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The Queer Moment: Post-Devolution Scottish Literature

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Abstract

This thesis investigates dramatic changes in the construction of Scottish national identity across the period 1999-2015; it identifies a move from hypermasculine Scottish identity at the end of the twentieth century to a queer national identity in 2015. This thesis argues that this is a product of the dramatic disorientation that Scotland encountered when it achieved devolution in 1999, as this moment disrupted the traditional means through which Scottish national identity was constructed. From this moment this thesis argues that the years 1999 to 2015 mark a period in which ideas of Scotland and Scottishness were overturned and made fragile. This thesis considers the implications of this within writing from Scotland produced between 1999 and 2014 in order to explore the consequences of this opened-up sense of Scottishness. As such this thesis explores, not simply how this writing represents Scotland but also how an overturned sense of Scottishness, combined with the varied and outward-looking themes of this writing, allows for an expansive reading practice that incorporates questions of globalisation, cosmopolitanism, and postcolonialism. The chapters track these developments through to the 2014 Scottish independence referendum and the landslide victory of the Scottish National Party in the 2015 UK general election and find ideas of a queer Scottish national identity amplified during these political events. This focus on Scotland evidences this thesis's broader claim that, if nations are constructed then they can be deconstructed or 'queered'. This is significant because the nation is typically understood as a source of hegemonic power; it regulates its citizens as a

healthy body politic and also demands the protection of the nation against various

'others'.

Contents

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I declare that all the material contained in this thesis is my own work.

Introduction

It is generally held that 1967 saw the decriminalisation of homosexuality in the UK, which was advised by the Wolfenden report and implemented through the Sexual Offences Act. However, Scotland did not share the same, albeit limited, reform; it requested that it be excluded from this legislation. This is the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland's reaction to the recommendations of the Wolfenden report in 1958: '[homosexuality is] so repugnant to the general consensus of opinion throughout the nation that, even if private and personal, [homosexuals] should be regarded as both morally wrong and legally punishable' (cited in Davidson and Davis, 2012, p. 56). As we will see, it is important that it is a 'nation', and not a people, that finds homosexuality repugnant and demands its purgation. Those seeking consolation in the idea that this was a Christian organisation and might not reflect a specifically 'Scottish' response to the Wolfenden report will find little comfort in the fact that these recommendations were accepted by the Church of England and by the Roman Catholic Church (Davidson and Davis, 2012, p. 65). And yet, less than sixty years after the Church of Scotland's condemnation of homosexuality and only a matter of decades after the eventual decriminalisation of homosexuality in Scotland in 1980, Scotland is the fairest country for LGBT legal rights in Europe (Press Association, 2015, n.p.), has a female first minister, and the highest number of LGBT political party leaders in the world (Torrance, 2016, n.p.). Moreover, it has recently appointed out lesbian Jackie Kay as its Makar. It appears, then, that it is possible to map a trajectory of change in Scotland and this extends far

beyond the process of a nation becoming more 'tolerant' of LGBT rights in line with the general western gay rights movement. This transformation entails something different; it indicates a process whereby the fundamental construction of Scottish national identity has changed.

This thesis is not interested in this as a celebration of Scottishness and its 'more positive' national identity. Instead, it finds in Scotland evidence that nationhood can be a fragile and malleable entity. This is significant given that nationhood is widely held as a constructed yet powerful organising force in our social and political lives, both for the way in which it organises people along borders and for the ways in which it regulates the bodies, behaviours and identities of its citizens around the image of a 'healthy body politic'. Thus, Scotland provides a case study in which this often seemingly impermeable structure of 'nation' is disorientated, disrupted, and changed. This is what it means to refer to a 'queering' of Scottish national identity. As we will see, this is a broader definition of 'queer' than LGBT; it refers to an attempt to disrupt the regulating patriarchal heteronormative construction of nationhood.

This thesis therefore explores why and how this disorientation of Scottish national identity came about, the consequences that this had both for the possibilities for gender and sexuality within the nation, and also for the way in which the very idea of 'nationhood' and its sacred position within society can be interrogated and expanded. Specifically, this thesis holds the years 1999-2015 as a particular point of interest; bookended by Scottish devolution and by the Scottish independence referendum, as well as the Scottish National Party's landslide victory

at the 2015 UK general election, Scottish national identity was thrown both into the limelight and into question in these years. Through an analysis of writing from Scotland at this time, this thesis focuses on 1999-2015 as a period of dramatic disorientation that queered Scottish national identity. This analysis cannot be carried out in a vacuum, however, and first an understanding of nationhood and of the broad development of Scottish national identity is required.

Nationhood: An 'Imagined Community'

Phillip Spencer and Howard Wollman's overview of nationhood and nationalisms helpfully distinguishes between nationalism, national identity, and the state; three terms that are often conflated in academic study and political rhetoric. They write that 'national identity involves a process of identifying oneself and others as a member of a nation' (2002, p. 3) and that 'nationalism is an ideology which imagines the community in a particular way (as national)' (2002, p. 3). In other words, a nation is a community imagined into being through ideology; it is a constructed collective identity maintained through myths of common origin, shared histories, and sameness between people within a particular set of borders. Nationalism is the ideology that 'asserts the primacy of this collective identity over others, and seeks political power in its name, ideally (if not exclusively or everywhere) in the form of a state for the nation (or a nation state)' (Spencer and Wollman, 2002, p. 3). To be a 'nationalist' then, in its broadest term, is to identify with and support the constructed community of the nation over others and to seek its representation and continuance. This process, as the authors recognise, often

involves seeking statehood, which, in contrast to the ideological construction of nationhood, refers to the material political power and sovereignty of that body politic.

In its engagement with Scotland and Scottishness, then, this thesis deals primarily in the ideological construction of the nation and national identity. However, nationhood and statehood are often conflated because one influences the other. This thesis on Scottish national identity is bookended by two events involving statehood: the 1999 formation of the Scottish parliament and the 2014 Scottish independence referendum. Both of these events, although concerned with the logistical political power of Scotland, galvanised discussion around Scottish national identity. The Scottish National Party success at the 2015 general election entwined statehood and nationalism as they promised logistically more state powers for Scotland but also, ideologically, positioned themselves as the Scottish socialist alternative to right-wing England/Britain. Thus, it is important to distinguish between statehood and nationhood but it is equally pertinent to understand the ways in which the material facts of a state interact with the ideological construction of the nation.

Although the current broad definition of nationhood recognises its constructed nature, there have been trajectories within thinking on nationhood that try to uncover an essentialist aspect of national identity. Spencer and Wollman describe this trajectory as 'primordialism' and write that this approach 'suggests that nationalism has deep roots in human associational life' and that 'biology, psychology and culture may all be summoned in support of the idea that nations are

an ancient, necessary and perhaps natural part of social organisation, an organic presence whose origins go back to the mists (or myths?) of time' (2002, p. 27). The authors' allusion to the 'myths' of time highlights their view that imagination actually underpins ideas of nationhood and this underlines their scepticism that the primordial approach attempts to uncover an essentialist understanding of a socially constructed entity. As we will see, the author's scepticism on the primordial approach reflects general consensus in late twentieth and twenty-first century writing that nationhood and national identity are, following Benedict Anderson's seminal work on the topic, 'imagined' entities. However, it is important that we do not dismiss primordialism merely as an out-dated critical position; primordialism is an implicit yet important feature in the imagining of nations. Nations do not recognise themselves as social constructions but as natural and rooted body politics. It is this naturalisation of national identity that makes the idea of nationhood and national belonging a powerful organising force in our world.

In a similar vein to primordialism, what Spencer and Wollman call 'perennials' attempt to map underlying roots for the nation; they 'claim to find major continuities in ancient and modern concepts of the nation across different historical periods and in very different places' (2002, p. 27). This attempt to map a lineage through nations, although not as extreme as primordialism, does imply a pre-determined commonality between national communities and their ancestry. The perennialist approach, for instance, might focus on some shared Celtic ancestry in order to explain the grouping of people as 'Scottish'. However, as Colley writing on Scotland in the eighteenth century notes, most Lowland Scots were 'not even

Celtic in ethnic origin but Anglo-Saxon or Norse' (2009, p. 14). Colley's historical approach therefore produces complex and contradictory 'ethnic' bases for the nation and draws a distinction between the facts of that body politic and the processes of imagination that bind them together as a 'nation'. The perennial focus on uncovering commonalities across national timelines therefore clearly draws attention away from the political and institutional constructions of nationhood and the hegemonic power that the idea of nation and national belonging hold within society. And yet, while Colley's example can expose flaws in the perennial approach, it is easy enough to recognise that some perennial belief in shared Celtic origins has shaped the imagining of a Scottish national identity. Thus, like primordialism, these 'continuities' often allow for the nation to present as a naturalised entity and justifies the grouping of people along borders in this way.

Attention to the perennial and primordial approaches therefore provides understanding of the way in which the nation, although constructed, presents itself as somehow natural or essential. Ernest Renan's 'What is a Nation?' ('Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?') provides one of the earliest and most cited examples of thinking on the construction of nationhood: 'forgetting, and I would even say historical error, is an essential factor in the creation of a nation' ([1882] (1992), p. 3). Here Renan explicitly references the redundancy of historical fact in the creation of nationhood and exposes its imagined nature. Renan's original lecture anticipates some of the most quoted and influential thinkers on the construction of the nation that emerged in the late twentieth century.

Tom Nairn outlined the now consensus view that nationalism 'first arose as a

general fact (a determining general condition of the European body politic) . . . after

the combined shocks engendered by the French Revolution, the Napoleonic

conquests, the English industrial revolution, and the war between the two super-

states of the day, England and France' ([1977] (2003), p. 96). This, he writes, led to

'a situation where polite universalist visions of progress had turned into means of

domination . . . and it had become a prime necessity to resist this aspect of

development' ([1977] (2003), p. 96-97). Initially, Nairn's location of the relatively

recent historical roots of nationhood and nationalism dismisses the notion that

these are natural and essential means for spatial organisation of people and

resources. Nairn makes clear here that 'progress' could now be attributed to

particular areas, and therefore argues that nations emerged through the production

of centres and peripheries in this new world model. He explains that what produces

a nationalism is twofold; one is the assertion of a bordered centre that asserts its

dominance while the other consists of those communities at the peripheries who

must form a cohesive identity in order to prevent this new version of 'progress'

being imposed upon them ([1977] (2003), p. 97).

Working from this model, Nairn is clear that 'Nationalism was one result of

this rude awakening' ([1977] (2003), p. 96) and that the result of constructing a

bordered identity for these new body politics was that 'many new "nations" had to

think away millennia of oblivion, and invent almost entirely fictitious pasts' ([1977]

(2003), p. 105). This coheres with Renan's 1882 revelation that forgetting is

necessary to the construction of a nation. Put together with Nairn's account of the,

historically speaking, fairly recent origins of nationhood, we can comprehend the fundamentally invented nature of national histories and national culture, brought about from the need for particular areas to band together either in claiming dominance over others or resisting this new version of 'progress'.

Inherent in Nairn's outline of nationalism is also the idea that there are two different types of nationalism: one that seeks power and one that resists it. This duality is widely recognised in writings on nationalism; put simply by Spencer and Wollman, 'there are "good" forms of nationalism, that are hailed as desirable or necessary by many writers, and then there are the "bad forms", that are more easily criticised' (2002, p. 3). Nationalisms such as the imperialist sort of the British Empire, or the cleansing inherent in Nazi Germany, are easily identified as the 'bad forms' of nationalism. Meanwhile, the nationalist campaigns that led to countries' emancipation from Empire, such as Gandhi's campaign for the freedom of India from British rule, might fall under the albeit simplistic category of 'good forms' of nationalism. Scottish nationalism, however, sits uneasily within this binary framework as it often imagines itself through the experience of being a 'colony' that requires emancipation and yet encounters its own expansive history as coloniser at the heart of the British Empire.

However, this split between 'good' and 'bad' nationalism does not necessarily require resolution. Nairn, instead, is clear that there is good and bad nationalism inherent in all formulations of the nation. He writes that 'both progress and regress are inscribed into [nationalisms'] generic code from the start . . . in this sense it is an exact (and not rhetorical) statement about nationalism to say that it is by nature

ambivalent' ([1977] (2003), pp. 347-348). This duality is fundamental to his conception of the nation as 'the modern Janus'; it is an ambiguous entity that looks simultaneously back to past myths of common origin and forwards to shared visions of imagined progress. Nairn's identification of the inherent ambivalence of nationalism emphasises the contradictory processes involved in the construction and maintenance of nationhood. This thesis is interested in this trajectory particularly because if the nation is socially constructed and therefore ambivalent, then we might also identify a certain fragility in the idea of nationhood. This is not to state that nations are not forces of hegemonic power in our world, but is to argue that through attention to the contradictions and historical amnesia inherent in the ways in which nations are constructed and maintained, we might also recognise ways in which those national identities - and their hegemonic power – are vulnerable to disorientation. This line of enquiry overarches my examination of the years between devolution and the independence referendum as a moment of disorientation in Scottish national identity that yielded more productive and malleable formations of identity in writing from Scotland.

Following Nairn, 1983 saw the publication of two of the most influential articulations of the construction of nations: Ernest Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism* (1983) and Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983). Gellner provided one of the most cited statements on the construction of national identity: 'nations as a natural, God-given way of classifying men . . . are a myth' ([1983] (2008), p. 47). Importantly, here, Gellner articulates the myth-making involved in the construction of national identity but also recognises that these are constructions that produce an

illusion of an essentialist orginaising principle that is 'natural' and 'God-given'.

Similarly, Benedict Anderson's idea of the nation as an 'imagined community' is

perhaps the most quoted reference point for understanding nations as constructed.

He wrote, famously, that 'the members of even the smallest nation will never know

most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of

each lives the image of their communion' ([1983] (2006), p. 6). Anderson's notion of

imagined communities is much cited because it illustrates the way in which the

nation relies on a sense of commonality between strangers that is, ultimately,

imagined, and is supported in this imagining by processes designed to promote

political, social, and historical ideas of cohesion between them.

Less cited, however, is Anderson's recognition that many communities are

'imagined' outside of the category of nation; Anderson articulated that 'all

communities' that transcend 'face-to-face contact' are imagined ([1983] (2006), p.

6). We need only think of the imagined community of 'northerners' bound along

regional and class lines or that of 'Londoners' constructed along city lines to accept

Anderson's nuance on the idea of 'imagined communities'. Anderson clarifies, then,

that specific to the imagined community of the nation is the idea that they are 'both

inherently limited and sovereign' ([1983] (2006), p. 6). This captures one of the

paradoxes behind the concept of nation that makes it so reductive; the nation is

simultaneously imagined as the site of supreme power and as a bordered, and

therefore a spatially finite, entity. In this paradox, the nation accepts that there are

other nations beyond its borders and also that it exists in hierarchy with those

beyond it. The idea of the nation as both sovereign and limited places ideas of pride

and, in its extreme forms, superiority at the heart of national identities and also places them within a spatial framework that demands their protection.

If these twentieth-century thinkers attempted to interrogate the construction of nations, the new point of analysis for the twenty-first century has been whether the analysis of nationhood is still relevant in an increasingly globalised world. Judith Butler and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak have provided a philosophical dialogue on the position of the nation-state in a globalised world (2007). They do so from the starting point that the nation's borders have become more fluid and that more people are stateless now than ever before. This is certainly true of migration patterns and we can undoubtedly recognise that the increased global movement of people across the twenty-first century does call into question how the idea of nations and borders continues to manifest in the contemporary. And yet, to take only a few Western examples, the UK's recent vote to leave the European Union that has in part been the result of increased anxieties surrounding immigration into the UK, as well as the increased emphasis on border control in many European nations in response to the European refugee crisis, suggest that the ideology of nationhood and the anxieties that surround the protection of borders continue to persist even in a global world. Add to this the fact that since the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre, the U S spend on Homeland security has increased by 301% (accounting for inflation) (National Priorities Project, n.p.), as well as the current anti-immigration rhetoric that surrounds Donald Trump's presidential campaign, and it appears that the ideologies of the national people and the national border, both of which require

'protection' from various external 'others', demand ever more urgent analysis in the contemporary period.

In recent years critics have begun to note the continued prevalence of the nation, despite the anticipation that nations would diminish under globalisation. Claire Sutherland has observed that 'governments have had to incorporate some form of regionalism and globalisation into their nation-building ideology. Some have opted to paint globalisation as a threat in order to encourage national solidarity . . . whereas others have portrayed it as an opportunity to enhance national prosperity' (2012, p. 171). Sutherland's focus on governments here demonstrates that nations continue to persist, not simply ideologically, but also at the level of the state. Moreover, globalisation appears here not as an entity capable of destroying the nation but actually as one that can be manipulated to consolidate that sense of national belonging. This leads Sutherland to the conclusion that 'the widely anticipated decline of the nation-state in the face of globalisation does not seem to have materialised' (2012, p. 1). If globalisation has not brought about the demise of the nation-state, then, it would appear that the global and the national do not exist in as simplistic a relationship as writers on globalisation first anticipated.

Robert J. Holton is in agreement with Sutherland that 'globalization [is] not about to destroy the nation-state' (2011, p. 227). Holton argues that across the twentieth and twenty-first centuries we have seen a rise in the ideas of nationhood and nationalism; however, he is clear that this equally does not constitute a process of 'de-globalization' (2011, p. 229). This coheres with my observation in this thesis that the nation-state is an urgent site of analysis in the twenty-first century and,

additionally, enhances thinking on the relationship between the national and the global in that they no longer appear in a binary relationship in which the rise of one constitutes the demise of the other. This becomes further apparent through Spencer and Wollman's observation that 'globalization does not seem to guarantee any particular outcome to nationalism' (2002, p. 181). We are then faced then with increased critical recognition that globalisation has not brought about the demise of the nation, nor does an increase in nationalism and nationhood necessarily signify the end of globalisation. Therefore, it appears an oversight to imagine that the rise of one is to the detriment of the other. Thus to state that analysis of nationhood is an urgent line of enquiry in the twenty-first century is to recognise that the global remains a related but separate sphere for analysis.

It would similarly be an oversight, however, to assume that because globalisation has not brought about the demise of the nation, that the manifestations of nationhood have not shifted in the twenty-first century global world. This thesis speculates that through its interaction with the global, the nation manifests in new and particular ways in the contemporary. Chapter three pursues this line of enquiry but, for now, Billig's notion of 'banal nationalism' (1995) provides some of the most fruitful lines of enquiry for thinking on how we might best approach the nation in the contemporary.

In 1995, Michael Billig argued that nationalism and nationhood are not simply powerful forces in their most extreme forms, but exist unquestioned within the everyday; he writes that 'in our age, it seems as if an aura attends the very idea of nationhood' (p. 4). By this he means that the naturalised idea of the nation is

unquestioned and influences a great deal of our social and political lives. He used

the example of President George Bush, who announced the start of the Gulf war with

the justification that 'Sadam Hussein systematically raped, pillaged and plundered a

tiny nation no threat to his own' (cited in Billig, 1995, p. 1). As Billig astutely notes in

this example, 'it was not individuals who had been raped or pillaged. It was

something much more important: a nation' (p. 1). Billig's observation helps to

articulate the naturalised quality that the nation has increasingly assumed. It does

not seem to matter that there is critical consensus that the nation is an imagined

entity; the idea of nation appears ever more naturalised and yet ever more powerful

in the contemporary world. Spencer and Wollman recognise something similar

when they write that '"possessing" a national identity has come to be seen as almost

natural' (p. 3). Billig shows how this naturalisation of national identity is used, in

just one example, to justify wars and, of course, multiple deaths. Thus, while earlier

writings in the twentieth century by Anderson, Gellner, and Nairn helped to

articulate that the nation is constructed as a natural and essential way of

understanding identity and belonging, Billig's writing helps to articulate the social

and political consequences of this. Therefore, rather than focus on the nation as an

'imagined community', it seems that the naturalisation of this 'imagining' is the most

important aspect of nationhood to consider.

Although writing in 1995, then, Billig's words make clear the pertinence of

analysing the naturalised and every-day manifestation of the nation in the

contemporary moment. Commenting on the massive loss of life across the twentieth

century during, but not solely in, the First and Second World Wars, Billig notes that

'much of this slaughter has been performed in the name of the nation' (p. 1). These words, significantly, were published before 9/11 and the wars on Iraq and Afghanistan which undoubtedly together constitute the most prominent examples of the twenty-first century western fixation on the protection of national borders. Although not 'wars', the responses to the European refugee crisis that saw borders across Europe close due to anxieties over, in David Cameron's words, a 'swarm' of migrants (Elgot, 2015, n.p.), demonstrates further that national borders continue to be prioritised over human life.

However, Billig stops short of fully realising the full scope of violence committed in the name of this essentialised sense of nationhood. He is clear that the naturalised nation requires analysis because 'it is reproducing institutions which possess vast armaments' (p. 7). Of course nations cause violence in their extreme fixations on the protection of national borders, but the nation requires analysis not only for the violence that arises from the dynamic between those living within the nation and the 'others' perceived to threaten it, but also for the way in which the nation regulates the body politic living within its borders.

The nation produces an image of a homogeneous body politic that, in order for the nation to continue, must be both healthy and reproductive. Clearly, then, ideas of normativity are inscribed into the idea of the nation. Queer and gender theorists have been astute in identifying this hegemonic and regulating force within the construction of nationhood. Christianson's extensive statement on the patriarchal construction of nations is worth laying out here in order to fully introduce this aspect of nationhood:

if nationalism is a post-rationalist or enlightenment substitute for religion, with fake-historical roots to legitimise it, as Benedict Anderson argues, then given the patriarchal, male centred nature of Christianity and most other world religions, and the oppressive nature of their relation to women, it is inevitable that the construction of the idea of the 'nation' should have been equally male-centred and patriarchal, manifesting itself in the traditions of warrior nations, warrior clan systems, with women as bearers of warriors or symbolic female figures of nationhood. (2002, p. 68)

As Christianson observes here, the nation is not simply a construction, but is a religiously informed patriarchal construction. This manifests clearly in ideas of 'warrior nations' and 'warrior clan systems' but also in contemporary terms of the male-centred state structures of government and military that protect the nation. As Christianson also observes, this has consequences for the position of women within this system; they are reduced to symbols of the nation. This is easily recognisable in the gendered language inherent in terms such as 'motherland' and, specifically in the case of 'Britannia', the roman goddess who, in some lines of thinking, still stands for Britain today. This produces a feminine nation protected by masculine 'warriors' as well as male-dominated state structures of military and government.

Christianson's identification of the way in which women are imagined as 'bearers of warriors' reminds us also that reproduction is at the heart of the continuance of the nation. The woman's role is thus cast as central to the general

continuance of the body politic, not simply for their production of 'warriors', but for their potential to reproduce more generally. In addition to the patriarchal construction of the nation, then, reproduction is also at the heart of nationhood and this makes the demand that the relationships that produce these children and ensure the continuance of this nation are necessarily safe and heteronormative.

The traditional heteronormative family model, then, with the father as the protector of the family and the mother who produces its children, acts as a microcosm of the nation. As Smyth has observed, 'gendered and sexualized nationalist discourses often rely primarily on the naturalization of the patriarchal heterosexual family as the source of, and justification for, hegemonic "national" culture' (2005, p. 36). Smyth's words here attend to the dual relationship between the nation and the family model; on the one hand, the family model is the 'source' of the nation in that it ideologically underpins it and, on the other hand, the sacred family unit then 'justifies' the maintenance and protection of national culture. This produces a situation in which, in Lauren Berlant and Elizabeth Freeman's words, the nation 'touts a subliminal sexuality more official than a state flower or national bird' (1993, p. 195). This is, of course, a state-sanctioned monogamous and heteronormative sexuality; as Winning states, 'the sanctity of heterosexual marriage is inextricably tied to nationhood' (2007, p. 285). Therefore, just as the nation is constructed, it is underpinned by the socially constructed notions of normative gender and sexuality, which ensure ideas of longevity for the national body politic.

This thesis therefore defines queer as that which radically disrupts the ideas of linearity, stability, and longevity, which are underpinned by the regulation of

sexuality, gender, and desire. Queer appears across this thesis, then, as a set of crisis points that overturn normative ideologies underpinning society, politics, and identities. This thesis applies this idea of queer specifically to the nation, one of the most prominent structures that regulate identity and politics along the lines of that which is healthy and normal. In defining and using 'queer' in this way, I draw upon, and engage with many of the foundational ideas from queer theory but primarily focus on queer theory as it has developed into the twenty-first century.

Queer theory has long sought to understand and challenge the norms of gender and sexuality that are implicitly inscribed into our social and political lives broadly because the privileging of heteronormality regulates and controls bodies, sexualities, and identities and, in turn, casts experiences that fall outside of that normative structure as dissident, degenerate, and 'other'. Michel Foucault's seminal work in *The History of Sexuality Volume 1* (1976) outlined the increased regulation of sexuality through medicine, law, and religion in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries which 'claimed to ensure the physical vigor and the moral cleanliness of the social body; it promised to eliminate defective individuals, degenerate and bastardized populations' (1980, p. 54). Foucault argued that this increased attention to and anxiety about desire wrote sexuality into discourse and constituted the 'invention' of the homosexual. In 1985 Eve Sedgwick's *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* argued that relationships between men are closely regulated as homosocial so that they exclude the possibility of desire. She argued that these relationships actually constitute a continuum between the homosocial and homosexual and she provided a set of readings that argued for the

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presence of desire within relationships between men across a selection of literary texts. Judith Butler's similarly influential *Gender Trouble* (1990) argued that gender is socially constructed or 'performed' and as such she dismantled the idea that gender is essentially tied to sex, writing that 'it becomes impossible to separate out "gender" from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained' (1990, p. 5). In the same year, Eve Sedgwick published *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990) and argued against the overly simplistic understanding of sexuality within the binary of heterosexual/homosexual. This is not an exhaustive list of the influential texts through which queer theory has developed. They do, however, evidence queer theory's interrogation of the hegemonic structures that regulate gender and sexuality and its concern to radically overturn the essentialist and normative understandings of gender and sexuality.

This thesis is interested in queer theory as it has developed into the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries for the way in which it has begun to draw its attention away from the explicit categories of gender, sexuality and desire. In 1993 Michael Warner wrote that '"queer" gets a critical edge by defining itself against the normal rather than the heterosexual' (p. xxvi). This idea of queerness as disruptive to normativity, rather than as oppositional to heterosexuality, draws queer away from being exclusively tied to homosexual identities and experiences. It also asks queer to disrupt the 'normal' and, in doing so, demands that we interrogate what fantasies and hegemonic power structures regulate the idea of 'normality'. In 2006 Sara Ahmed also argued for queer along these lines, writing that a queer project should attend to that which is odd and strange because it 'allows us to move

between sexual and social registers, without flattening them or reducing them to a single line' (2006, p. 161). Ahmed's approach here recognises the interaction between the social and the sexual and simultaneously resists an overly simplistic approach to these categories. The idea of queer as that which is strange also allows for exploration of why and how such oddities are excluded from the fantasy of normality.

A focus on that which is strange and challenges the fantasy of normality, then, is at the foundation of queer scholarship in the contemporary, which, as Browne and Nash write, 'is anti-normative and seeks to subvert, challenge and critique a host of taken for granted "stabilities" in our social lives' (2010, p. 7). This definition of queer scholarship is additionally helpful because it disentangles contemporary queer theory from LGBT politics that have developed across the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Instead, contemporary queer theory interrogates and disrupts the hegemonic structures that produce meaning and stability in our social and political lives. We might recognize that to challenge those structures opens renewed possibilities for LGBT politics, but also that queer analysis can include any situation in which human experience does not fall into safe monogamous and reproductive patterns.

The strands of queer theory that this thesis is interested in, including but not limited to writers such as Lee Edelman, Lauren Berlant, J. Halberstam, and Sara Ahmed, help to interrogate the broad structures that yield hegemonic power within our politics and society. This thesis takes this approach to queer theory because it

seeks to challenge the heteronormative assumptions of society and politics that, as discussed, are fundamentally entwined with the structure of the nation.

Throughout this thesis, then, in addition to an analysis of homosexuality, encounters with alcoholism, perceived failures in motherhood, polyamorous sexual encounters, and incestuous desire provide analysis for that which is excluded from, and which potentially disrupts, the heteronormative construction of the nationhood. Broadly, then, this thesis investigates the nation as a particularly pronounced site through which 'taken for granted "stabilities" in our social lives' (Browne and Nash, 2010, p. 7) have consequences for the regulation of bodies, identities, and experiences. This queer project therefore outlines the ways in which those stabilities are upended in post-devolution writing from Scotland.

As we will see in chapter one, Scotland is traditionally a particularly extreme example of the patriarchal nation and of the heteronormative, and even homophobic, nation. The Church of Scotland's original appeal against the legalisation of homosexuality explicitly referred to the 'consensus of opinion throughout the nation' that homosexuality 'should be regarded as both morally wrong and legally punishable' (cited in Davidson and Davis, 2012, p. 56). Like George Bush's appeal to the 'nation' that is victim to Sadam Hussein's crimes, it is not 'people' that hold this opinion, but the 'nation'. And yet, there certainly seems to have been a change, not simply in the 'tolerance' of alternative genders and sexualities in Scotland but in that Scotland's openness to queerness is now positioned at the centre of its construction of its national identity. In addition to its having the most LGBT political party leaders in the world and its being the fairest

place in Europe for LGBT rights (Press Association, 2015, n.p.), since Nicola Sturgeon became the first female first minister of Scotland she has ensured a gender balanced cabinet (Brooks, 2014, n.p.) and welcomed Scotland's three openly gay ministers (Duffy, 2014, n.p.). More recently, in the SNP campaign for the May 2016 Holyrood elections, Sturgeon promised an overhaul of Scotland's gender recognition laws in order to allow citizens to change their name and gender legally using a simple process of self-declaration, without medical diagnosis, and to include gender neutral identities in that (Johnson, 2016, n.p.). This is not simply the case of a nation becoming more inclusive; this is a nation in which openness to queer genders and sexualities are at the heart of its constructed identity.

This is significant given that the existing literature on nationhood recognises that, even if the nation is constructed, it is nonetheless a hegemonic source of immense explicit and implicit regulatory power. This leads us to the bind often faced by a queer project; that by recognising these 'stabilities' as constructed or imagined, we nonetheless find them impermeable, precisely because they present themselves as natural, safe, and stable. In her talk 'Queer Fragilities' given at the University of Sussex, Sara Ahmed described the hegemonic structures of patriarchy, heteronormality, and racism as a brick wall that the queer, feminist, and/or postcolonial subject repeatedly comes up against. She recognised the queer experience of living outside of these structures as 'fragile'. And yet, she simultaneously recognised that while these structures appear as 'a brick wall', their socially constructed nature also means that they have a certain, even if carefully managed, level of fragility. Following this, she outlined the need for a queer,

feminist, and/or postcolonial project to continue to rally against that 'brick wall' in order to exploit its fragility and provide a means for change (2016).

Taking the hegemonic power of nationhood as its point of focus, this thesis investigates Scotland because it appears, at least from my opening examples, that Scotland is an example of a nation that was, in Brown and Nash's words, subverted, challenged and critiqued (2010, p. 7), and, eventually made malleable. Therefore, Scotland is a significant example in which the naturalised, rigid, regulating structure of nationhood appears to have been disrupted. If we can encounter one contemporary example of a radically disorientated nation, then we may recognise that the nation, although powerful, can be made fragile and can be opened to renewed possibilities. This thesis therefore proposes that the achievement of devolution in 1999 radically disorientated the construction of Scottish national identity and that the years 1999-2015 present an opened space where the stabilising features of Scottish identity were in 'free-fall'. In this conjecture, I propose that this crisis was central to the process through which the nation was made malleable, was opened up, and was, in essence, 'queered'. Therefore the consideration of crises and trauma as productive sites for analysis is one overarching strand of my engagement with queer theory throughout this thesis.

Like much of queer theory, some of the ideas explored in this project emerge from a psychoanalytic tradition. However, within the scope of this project, and particularly due to its focus on the contemporary nation, this thesis will engage with these writings as political rather than psychoanalytical. At times the analysis may reference the psychoanalytic tradition; this is usually in order to draw upon a

critical language that helps to articulate my argument, rather than to engage deeply with the traditions of psychoanalysis. There is certainly room for a potential psychoanalytically focused investigation of contemporary Scottish literature; it is hoped that where this thesis does not carry this out, it at least alerts us to the possibility of further analytical possibilities of these texts.

It is pertinent that this analysis of the increased malleability of the idea of 'nation' must also constitute a process whereby the naturalisation of nationhood is questioned. Contemporary UK politics provide a pertinent example of the way in which the idea of nationhood has become naturalised to the point where it is accepted as the only available organising principle in our contemporary world. It is a rarely acknowledged fact that in 2014, when Scotland voted on independence, its citizens were faced with a choice between two versions of nationhood: Scottish or British. The SNP and Yes campaign were regularly demonised as 'nationalists' throughout the campaign. And yet nationalism was inscribed into the very idea that Scottish independence poses a threat to the safety and security of the UK. As if there was any doubt as to David Cameron's 'key message' in his speech following the outcome of the referendum, he used the phrase 'our United Kingdom' nine times in his short statement (2014, n.p.). National unity was at the centre of the No campaign just as much as national representation was at the heart of the Yes campaign. There was never an option that did not involve nationhood in this referendum.

In contrast to our apparent political investment in frameworks of nationhood, critics and theorists have long been exploring alternatives to this; the cosmopolitan argument broadly holds that if the nation is simply imagined then

other principles for organizing people and identity can be similarly imagined. Spencer and Wollman, for example, aim for the 'development of a democratic politics where identities, citizenship and human rights do not depend on the nation-state or affiliation to a nation' (2002, p. 4). This thesis engages with these debates through an analysis of the nation within the global in chapter three and through exploration of cosmopolitanism in chapter four. Thus to 'queer' the nation means, initially, to make room for non-heteronormative identities within that nation. But this, of course, must also entail a process where the very idea of 'nation' as a natural organising principle for our world is questioned. These questions therefore rely on the idea of the nation as constructed. And therefore an understanding of developments in the imaginings of Scottish identity is first required.

The Development of Scottish National Identity

Tom Nairn writes that while nationalism was developing across Europe in the nineteenth century, 'Scottish nationalism was simply absent' ([1977] (2003), p. 95). Nairn continues that 'what can reasonably be held to correspond to the mainstream of European nationalism is astonishingly recent in Scotland. As a matter of fact, it started in the 1920s' ([1977] (2003), p. 95). Thus, Scotland does have a history of the sort of nationalism identifiable as that which sprung up across Europe in the nineteenth century, but this is located relatively recently in the twentieth century. As chapter one will demonstrate, twentieth-century Scottish nationalism was marked by an investment in the idea of a rugged Highland masculinity produced in order to resist the perceived dilution of Scottish culture – often imagined as

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emasculation – in the face of Anglicisation. Chapter two further demonstrates that much of this perception of Anglicisation was bound up with the way in which the 1707 Act of Union has been remembered within Scottish culture as a moment that 'dissolved Scotland into the greater economic unity of Britain and the project of a British Empire' (1992, pp. xi-xii).

However, Colley writes on the Act of Union that: 'Great Britain did not emerge by way of a "blending" of the different regional or older national cultures contained within its boundaries as is sometimes maintained, nor is its genesis to be explained primarily in terms of an English "core" imposing its cultural and political hegemony on a helpless and defrauded Celtic periphery' (2005, p. 6). This idea that the Act of Union did not constitute a 'blending' of different nations contradicts popular imagining of the Act of Union as a process that 'dissolved' Scotland. Colley's historical view that this also did not consist of the domination and take over of a Celtic fringe by an 'English "core"' is important because, as chapter two demonstrates, by the time the Act of Union reaches the popular imagination, it is imagined not simply as a process that dissolved Scotland but as an active process of English colonisation.

The Scottish Enlightenment, however, directly disputes the idea that Scotland was unfairly colonised by England. The Act of Union provided Scotland with rapid economic development, largely through increased access to the transatlantic slave trade, which saw rapid development of the city of Glasgow, in particular, as it became a prominent tobacco hub. Edinburgh also became the hub of the intellectual Scottish Enlightenment, beginning in 1710 and reaching its peak

from the 1750s onwards. The Scottish Enlightenment, then, produced a situation in

which 'as both sides of the border came to recognise, there were senses in which

Scotland was not England's peer but its superior' (Colley, 2005, p. 123). This aspect

of Scotland's history juxtaposes the Scotland-as-colonised narrative which, as

chapter two explores, was central to Scottish national identity by the end of the

twentieth century. The fact that this Enlightenment and economic expansion in

Scotland came about through its participation in the transatlantic slave trade

highlights the disturbing extent to which history is erased in the construction of

more comfortable narratives of national identity. The Act of Union actually provided

Scotland access to an Empire in which it played a far deeper and brutal role as

coloniser than Scottish nationalists in the twentieth century attribute to

Anglicisation. It will be of little surprise that this is not an aspect of this period that

finds its way into the imaginings of Scottishness in the twentieth century. The

opening chapters of this thesis explore the ways in which devolution disorientated

twentieth-century constructions of national identity. Following this, the final

chapter of this thesis investigates whether and how a more malleable Scottish

national identity might better be able to acknowledge its history as coloniser.

If Great Britain did not come about through a blending of different national

cultures, Colley is clear, instead, that the idea of Great Britain came about through a

shared opposition to the perceived threat of France in the Anglo-French wars. This

is one of the events that Nairn locates at the roots of the development of

nationalism, and Colley shares this view that this constituted some sense of shared

Britishness between the different regions of the UK: 'they came to define themselves

as a single people not because of any political cultural consensus at home, but rather in reaction to the Other beyond their shores' (Colley, 2005, p. 6). This follows general consensus that nations are consolidated in reaction to the perceived threat of external others. Colley's words, however, are also significant because, as she goes on to demonstrate, we should not be under any impression that a lack of 'cultural consensus at home' refers to the clearly defined separate identities and cultures of England, Scotland, and Wales.

Particularly problematic for a generalised idea of Scottishness at this time is the Highland word 'Sassenach' which means 'Saxon' and was used by Highlanders throughout the eighteenth century to refer broadly to Englishmen and Lowland Scots. This evidences, in Colley's words, that 'in Highland eyes, these two peoples were virtually indistinguishable, and both were equally alien' (2005, p. 15). Similarly, she continues, 'Lowland Scots traditionally regarded their Highland countrymen as members of a different and inferior race, violent, treacherous, poverty-stricken and backwards' (2005, p. 15). Thus while there is an identifiable 'country' or 'nation' that is Scotland, these 'countrymen' do not share any collective identity. In 1919, Gregory G. Smith defined Caledonian Antisyzygy as the intrinsic duality at the heart of Scottishness and Scottish culture, a key example of which is the Highland/Lowland division (1919, p. 5). Yet surely Colley demonstrates here that these two regions did not share any distinctive national unity and that Smith takes an example that actually evidences the nonexistence of an intrinsic Scottish identity and appropriates it so that it somehow now stands for something 'essential' to Scottish nationhood.

The Jacobite rebellion provides further evidence that the ideological border was even more pronounced between Highland and Lowland Scotland than it was between Lowland Scotland and England. The Jacobite rebellion consisted of invasions in 1708, 1715 and 1745 by forces that supported a Stuart and Catholic claim to the British throne (Colley, 2005, p. 24). The 1745 invasion by Charles Edward Stuart, 'Bonnie Prince Charlie', and the final conflict between the Jacobites and the Hanoverians at the battle of Culloden remains the stuff of legend in Scotland (Devine, 1999, p. 31). Significantly, what is often reported as 'Scottish' support for the Jacobite cause refers specifically to the support of the Highland clans for Charles Edward Stuart and his predecessors (Colley, 2005, p. 80). The history of the Jacobite invasions certainly indicates a pronounced difference between Highland identity and the rest of Britain, but it would be anachronistic to suggest that even this ideological border between Highlanders and the rest of Britain was fixed; Colley provides evidence that support also came from, although fewer in their numbers, Welsh and Englishmen (2005, p. 81). Thus although Britain broadly developed a collective identity in response to the wars with France, this did not constitute a blending of different nations and, significantly, did not even at this stage consist of three separate and distinguishable unified national cultures.

Just as the war on France produced external threats that contributed to an increasingly collective identity in Britain, the Jacobite rebellion also provided an internal 'other' for the regions of Britain, lowland Scotland included, against which to consolidate themselves. Colley recognises that 'the first major protest in which English and Scottish artisans openly collaborated' was against the Jacobite cause

(2005, p. 23), which provides further evidence of a more permeable ideological border between Lowland Scotland and England than between Lowland Scots and the Jacobite Highlanders. Even when Devine speaks of a, perhaps too simplistic, generalised 'Scottishness' at this time, he is clear that this was not a 'Scotland' with Jacobite sympathies: 'Scottish backing for the Stuarts during the rising was remarkably thin on the ground long before the crushing defeat of Culloden' (Devine, 1999, p. 48). Moreover, Colley even finds that the British national anthem, God Save the King, came about after it was first sung in a London theatre in September 1745 and, during the 1745 Jacobite invasion, provided a 'comforting and blessedly familiar lifeline to lay hold of' (2005, p. 44). This is perhaps one of the most prominent forms of a sense of unified national identity appearing at this time and Colley is clear that this involved Scotland as well: 'newspapers and monthly magazines quickly supplied their readers with the words and music; even the "Scots Magazine" printed it, despite the fact that Scotland was still technically under Jacobite occupation' (2005, p. 44). Here the Jacobite Highlanders form the 'other' that consolidates some sense of British solidarity and, importantly, this includes the Jacobite-occupied Scotland. This, initially, evidences the impossibility of speaking about a Scottish national identity in the eighteenth century. But it is of further significance given that Scottish national identity in the twentieth century came to be constructed through the image of Highland Scotland.

Later on in the eighteenth century the Highlands of Scotland encountered their most well known period of oppression in the form of the Highland Clearances. This was a period lasting from the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century which

saw 'the displacement and dispersion of many thousands of common people from the glens and straths of the Highlands and Islands in the north of Scotland' (Richards, 2007, p. 3). Multiple families were cleared from their homes and land at once to make room for new developments in agriculture. Richards is also clear that an ideology of 'improvement' as well as cold economic development accompanied the laird's clearance of the Highlands; they 'confidently envisaged a new economic structure in which the mass of people would be self-reliant, liberated from the chains of feudalism' (Richards, 2007, p. 55). These lairds included Scottish Lowlanders as well as Englishmen, both, we must remember, known to the Highlander as 'Sassenach' ('Saxon') (Colley, 2005, p. 15). In addition to the dual investment of Lowlanders and Englishmen in the Clearances, Richards is clear that this 'improvement' ideology was tied to the Enlightenment: 'the plan was fully articulated and drew on the ideology and textbooks of the Edinburgh Enlightenment' (Richards, 2007, p. 55). It is significant that Richards refers to the 'Edinburgh Enlightenment', rather than the generalised 'Scottish Enlightenment'; this implies that the benefits of this applied to all of Scotland whereas at this time it is more accurate to speak of specific regions of this nation. This not only allows a more historically accurate view of the period, but also makes room for the recognition that these were opposing places; in fact Edinburgh Enlightenment ideologies underpinned the Clearances of the Highlands.

And yet, as McCrone *et al.* recognise, Scottish national identity as we know it today revolves around iconography that includes 'tartan, Glencoe, Bonnie Prince Charlie and Culloden' (1995, p. 5). This means that Scottish national identity

eventually became constructed through the image of the Highlander that had previously appeared alien and threatening to Lowland Scotland. Colley recognises that after the battle of Culloden, at which the Jacobites were defeated, parliament 'devised legislation to undermine the cultural, political, and economic distinctiveness of the Scottish Highlands . . . the wearing of tartan was banned on pain of imprisonment, except, indicatively, for the Highland regiments serving with the British army' (2005, p. 119). We can recognise that this, alongside the Clearances, constituted suppression solely of the Highland community, which, far from representing all of Scotland, constituted its threatening internal 'other'. And yet, as McCrone *et al.* recognise, tartan and Culloden form a key part of Scottish heritage today. This is therefore one of the clearest examples of the construction of national identity. However, more significantly, this particular reinterpretation of history creates a Scottish national identity invested in the idea that the banning of tartan is representative of a long history of English oppression of Scotland. In other words, Scotland identifies with the regional suppression of the Highlands and that regional suppression is translated into a narrative of national oppression. In order to understand Scotland's transition from eighteenth-century othering of the Highlander to a twentieth-century identification with him, we must first turn to consider the nineteenth century in Scotland.

Richards is clear that the Highland Clearances 'happened at a time when the rest of mainland Britain exulted in the most dynamic expansion ever seen in the world economic history' (2007, p. 6). This places further distance between the Highlands and the rest of Scotland because, although not acknowledged within

popular Scottish national identity, there are many historical sources that evidence

Scotland's extensive involvement with the British Empire. Martin writes that 'in the

nineteenth century, many Scots enthusiastically participated in the British Empire

and identified with it' (2009, p. 3). This translated to not just involvement, but

disproportionate Scottish influence within the Empire. Colley shows, for example,

that 'more than a quarter of the East India Company's army officers were Scotsmen;

so, by mid-century, were a good proportion of its civilian officers in Madras and

Bengal – the Scottish bankers and stock-holders who had a strong grip on the

Company made sure of that' (2005, p. 128). Chapter six explores further the

evidence of Scottish involvement with Empire and the way that this affects cultural

memory in contemporary Scotland. It is clear, however, that in the nineteenth

century, this heavy Scottish involvement in Empire produced some level of Scottish

national pride. J. Finlay recognises that 'support for the Empire was one of the few

issues which commanded a general consensus in Scottish intellectual and political

circles' (1997, p. 15), while Glass comments that 'Scottish national pride and

identity were closely associated with the benefits bestowed on this small nation

through access to the British Empire' (2014, p. 1). While this sense of Scottish pride

does not translate to the overt Scottish nationalism in the twentieth century, it does

contradict the way in which Scottish pride across the twentieth and twenty-first

centuries is often reliant upon its distinction from England's aggressive and colonial

past.

Critics might be clear that there was Scottish involvement in Empire, but they

are less certain on why this was. Both Colley and Martin, however, have suggested

that economic disparity within the union between Scotland and England may have been a contributing factor. Post-Scottish Enlightenment and at the height of Empire, England was more economically advantaged within the union. As such, they suggest that Scottish enthusiasm for Empire may have sprung from the fact that they had less to lose at home. Colley suggests that 'it was a case of comparative Scottish poverty spurring on aggressive Scottish interest in British imperial expansion' (2005, p. 129), while Martin writes that 'although English economic interests generally took precedence over Scottish, Scotland had a strong industrial base and benefited from wealth acquired from the Empire's superexploitation of overseas colonies' (2009, p. 3). This may suggest the reasons behind the disproportionate Scottish involvement with Empire that we encounter later in this thesis. For now, this demonstrates that Scotland has a selective history available to it; it can isolate this period in order to focus on the Union as a site of economic inequality between Scotland and England. Place this alongside the idea of the British Empire as an English-dominated force, and Scotland emerges quite comfortably as the unwilling suppressed passenger of Empire. This history forgets, however, the Enlightenment that immediately followed the Act of Union, which saw the Scottish economy rise at a higher rate than England's, that produced ideology that underpinned the Highland Clearances, and which even led to the perception that Scotland was England's superior rather than its peer (Colley, 2005, p. 123; Richards, 2007, p. 55). It further erases this Scottish growth's association with the transatlantic slave trade and diminishes the Scottish involvement with the age of Empire, no matter if it originated from nineteenth-century inequality within the union or not.

The suggestion of inequality within the nineteenth-century union, however, may explain why, unlike during the Enlightenment, Scottish Lowlanders did not so easily identify with concepts of Britishness. In fact, Martin explains that Lowlanders began to look to the Highlands in order to gain a sense of a separate Scottish identity but one that did not diminish the access to Empire provided by the union: 'Highland identification did offer Scots an element of national distinctiveness while allowing them to reap the economic benefits of union' (Martin, 2009, p. 8). This would explain how a Scottish identity came to be associated with the Highlands, even at a time when Scotland was taking pride in its riches gained from Empire.

Nairn writes that Scottish nationalism in the twentieth century was 'the chronological companion of the anti-imperialist revolt and Third World nationalism, rather than of those European movements which it superficially resembles' (Nairn, [1977] (2003), p. 95). Glass is in agreement that 'nationalism only appeared as a legitimate force in Scotland in the 1960s as the last vestiges of empire collapsed' (Glass, 2014, p. 1). Although we might locate Scottish nationalism earlier in the twentieth century than Glass, this correlation between the rise of Scottish nationalism and the decline of Empire appears significant. We might speculate that Scotland's Highland identity, which originally granted it national distinctiveness as it enjoyed the benefits of Empire, proved increasingly useful for Scottish national identity during the decline of Empire. On the one hand it provided a sense of separate Scottishness to turn to when the advantages of Empire were diminishing. On the other, it also allowed Scotland a separate identity to the colonial identity

associated with the British Empire that was called into question in the twentieth century.

While Nairn, then, writes that Scottish nationalism did not begin until the twentieth century, we can see that the ingredients for a Highland identity originated in the nineteenth century. Martin is clear that this association with the Highlander entails a process that displaces Scotland's less comfortable history:

> the cultural association of Scotland with the figure of the brawny kilted Highlander necessarily obscured those elements of Scottish history or culture that it could not accommodate. The Jacobite rebellion, the mountains, the warrior-clansman fit the bill (albeit in a distorted form); the Enlightenment and the Clearances, the densely packed cities and the industrial working class, the Edinburgh intellectuals and the Glasgow capitalists did not. (Martin, 2009, p. 8)

Martin's words here clearly define which aspects of Scottish history have been incorporated into Scottish identity and which have not. The, albeit brief, overview of these events in this introduction exemplifies that those events that have been forgotten are the ones associated with the less comfortable processes of colonisation and brutality. This introduction should also make clear that the Scottish association with a Highland identity did not entail a process where the nation simply appropriated aspects of its culture that had been neutrally treated in its history; the Highlands actively faced suppression and brutality at the hands, of

course, of Englishmen, but also of Lowland Scotsmen. And yet, since we have come to understand the world in terms of nations, these events have been remembered as Scottish, not as Highland. It is not difficult to note the irony of the shops of Edinburgh's new town, built on the prosperity of Enlightenment and Empire, that sell Highland tartan, clan names on keyrings, and bagpipes to tourists in their thousands. Not only does Scottish-Highland national identity provide an inaccurate view of the Highland/Lowland relations in British history, it allows Highland suppression to stand for all of Scotland. This creates a mythology of colonised and suppressed Scotland which displaces the part that Scotsmen played in Empire and the Clearances. Additionally, this broadly highlights the forgetting and appropriation of history in the construction of a nation. McCrone *et al.* recognise that it would seem to a critical eye that 'if heritage has to do with "glamour", with deceit and fabrication, then history is much to be preferred' (1995, p. 7). Yet, as McCrone *et al.* acknowledge, these myths of national identity are worthy of urgent analysis precisely because, in spite of the overwhelming historical evidence that exemplifies their construction, these versions of national identity still hold weight and influence in the contemporary world.

Chapter Outline

Chapter one outlines the developments of Scottish national identity across the first and second Scottish Renaissances that comprise the beginning and end of the twentieth century respectively. This chapter explores the hypermasculine Scottish identity that was fully invested in a Highland identity, which introduces Scotland's problematic relationship to gender and sexuality across these periods. Chapter one

then introduces the anxieties looking forward to 1999 that devolution would result in a strengthened Scottish national identity and, by association, an amplified national hypermasculinity. Chapter two argues that, contrary to anxieties that devolution would strengthen masculinised Scottish identity, it actually constituted a rupture to Scottish national identity, as it became less able to construct itself in relation to England. Add to this the failure of devolution to deliver on the (always already impossible) promise that it would resurrect some original and essential Scottishness, and the devolutionary years mark a radical overturning of Scottish national identity. This chapter uses closes analysis of Laura Hird's *Born Free* (1999) in order to outline the queer possibilities of this rupture. Chapter three holds that if post-devolution notions of Scottishness have been radically disrupted, then it is necessary to allow the category of Scottishness to become malleable. This chapter therefore engages Ali Smith's *The Accidental* (2005) with queer theory and ideas of globalisation in order to open renewed ways of thinking on the contemporary nation within the global. Chapter four continues chapter three's trajectory as it engages with debates surrounding cosmopolitanism in relation to Zoe Strachan's *Negative Space* (2002). Bringing these debates on the global into dialogue with chapter two's argument, this chapter questions whether disorientated post-devolution Scotland might actually encompass queer cosmopolitan potential. Chapter five furthers these investigations into links between queerness and Scottishness. It analyses four gothic texts published between 2002 and 2012 in order to argue for a shared affinity between Scottishness and queerness in post-devolution writing. Louise Welsh's *The Cutting Room* (2002), Luke Sutherland's

Venus as a Boy (2004), Zoë Strachan's *Ever Fallen in Love* (2011), and Welsh's *The Girl on the Stairs* (2012) provide the literary material for this chapter. Chapter six explores how this newly configured and opened-up sense of Scottishness enters the 2014 independence referendum. In particular, it locates this as the most pertinent time in which to question how writers leading up to and writing into this moment address Scotland's dual position as coloniser and colony. Jackie Kay's *Red Dust Road* (2010) and Alan Bissett's *Jock: Scotland on Trial* (2014) provide the focus for this literary analysis. Finally, this chapter considers the materialisation of Scotland's queer moment during and in the aftermath of the independence referendum.

This thesis comprises chapters taking both a single and multi-text approach. Chapter one is a broad discussion of the shifts in Scottish identity across the twentieth century and it therefore presents multiple literary examples. Chapters two, three, and four comprise theoretical investigations into the idea of a queered and expanded Scottishness. As a result, they each comprise of single-text analysis that engages with queer themes as well as ideas relating to cosmopolitanism, globalisation, and postcolonialism, which guides the chapter through extensive theoretical arguments. Chapters five and six broadly consider the consequences of the previous chapters' arguments and therefore engage with multiple texts in order to fully scope out the ramifications of the thesis's proposed renewed engagement with writing from Scotland. It will be apparent in this chapter outline that this thesis rejects a chronological order for its textual analysis and similarly, while it is bookended by devolution and independence, it does not attempt to 'map' the years 1999-2014 in any linear pattern. This decision has been taken in order to avoid the

anachronistic implication that this literature in any way corresponds directly onto a simplistically developing 'Scottish consciousness'; this is precisely the sort of approach that this thesis aims to push beyond. The chapters are, instead, organised by themes and are arranged so that each exploration can build on the arguments of its forerunner.

Throughout this project the novel will be a primary site of exploration of ideas of Scottishness, nationhood, and their associated debates. Since the twentieth-century new 'Scottish literary Renaissance', sparked by poet Hugh MacDiamid, which then gave rise to the 'Scottish novel' through such writers as Lewis Grassic Gibbon, Neil Gunn and Edwin Muir, questions of Scottish nationhood have been discussed and deliberated through the novel form. Moreover, Whyte's observation that 'in the absence of an elected political authority [in Scotland], the task of representing the nation has been repeatedly devolved to its writers' (Whyte, 1998, p. 284) is a much-cited overview of the perception that literature, and the novel in particular, has been intrinsically linked to Scottish nationhood and its associated politics of devolution. This was particularly apparent in 'second Scottish Renaissance' where writers including but not limited to Alasdair Gray, James Kelman, William McIllvanney, and Irvine Welsh apparently continued the task of representing Scotland that originated in the first 'Scottish Renaissance' following the unsuccessful referendum on Scottish devolution in 1979. Commenting on the formation of the Scottish parliament in 1999 following the second referendum on devolution in 1997, Duncan McLean declared in the *Edinburgh Review* that 'there's been a parliament of novels for years. This parliament of politicians is years behind'

(cited in Hames, 2014, n.p.). This speaks to the consensus that writing, and the novel in particular, has been a space where Scottish national identity and issues of Scottish statehood have been both represented and debated. Given this particular relationship between the novel and Scottish identity and politics, post-devolution novels from Scotland are the obvious starting point for the present thesis' argument for the queer disorientation of Scottish national identity. This is not to argue that the writings analysed in this thesis are only concerned with Scottish identity. In fact, this thesis aims to recognise Whyte's desire for 'Scottish literature to be literature first and foremost, rather than the expression of a nationalist movement' (1998, p. 284). But this approach is to observe that one of the most productive methods for analysis of Scottish identity is to find ways in which writing from Scotland can disorientate ideas of Scottishness, rather than consolidate them.

Of course, investigations into a disorientated Scottish identity and the wider critical possibilities of this for Scottish literature should extend beyond the novel form. This thesis hopes that the present analysis of disruption, disorientation, and crisis in the post-devolution Scottish novel will open similar lines of enquiry for other genres of writing from Scotland. With this in mind, in its final chapter this thesis turns to consider autobiography and a play in order to recognise that while the Scottish novel provides a point of origin for this analysis, this must also lead to a situation in which the arguments of this thesis apply to all writing from - or indeed about - Scotland.

Due to its interest in queer theory as a broad category, rather than to the specifics of LGBT studies, there will appear to be, initially, some obvious omissions

in the choice of texts for analysis in this thesis. The post-devolution anthologies of

LGBT writing from Scotland, Joseph Mills's *Borderline: The Mainstream Book of*

Scottish Gay Writing (2001) and Zoe Strachan's *Out There: LGBT Writing from*

Scotland (2014), are not taken for analysis in this project. Similarly, James

Robertson's *And the Land Lay Still* (2010), labelled by David Torrance in the *Scottish*

Review of Books as 'the first mainstream Scottish novel to include an openly gay

character' (2012, n.p.), is not taken for analysis. It will become apparent in this

thesis that Torrance's is a dubious statement; the thesis will present along the way

multiple gay characters in writing from Scotland before 2010 and there is little

question as to the 'mainstream' status of these writers, who include but are not

limited to Ali Smith, Zoe Strachan, and Louise Welsh. If anything, Torrence's

statement evidences a limited use of the word 'gay' and a limited use of the word

'Scottish'. This narrow conception of what can constitute a gay or Scottish text is one

of the critical tendencies that this thesis seeks to resist; it finds it more productive to

deal in ideas of queerness and in writing from Scotland as a loose and

heterogeneous category. *And the Land Lay Still*, along with the anthologies, offers

multiple points for investigation of the position of homosexuality with Scotland. But

this is not a thesis which is solely about the representation or prevalence of LGBT

writing in Scotland; it is a thesis on how Scotland itself has become queer. That said,

the present research and argument will hopefully provoke further extensive

analysis of queerness and Scottishness and this can include studies of LGBT

representations across Scottish literature. Chapter five recognises that the

nineteenth-century gothic texts James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of*

a Justified Sinner (1824) and Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) have been read as Scottish or as queer, but never as both. In 2004 Christopher Whyte challenged the tendency of Scottish criticism to ignore queer readings of Scottish literature. His article righted some of this wrong through its attention to cross-dressing in Walter Scott's *Redgauntlet* and to the homoerotics in Muriel Spark's *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (2004, pp. 147-166). If this thesis is successful in alerting Scottish criticism to the various queer readings and interpretations available in Scottishness and in Scottish literature, there will be extensive opportunities to continue what Whyte started and recover the lost queer perspective on Scottish literature and culture far beyond the scope of the contemporary period.

Traditional Scotland and its Transformations

This chapter provides an overview of the movements in Scottish literature in the

twentieth century in order to introduce the ways in which key concepts of national

identity and gender have developed in Scottish literature and criticism throughout

the twentieth century. This will contextualise the 'post-devolutionary moment' that

the rest of this thesis explores.

The Scottish Renaissance

The Scottish Renaissance constitutes the period from the beginning of the twentieth

century to the Second World War in which writers such as Edwin Muir, Hugh

MacDiarmid, William Soutar, Tom MacDonald, Neil Gunn, Lewis Grassic Gibbon and

Fionn MacColl broadly sought to 'achieve something new and typically Scottish'. In

other words, 'the "Scottishness" of Scottish literature move[d] into the foreground'

(Schwend, 1990, p. 8). There are, of course, other Scottish writers in this period and

writers not preoccupied with Scottishness. My intention, however, is to outline here

the Scottish Renaissance as it is predominantly remembered. Gifford's overview is

in line with how most would characterise the period: 'it is clear that the agenda of

the Scottish Renaissance, whether localised in MacColla's *The Albannach* or

generalised in *A Drunk Man Looks at a Thistle*, was politically repudiatory, in the

sense that it attacked the previous century and its cultural stagnation and

Anglicization' (1996, p. 21). The Scottish Renaissance, then, constituted an 'agenda'

that resists Anglicization and, by extension, seeks to explore and establish a clear sense of Scottishness.

Gifford's analysis of the main figures and ideas of the Renaissance in 'Imagining Scotlands' helpfully describes the creation of an apparently timeless notion of Scottishness. In his analysis of Gibbon's *Sunset Song* he describes how the idea of a pre-existing essence of 'Scottishness' is evoked through yearning for a 'pre-historic Golden Age of a rural Scotland' (1996, p. 18). He then turns to the poetry of Muir and MacDiarmid as well as Soutar's 'Birthday' and 'The Auld Tree' to assert that they 'attempt to endow their poetry with this same sense of "other time" for their protagonists, so that the sense of modern Scotland in relation to a timeless or fabulous or a heraldic chronological ur-Scotland haunts the poetry' (1996, p. 19). Gifford implements the term 'river of time' as he finalises his overview:

> all this is done in order to give a sense of a river of time, so that voyagers on that Scottish river in the present can establish a clear line of continuity with their past; and more than that, so that the river is also seen as a sort of mental artery or connecting cord to 'essential' racial origins which justify and define us in the present day. (1996, p. 19)

MacDiarmid's lines from 'Gairmscoile' demonstrate this use of the 'past' to claim the 'future': 'for we ha'e faith in Scotland's hidden poo'ers, / The present's theirs, but a' the past and future's oors' ([1926] (1992b), p. 23, 108-109). Time is translated into tangible terms here as it is put forth that the 'past' was 'ours', the 'present' has been

taken from 'us', and the future can only been 'reclaimed' by using 'our' 'past'. This 'river of time' therefore constitutes an unchanging, rooted, and 'essential' Scottishness. This demonstrates that, while we might accept theories such as Anderson's notion of 'imagined communities', which evidence the social construction of nations and national identity, we must also understand that this does not provide grounds simply to dismiss national identity. One of the most significant aspects of nations is the tendency to imagine this constructed sense of coherence and belonging in naturalised or essentialist terms. As Gifford's overview of the Scottish Renaissance and MacDiarmid's 'Gairmscoile' evidences, this is clearly a central aspect of the way in which Scottishness in presented in the Scottish Renaissance.

The emphasis on the resistance to Anglicisation also clearly demonstrates that the production of Scottishness is bound up with its position within the United Kingdom. In his comments upon the 'disintegration of the language of Scottish literature', for example, Muir is clear that 'the Reformation, the Union of the Crowns, and the Union of Kingdoms had all a great deal to do with it' (1936, p. 18). Similarly, Alan Riach describes Scotland as 'the site of abandoned histories' by documenting examples such as the sixteenth-century Reformation, the 1603 naming of James IV of Scotland as James I of the United Kingdom, the 1707 Act of Union, and the nineteenth-century 'confiscation of land, dress and language, [and] the clearances of the Highland populations' (1992, p. xii). Riach describes the Act of Union, for instance, in particularly emotive terms: 'the Scottish parliament voted itself and the nation's political and economic autonomy out of existence, and dissolved Scotland

into the greater economic unity of Britain and the project of a British Empire' (1992, pp. xi-xii). Riach demonstrates the perceived trauma tied up with Scotland's cultural loss and the association of this with Anglicization. This undoubtedly becomes a central factor in the construction of an oppositional Scottish national identity; as Schwend states: '[the Renaissance writers] see the national identity of their home country threatened and their aim is to underlie Scotland's originality and individuality as a nation in her own right' (1990, p. 8).

Significantly, this perception of Scotland's cultural loss has been imagined through a gendered language; Whyte states that 'often enough this dilution is envisioned in gendered terms as an emasculation' (1995, p. xii). Riach's overview exemplified this tendency to gender Scotland's 'dilution' under Anglicization as he refers to 'the resulting debilitation of Scottish literature, stretched into etiolation – sentimental, sanitized, emasculate' (1992, p. xii). This association between cultural loss and emasculation articulates a presumption of a 'masculinity' stripped of Scotland by the English imperial project.

MacDiarmid's 'Gairmscoile' exemplifies this gendering of the Renaissance response to this perceived cultural loss. The poem begins: 'Aulder than mammoth or than mastodon / Deep i' the herts o' a' men lurk scaut-heid / Skrymmorie monsters few daur look upon' ([1926] 1992b, p. 19, 1-3). Primordialism is clearly implemented in these opening lines of the poem as the idea of ancient time - 'Aulder than mammoth or than mastodon' - is located as 'lurking' dormant in 'the herts o' a' men'. This is clearly gendered as this deep-rooted passion lies exclusively in the hearts of 'men', and is coded as bestial and monstrous; in standard English 'scaut-

heid' roughly aligns with 'disfigured' while 'Skrymmorie' means 'frightful and terrific' (Riach, 1992, p. 19). The association of this timeless monstrosity that lies dormant undoubtedly recalls nationalism, particularly given MacDiarmid's decision to write in Scots as part of the resistance of 'emasculating' Anglicization. This passion becomes further synonymised with Scotland as monstrosity is tied to the Highland landscape: 'on the rumgunshoch sides o' hills forgotten / Life hears beasts rowtin that it deemed extinct' ([1926] 1992, p. 20, 37-38). There is an equation made here between the men's nationalist passion and the hills that form the tangible fabric of the nation. This implies that the men are 'naturally' tied to the land and share its bestial passions lying 'extinct' under the influence of Anglicization. This promotes the idea that this deep-rooted masculinity holds the power to rise up against this Anglicisation. This tract is continued as MacDiarmid assumes the tone of a heroic protagonist of an epic as he describes:

> And I sall venture deep into the hills
>
> Whaur, scaddows on the skyline, can be seen
>
> - Twinin' the sun's brent broo wi' plaited horns
>
> As gin they crooned it wi' a croon o' thorns –
>
> The beasts in wha's wild cries a' Scotland's destiny thrills.
>
> ([1926] 1992, p. 19-20, 16-20)

This 'ventur[ing] deep into the hills' infers a heroic mission into the landscape and into the past to uncover Scotland's deep rooted 'destiny'. In these hills the

protagonist sees 'scaddows on the skyline' which gives a sense of something threatening approaching. This emerges in these latter lines as the 'beasts' whose 'wild cries a' Scotland's destiny thrills'. The manifestation of this in the 'beast' clearly indicates a savage masculinity that is explicitly attributed nationalist import through the 'wild cries' for 'Scotland's destiny'.

This is potentially a necessary masculinist tactic; the 'nation's origins' must take on a threatening quality that can fulfil the imagined radical resistance of Anglicization. However, this masculinity extends beyond necessary bestial representation; it is an exclusively male passion to which women are silent onlookers:

Brides sometimes catch their wild een, scansin reid,

Beekin' abune the herts they thocht to lo'e

And horror-stricken ken that I' themselves

A lke beast stan's, and lookin' love tro' and thro'

Meets the reid een wi' een like seevun hells. ([1926] 1992, p. 19, 4-8)

The presence of the brides serves to show that women are actively imagined as distinct from the nationalist cause. They also serve as markers of a presumed heterosexuality as masculinity extends beyond the bestial and takes on a phallic quality in the presence of the wives. The sexual undertones of the nationalist passions, 'scansin reid / Beekin' abune the herts they thoucht to lo'e', are obvious. Thus, an imagining of a nationalist uprising that is aligned with male sexuality is

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clearly present. One might add Whyte's criticism of MacDiarmid's *A Drunk Man Looks at a Thistle* to this analysis of MacDiarmid's representation of nation and gender. With reference to the lines 'and nae Scot wi' a wumman lies, / But I am he and ken, as 'twere / A stage I've passed as he maun pass't, / Gin he grows up, his way wi' her!' (cited in Whyte, 1995, p. x), Whyte concludes: 'if the drunk man succeeds in standing for his nation, his representation is limited to its male members, and to the heterosexual ones at that' (1995, p. x). While not all writers of the Renaissance depicted an essentialist masculine national identity as explicitly as MacDiarmid, these are ideas that are exemplary of the kind of processes implicit in the Renaissance project.

The hypermasculinity that surrounded Scottishness in the Renaissance therefore produced a national imagination from which women were excluded. This manifested itself in practical terms as writing by women of the time went out of print and subsequently became both invisible and forgotten. It was not until the 1997 publication of Gifford and McMillan's *A History of Scottish Women's Writing* that any real endeavour to recover this history of women's writing was undertaken. Further discussion of women's writing will take place in discussion of the late twentieth century that forms the latter part of the present chapter.

For now, we can recognise that Scottish women's writing of the period, does, in places, challenge the predominant ideas of the Renaissance. The overshadowed literary career of Edwin Muir's wife, Willa Muir, provides one such example of this. Towards the end of *Imagined Corners* Elise states that 'I knew – someone – who would shut himself in a room and hunt ideas like big game. But I always suspected

him of collecting only the horns and skins . . . I distrust any systematic interpretation

of everything' (1935, p. 170). Bell reads this as direct criticism of MacDiarmid when

she concludes that 'while MacDiarmid was busily collecting these "horns" and

"skins", there is an indication here that potentially a lot of the meat and bones were

also left behind' (2004, p. 28). This is an accurate view of the Renaissance; it strove

to create something complete and understandable that could define Scotland and

resist Anglicisation. The product was a limited idea of Scottishness reliant on

essentialism, which silenced women writers and left little space for alternative

modes of gendered understandings of the nation.

However, strikingly, this drive to create 'systematic interpretation of

everything' did not produce simplistic coherence within Scottish identity. As

previously discussed, Caledonian Antisyzygy was defined by Gregory G. Smith in

1919 as 'the very combination of opposites' (1919, p. 5). The term was centred

primarily on the debates surrounding language during the Renaissance. While Smith

celebrated antisyzygy, Muir lamented this duality; he wrote that 'Scotsmen feel in

one language and think in another' and continued: 'their emotions turn to the

Scottish tongue, with all its associations of local sentiment, and their minds to a

standard English which for them is almost bare of associations other than those of

the classroom' (1936, p. 21). Clearly, the Caledonian antisyzygy is bound up with

ideas of Scottish cultural anxiety that stems from Anglicization. And yet, often

Scotland's dualisms are appropriated to present an unstable and undefinable image

of the nation which arguably partakes in a process of that resists Anglicisation.

MacDiarmid, for example, speaks of 'this complicated kink, this lighting-like zig-zag

of temper' ([1936] 1993, p. 284) which soon becomes identified as 'the typical and the wildest irregularities combine to manifest the essence of our national spirit and historical function' ([1936] 1993, p. 286). Smith openly sees Scottish schizophrenia as available for national pride when he declares 'oxymoron was ever the bravest figure' (1919, p. 5). On the one hand, Scotland's perceived cultural loss manifests as a cultural 'emasculation' which feeds into the idea of Scotland's schisms between 'local sentiment' and 'standard English'. On the other, it is present in attempts to resist cultural loss as it contributes to an imagined 'wild' and 'brave' national character and offers a point of resistance to the perceived threats of emasculating Anglicization.

Caledonian antisyzygy has since been criticised as a reductive trope that produces stagnant images of Scotland. Stirling calls it 'that heavily over-used term in Scottish literary studies' (2008, p. 103), while Jones refers to 'the exaggerated significance of an antisyzygy sensibility' (2009, p. 15). However, it is this 'overuse' of antisyzygy in the national imagining that is significant. The present project is concerned not with what Scotland 'is' but how it is 'imagined' and thus the Caledonian antisyzygy must be considered. The trope demonstrates a complicated process whereby Scotland's inferiority complex is appropriated into its national character.

The Scottish Renaissance of the early twentieth century encapsulates ideas that have rooted a great deal of the subsequent study of 'Scottishness'. The period introduces the essentialist tactic implemented by nationalists, the anxieties tied up with inferiority and cultural loss that feeds into Scottish gendered preoccupations.

The Caledonian antisyzygy exemplifies the often bizarre oscillations between national anxiety and national pride that emerge from this Renaissance perception of Scotland. These themes continued into the late twentieth century, particularly during the period labelled the 'Second Scottish Renaissance'. We turn now to this second period of heightened Scottish literary activity to delineate how these ideas develop through to the 1999 devolutionary moment that this study is concerned with.

The Second Scottish Renaissance

The last two decades of the twentieth century were the site of a boom in Scottish literature. Critics such as Matt McGuire, Gavin Wallace and Jürgen Neubauer agree that this period witnessed a dramatic upsurge in notable literary activity in Scotland with more challenging and exciting explorations undertaken by writers. The commonplace overview of this success begins with the now legendary status of Alasdair Gray's *Lanark* (1981) followed by James Kelman's nomination for the Booker Prize in 1989 for *Disaffection* and subsequent controversial win for *How Late it was How Late* (1994b) in 1994 (Neubauer, 1999, p. 9). The 'publishing phenomenon' and subsequent movie success of *Trainspotting* (1993) provides further evidence of this flourishing Scottish literary scene (McGuire, 2009, p. 1). Janice Galloway and A. L. Kennedy find their place in discussion via their winning both national and international literary prizes while Iain Banks usually warrants a mention as 'one of the best known British science fiction writers both at home and abroad' (Neubauer, 1999, p. 9).

The 1979 'devolution debacle' is typically understood as something of a catalyst for the proliferation of Scottish creative output throughout the 1980s. 1979 was the year in which a referendum on devolution failed in Scotland. Although 51.6% of the vote came out in favour of devolution, this did not satisfy the last minute clause implemented by the UK government requiring that 40% of the entire electorate voted in favour. Due to the inclusion of those who did not vote or were unable to vote the result concluded only 32.9% of the electorate voted for a devolved parliament, resulting in its infamous failure in 1979. Cairns Craig suggests a direct relation between these events and the proliferation of Scottish literature over the 1980s: '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' (1989, n.p.). Not everyone is as willing to paint the same picture of nationalist sentiment seeping from politicians into Scotland's writers. Tom Toremans introduces his interview with Gray and Kelman in different terms: 'the "Scottish renaissance" in truth denoted a change in publication policy and an adjusted critical view on Scottish writers' (2003, p. 566). Toreman's contention helpfully exposes the simplicity of a narrative that directly correlates Scottish literature and politics.

However, while we should be wary of an anachronistic association between politics and literature, this should not detract from our understanding of the significance of the 1980s for Scottish identity; these years were the site of obvious separatism between Scotland and Thatcher's government that sat in Westminster. Neubauer surmises that:

during the highly unpopular government of Margaret Thatcher, when less

than a quarter of the Scottish electorate was actually represented in

Westminster, so the argument goes, politics became cultural: writers were

the avant-garde for the shift from Unionism towards an independent

Scotland, which culminated in the success of the new referendum after the

election of Tony Blair in 1997. (1999, pp. 9-10)

It is true that in the Thatcher years the dismantling of industry, mass

unemployment, and introduction of the poll tax one year early in Scotland had a

detrimental effect on life for many north of the border. This subjugation to a

southern Conservative government, for which most of Scotland had not voted,

inevitably produced separatism. However, Neubauer's statement that 'so the

argument goes' is sensibly wary of criticism such as Craig's, which directly conflates

the new Scottish Renaissance with these political movements. Similarly, like

Toreman and Neubauer, McGuire is clear that the 'new Renaissance' had more to do

with publishing houses than any political effect. He details Peter Kravitz's becoming

commissioning editor for Polygon in the 1970s, suggesting that he was

'instrumental in championing the work of previously unpublished Scottish writers'

(2009, p. 5). He also details how the launch of Canongate in 1987 had a lot to do

with the swell of writing from Scotland at this time (2009, p. 9). This is not to argue

that the political situation in no way mapped onto the literature of the time but that

it was perhaps more complex than descriptions such as Craig's would allow for.

I would suggest that the idea of the writers of the 'new Renaissance' finding

motivation from the events of 1979 sits uncomfortably because the literature of this

period is marked by a concern to push beyond national boundaries. This is a literary

period celebrated for its postmodernism and for its overall challenge to traditional

themes within Scottish literature. However, at the same time this rise in notable

Scottish literature can easily prompt a certain national pride, which can

subsequently prompt nationalist ideas of a proliferation in 'Scottish Literature' that,

like the first Scottish Renaissance, rises in resistance to an Englishness from which

Scotland is fundamentally separate. This paradox renders the 'Scottish Question' a

problematic area in the period. Alongside the 'Scottish Question' is also the

inevitable 'Gender Question'; in this new era of literature breaking from convention,

new spaces opened for gendered analysis and for women's writing to receive its due

recognition. However, this is simultaneously a period still grappling with such

concepts. The following section seeks to delineate these tensions.

The Scottish Question

Neubauer is clear, when speaking of Banks, McLean and Welsh, that 'these authors

not only present a much more complex picture of identity at the end of the

twentieth century than nationalist critics allow, they often criticise or burlesque the

national project' (1999, p. 11). This is an accurate assessment of the period. Ali

Smith could speak for many late-twentieth-century Scottish writers when,

concluding their interview, Caroline Gonda states that the author's concern is for

her writing 'to take in as many interpretations or people . . . as possible' (1995, p.

13). However, this expansive view of literature from Scotland simultaneously exists

in tension with questions of nationhood that often find their way into critical

thinking on the new Scottish Renaissance.

Gifford writes of the 1980s: 'a new breed had arrived which felt utterly

confident in writing from Scotland, perhaps about Scotland, but by no means limited

at all to Scotland' (1990, p. 2). This seems a fair assessment of the period. However,

'confidence in writing from Scotland' implicitly holds potential nationalist

sentiment. Gifford, who would later criticise the essentialist 'river of time' evoked by

Renaissance writers of the 1920s and 1930s, is not so quick to disregard this type of

thinking when writing in the midst of the 'new Scottish Renaissance'. The structure

of the article helps realise this. In setting up his questioning of 'The Real Scottish

Literary Renaissance?' Gifford begins by saying of the writers of the 1920s and

1930s that 'their achievement was undoubtedly great, and was a rebirth of a new

Scottish consciousness, to be judged on its own terms and not as a cousin of a

greater literature' (1990, p. 1). There is a celebratory tone and a smack of Scotland's

inferiority complex in this. He then moves on to discuss the 1970s with similar

concern for the nation: 'ghosts of idealism, of archetypal representation, remained,

but very much in a fallen or wasteland Scotland . . . a general despair to what

Scotland had become, was dominating the mood' (1990, pp. 1-2). It is following this

anxiety that Gifford speaks of the 'confidence' in writing from Scotland that is by no

means limited to Scotland of the 1980s (1990, p. 2). In the context of the rest of the

article this 'confidence' is perhaps the point to be celebrated. In a move that links

this new set of writers to those of the first Renaissance Gifford writes: 'initially so

prickly about being cast as part of a small national tradition, it would appear that some of our most exciting writers are perceiving that Scots can be deployed for political reasons, and that these reasons may imply a fuller commitment to Scotland' (1990, p. 3). This perspective does not see the exciting new Scottish revival as 'about' Scotland in content, but in its success this body of literature is entirely 'about' Scotland; it offers pride in a despairing literary culture and a new and exciting canon 'from Scotland' for the world to consider.

Bell's discussion of Tom Nairn's *After Britain* is also helpful for realising this tension. Her criticism of Nairn clearly illustrates what Gifford would later identify as the 'mental artery' of essentialism (1996, p. 19). She says: 'each Scot, according to Nairn, has subsequently felt this "river of loss" within themselves, they have felt "the corrosive and disabling stream that has coursed through Scottish society – and in a sense through the veins of every individual – since that time"' (2004, p. 67). The Scottish inferiority complex is clearly still at play in these debates. Bell's criticism of Nairn demonstrates that this can still be imagined as an anxiety that can, in Gifford's words, 'justify and define us in the present day' (1996, p. 19). Clearly in this new Scotland essentialist ideas of nationhood are still very much live. Thus, in its success the literature of the new Renaissance has the potential to produce a certain type of 'Scottish pride' even though it pushes beyond this in its content. It is important to note that more generally in *After Britain* Nairn criticises essentialist ideas of nationhood yet, as Bell acknowledges, he simultaneously implements them in his own argument. The case is similar to the tensions found in Gifford's writing. I would suggest that this period must not be considered an arena that consists of 'nationalist

critics', as Neubauer puts it, and presumably more 'progressive' critics. Rather, a paradox is produced in which critics are looking to this new set of criteria but are still finding it all too easy to hark back to traditional modes of thinking about Scottish literature and culture.

Clearly in the Second Scottish Renaissance, to borrow Wallace's words, 'many of the old dreams . . . of literary criticism in Scotland no longer guarantee a good night's sleep' (1993, p. 5). To delineate the workings of this further it is necessary to consider some of the writers of the period in relation to the Scottish Question. This overview does not claim to be a definitive textual analysis of the writers of the time. Instead I hope to demonstrate some of the ideas and approaches implemented by writers with a few prompts from key texts, particularly in relation to Scotland.

Alasdair Gray's writings are typical of ways in which the writers of the period disallow critics a 'good night's sleep'. The opening page of the 2002 edition of *Poor Things* is exemplary of the kind of process into which Gray leads his reader. The page is full of extracts from fake reviews of the first edition of *Poor Things*, all clearly inadequate. These include 'but he has loaded his novel with false historical references and larded it with his own gruesome drawings' (falsely cited as *The Sunday Telegraph*) and 'a whole gallery of believably grotesque foreigners – Scottish, Russian, American and French – assist in [Bell's] downfall' (fictionally cited as 'Private Nose'). The quote found at the very bottom of the page makes an important point in this fictional display: 'the feeble state of English literary criticism has been demonstrated yet again. I refer to the recent kow-towing of London book reviews before the most recent product of that intellectual hooligan, Alasdair Gray' (2002,

n.p.). This is a nudge to the reader to do better than this; to avoid entering into a narrow critical perspective along national lines.

In its narrative of two halves, told in two pairs of books, which oscillate between realism and the fantastic, in its protagonist existing both as Thaw and as Lanark, in his setting being both Glasgow and Unthank, *Lanark* is a flashing beacon for the critic familiar with the age old concept of Caledonian Antisyzygy. The proliferation of doubles is present in *Lanark* but this concept is of note precisely because it is not widely highlighted by critics, at least not in the way texts such as James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* and Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* have, at times, been reduced to little more than examples of the Caledonian Antisyzygy in the national literary history. It seems there is a responsibility placed on the reader by Gray; from the outset he invites his reader to play with, and question, the traditional modes of Scottish literary analysis. Moreover, in his footnote explaining why the books appear together but separate, Gray simply states 'a heavy book will make a bigger splash than two light ones' (1981, p. 493). Isobel Murray and Bob Tait describe their reaction to this: '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, p. 221). Gray throws his reader into his 'Gray area' in which we are prompted to recognise these Scottish tropes as potentially narrow modes of literary analysis. Janice Galloway describes this in her first experience of *Lanark*: 'its high expectations of me as a reader, that I was somehow partner in the enterprise, capable of creative insights and interaction with an author who was prepared to

share his power, had a profound effect' (1995, p. 193). The traditional Scottish trope is subverted but, importantly, it is subverted through something of an intellectual partnership between author and reader.

One passage has been cited above any other in explorations of Scottishness in late twentieth-century literature (See Neubauer, 1999, p. 23, Jones, 2009, p. 17, McGuire, 2009, p. 3). Renton's now infamous monologue in Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting* reads:

> ah hate cunts like that. Cunts like Bebgie. Cunts that are intae baseball-batting every fucker that's different; pakis, poofs, n what huv ye. Fuckin failures in a country ay failures. It's nae good blamin it oan the English fir colonising us. Ah don't hate the English. They're just wankers. We are colonised by wankers. We can't even pick a decent, vibrant, healthy culture to be colonised by. No we're ruled by effete arseholes. What does that make us? The lowest of the fuckin low, the scum of the earth. The most wretched, servile, miserable, pathetic trash that was ever shat intae creation. Ah don't hate the English. They just git oan wi the shite thuv goat. Ah hate the Scots. (1993, p. 78)

Jones writes of this tirade that 'masculinised Scottishness stands in dread of feminised weaknesses' in response to the line 'We are colonised by wankers . . . we're ruled by effete arseholes. What does that make us? The lowest of the fuckin low' (2004, p. 17). However, also present in the wider passage is a critique of

hypermasculinity through Renton's distain for Begbie. This can be read as a critique of an exclusive and limited culture that finds no space for other cultures or sexualities. Yet the scene is obviously not reducible to this as a further layer is added when Renton himself finds only the offensive terms 'Paki' and 'Poof' to make this articulation. The quote is neither a rallying call for an open and more inclusive Scotland nor is it reducible to an example of 'masculinised Scottishness stand[ing] in dread of feminised weaknesses'. In its complexity satire is laid upon satire here; a joke is made of the 'hard man' dialect that criticises violence against what it can only call 'pakis' and 'poofs'. Additionally, the Scottish inferiority complex is a nod towards a now familiar debate in which Welsh makes the whole scene so pathetic, has Renton rage so fiercely against Scotland, that inferiority becomes the joke that facilitates the macabre humour that underpins the text. Scotland might be Welsh's backdrop, but it is an arena for humour more than it is for nationalist politics.

McGuire quotes Renton's tirade as it is adapted in the screenplay of *Trainspotting*. It occurs here when Renton is in 'the highland heart of tourist Scotland' (McGuire, 2009, p. 3). In this setting the lines read 'I hate being Scottish. We're the lowest of the fucking low. The scum of the fucking earth. The most wretched, servile, miserable, pathetic trash that was ever shat into creation' (cited in McGuire, 2009, p. 3). McGuire concludes from this that 'our antihero can only rage against the escapist fantasy embedded in such scenic sentimentalism' (2009, p. 3). This seems a fitting response to this and also to Renton's wider disgust towards his nation in the novel: 'Scotland the brave, ma arse; Scotland the shitein cunt' (1993, p. 228).

James Kelman offers appropriate conclusive terms for the Scottish Question, as he illustrates the intensions and motivations of himself and his peers in the 1980s and 1990s with regard to the nation. Kelman famously said in his acceptance speech for his 1994 Booker Prize: 'my culture and my language have the right to exist' (1994a, n.p.). This statement could prompt the kind of analysis that links Kelman back to MacDiarmid in the long nationalist continuum of Scottish literature. A reminder of this kind of approach is available in Gifford's 1990 piece: 'it would appear that some of our most exciting writers are perceiving that Scots can be deployed for political reasons, and that these reasons may imply a fuller commitment to Scotland' (p. 3). However, elsewhere Kelman is clear that:

> of course Scotland is oppressed. But we have to be clear about what we don't mean when we talk in these terms; we don't mean some kind of 'pure, native-born Scottish person' or some mythical 'national culture'. Neither of these entities has ever existed in the past and cannot conceivably exist in the future. (1992, p. 72)

This shuns Renaissance ideas of essential nationhood and discredits any critical attempts to understand Kelman's writing in those terms. In this period a resistance to an elitist 'English Literature' tradition may be more tied up with ideas of standardised English and its limited class association than it is about a 'Scottish' context resisting an 'English' context.

Towards the end of his acceptance speech Kelman speaks clearly of 'freedom' and this is not in national terms: 'one of the remaining freedoms we have as writers is the blank page. Let no one prescribe how we should fill it whether by good or bad intention, not the media, not the publisher, not the book trade; not anyone. In spite of everything it is the creation of art that keeps us going' (1994a, n.p.). With this in mind, McGuire's conclusion about the writers of the time is fitting: 'they shared an almost militant belief in the right to create art out of their own experience and with whatever voice they chose . . . in term of aesthetics, the enduring influence of these individuals lies in their stubborn refusal to bow to establishment expectations about what "good" literature ought to be' (2009, p. 4). The freedom of expression to do precisely whatever they want to do with the 'blank page' is the hallmark of these writers. Scottishness may be included in that, but they will resist any systematic interpretation of their work, including that which is carried out under the Scottish Question.

The Gender Question

Gender has already been pre-empted here to an extent with reference to Renton's speech in *Trainspotting*. The issues in this were complex; on the one hand there seems to be an acknowledgement of the need to question Scotland's machismo. On the other, Jones reads the same passage as showing 'masculinised Scottishness stand[ing] in dread of feminised weakness' (2009, p. 17). This complexity is representative of the whole period in relation to gender and sexuality.

Gray's 'A Modest Proposal for By-Passing A Predicament' details a conference which took place in Glasgow in 1982 with the theme being 'the predicament of the Scottish writer'. Gray describes the conference in uninspiring terms, with the exception of the final question asked by one 'trouble maker' regarding why there were no women on the panel. Gray's account of his response to this demonstrates much about the period: 'I stammeringly suggested that the proportion of male to female Scottish writers, statistically calculated, might, er, not, er, perhaps justify, er, the presence of more than half a woman' (1982, p. 7). To hear a writer who opens up traditional concepts of Scottishness in so many ways revert to such a reductive stance on women's writing emphasises that gender was still problematic territory at this time.

With hindsight Gray acknowledges in his article that writers such as 'Joan Lingard, Muriel Spark, Ann Smith, Agnes Owens, Marcella Evarist, Liz Lochhead . . . would constitute a brace of quintets twice as dazzling as our enplatformed one' (1982, p. 7). The paper is certainly confessional with regard to his comments and this advocation of women's writing offers atonement for them. However, it is important to recognise that, even though Gray was clearly aware of the notable presence of women's writing, he still suggested something of its invisibility at this conference in 1982. It seems the Gender Question holds the same tension as the Scottish Question; the period is often perceived to be moving forward but this remains in tension with older restrictive modes of thought.

The 'hard man' is the most prevalent gendered image in the second Scottish Renaissance. The argument goes that, after the rapid dismantling of industrial

society in the Thatcher years which was felt so strongly in Glasgow and which promoted wider Scottish separatism, 'the battlegrounds were left to that stubborn survivor, the "hard man" – brutalised in the struggle against social injustice and industrial decline; sustained by loyalties to community, class and proletarian culture' (Wallace, 1993, p. 3). The works of Kelman and Welsh, in particular, alongside those of William McIlvanney, have been read with frequent reference to this.

McIlvanney's *Docherty* is criticised by Whyte for its hypermasculine heterosexism endorsed through its 'hard man' protagonist. Whyte quotes the following passage to substantiate his criticism of the novel: 'he listened to Jenny's breathing, steady, peaceful – the pulse of his family . . . He felt an enormous upsurge of identity, and grew aggressive on it. He almost wished he could fight somebody now on their behalf' (cited in Whyte, 1995, p. xi). Whyte writes of this quote that: 'the thought of Docherty's sleeping, unconscious wife causes a sexual arousal (what else is the "upsurge of identity" as he is "made . . . bigger"?) which issues in undirected, unthinking aggression. Yet the man is a totem McIlvanney treats with an almost religious reverence' (1995, p. xi). This parallels my own analysis regarding the silent wives witnessing the nationalist passions 'scansin reid / Beekin' abune the herts they thoucht to lo'e' in MacDiarmid's 'Gairmscoile'. It is therefore pertinent to question whether the 'hard man' is simply a new manifestation of Scottish hypermasculinity stemming from a sense of the nation's inferiority or whether there might also be room to interrogate this image in the late twentieth century.

Accusations of hypermasculine heterosexism have been levelled at the writings of Welsh. In particular, he has often been criticised for his lack of depth in his characterisation of women in *Trainspotting*. I would suggest that this perhaps simplifies the text somewhat; while women may not be Welsh's central realm of analysis, masculinity certainly is. In this the 'hard man' is more the object of exploration and satire than it is upheld as a sacred figure for the Scottish context. This is clearly evident in the character of Begbie whose machismo verges on the ridiculous. The scene in which Begbie throws a pint over the banister in a pub and then relishes the opportunity for violence in the commotion that ensues is exemplary of this characterisation: 'Begbie's oan his feet, n racing doon the stair. He's right in the middle ay the flair. – BOY'S BEEN FUCKIN GLESSED! NAE CUNT LEAVES HERE UNTIL AH FIND OOT WHAE FLUNG THAT FUCKIN GLESS!' (1993, p. 80). In this, Begbie's overt masculinity is a comic spectacle. From this we can draw the important distinction between this type of representation and that which is found in *Docherty*; Begbie is a caricature of the hard man. The character provides satire of this type of typical Scottish masculinity. I would suggest that in all his ironies the character opens up alternative avenues of sexuality and sexual difference. Due press coverage ensued after Robert Carlyle, who played Begbie in the film *Trainspotting*, revealed that he played Begbie as a closet homosexual whose hypermasculine outbursts stemmed from his 'fear of being outed' with agreement from both Irvine Welsh and Danny Boyle, the film's director (Ronson, 2009, n.p.). It is important that this finds its way into thinking as a result of Begbie's farcical masculine behaviour.

Strachan disagrees with respect to Welsh's treatment of masculinity in 'Queerspotting: Homosexuality in Contemporary Scottish Fiction'. She opens her article with an addition to Renton's famous words from the screenplay of *Trainspotting*: 'Choose life. Choose a job. Choose a career. Choose a family. Choose a fucking big television. Choose washing machines, cars, compact disc players and electric tin openers. Choose DIY and wondering who the fuck you are on a Sunday morning. But whatever you do, don't choose homosexuality' (1999, n.p.). Strachan finds it notable that his scathing satire of convention does not extend to the realm of sexual orientation. This falls in line with general agreements about 'hard man' literature. However, the sexual exploration of Begbie that takes place in the screenplay does suggest that Welsh's treatment of masculinity is not reducible to the production of two-dimensional hard man figures.

Carole Jones' *Disappearing Men* permits further exploration of the complexities in representations of masculinities of the period 1979-1999. Her reading of Kelman can shed light on what has been raised here with regard to Welsh. She states: 'in the media, the stereotypical "hard man" characteristics of Kelman's men, such as their swearword laden discourse and Glasgow accents, tend to be dwelled upon' (2009, p. 24). Jones continues: 'Kelman's central figures are, however, immeasurably more complex than such cameo portraits allow. Full of uncertainty, vulnerability, and sometimes even at risk from inglorious humiliation or death, they are, in fact, decidedly unstereotypical hard men' (2009, p. 24). This analysis could extend to Welsh's less satirically masculine characters, such as Spud, who is humiliated in front of his girlfriend and repeatedly taken advantage of by his

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friends throughout both novel and film. Furthermore, with regard to Kelman, Jones'

analysis seems accurate. Sammy (*How Late it was How Late*) in his blind,

disorientated uncertainty, and Rab (*The Busconductor Hines*) in his circular state of

failure and inadequacy both fit the character profile of 'unstereotypical hard men'.

This is evident, for example, in Hines' statement: 'being dead: I wouldn't mind it so

much if you could wake up now and again just to savour it' (1984, p. 14). Moreover,

Kelman does not retreat from exploring the gendered implications of his

emasculated 'hard men'; Rab, considering his wife usurping him as the family

breadwinner, looks to his infant son and says 'these feminist career women! no time

to kiss their weans properly! Dont worry wee man, just call me mummy from now

on' (1984, p. 72). Patriarchy and all its instilled masculinity is subverted and Hines

does not rage against this in the way one might expect of McIlvanney's Docherty.

Jones says of these unstereotypical hardmen that they 'cannot relate to or live up to

the traditional stereotypes of manhood, but cannot get beyond them either' (2009,

p. 27). From this a circular hopelessness consumes Kelman's novels, but in this

static atmosphere where little - most of all masculinity - makes sense for his

protagonists, a more expansive gendered potential emerges.

In rethinking Scotland, then, there is certainly room to argue that

conventional models of its associated masculinity are available for more challenging

explorations of gender in the period. Perhaps the most notable example of this takes

place in Iain Banks' *The Wasp Factory* (1984). Frank's apparent castration as an

infant by a bulldog presents a narrative in which his perceived emasculation causes

him to commit murder three times. Frank's increasingly bizarre methods of

murdering his victims present a calculated, pathological, disconcertingly rational violence that is not at all comparable to the rugged masculinity present when Docherty 'almost wished he could fight somebody now on their behalf'. Nor does this subversion make Frank an example of a Kelman-esque unstereotypical hard man. Banks' exploration of masculinity might be difficult to categorise amongst his peers in the second Scottish Renaissance but his exploration is arguably one of the most ambitious and provocative.

With reference to his chubbiness and his 'little accident', Frank says 'looking at me, you'd never guess I'd killed three people' (1984, p. 20); there is clearly engagement with stereotypical ideas of masculinity and its relation to violence here. This hyperawareness of 'how men should be' is also present through Frank's continuous play at being a solider. This 'play' enacts a childlike obsession with a classic example of rugged masculinity which serves only to expose it as a fiction again and again. Thus, masculinity is present in the text as something of a phantom which stems directly from Frank's perceived castration. When Frank's 'female biology' is revealed, the narrative opens to a wonderful reflection on the events of the text, which amplifies the idea of violent masculinity as compensating Frank's 'loss':

> Lacking, as one might say, one will, I forged another; to lick my own wound, I
> cut them off, reciprocating in my angry innocence the emasculation I could
> not then fully appreciate, but somehow – through the attitudes of others
> perhaps – sensed as an unfair, irrecoverable loss. Having no purpose in life or

procreation, I invested all my worth in that grim opposite, and so found a

negative and negation of the fecundity only others could lay claim to. I

believed that I decided if I could never become a man, I – the unmanned –

would out-man those around me, and so I became the killer, a small image of

the ruthless soldier-hero almost all I've ever seen or read seems to pay strict

homage to. I would find or make my own weapons, and my victims would be

those most recently produced by the one act I was incapable of; my equals in

that, while they possessed the potential for generation, they were at that

point no more able to perform the required act than I was. Talk about penis

envy. (1984, p. 243)

This satire of masculinity can stand alone regardless of national context. However, it

can be appropriated to parallel Scotland's situation very directly. Nairn's description

of Scotland in *The Breakup of Britain* shows how available this reading is: 'it is true

that the political castration was the main ingredient in this rather pathological

complex (such was the point of the Union), and that intellectuals have been unable

to contemplate it for a long time without inexpressible pain' ([1977] 2003, p. 119).

With castration and the pathological in mind Banks' novel can certainly be read as

the ultimate satire of Scotland's own perceived emasculation. However, it is

important to maintain that this is only one reading that can be drawn from this

exploration of gender. That is, the text is not an exploration of masculinity facilitated

by Scotland. Rather, Nairn's words show Scotland's cultural loss as just one potential

reading fuelled by Bank's exploration of gender. In this way Banks truly moves

'beyond Scotland' as nationhood becomes only one possible facet of his exploration, and satire of, broader ideas of gender. The ideas of moving beyond Scotland and beyond gender are thus renegotiated in *The Wasp Factory*. However, thus far it seems that questions of Scottishness can only lead to explorations of masculinity and only explorations of masculinity can lead to questioning of Scotland. In this respect masculinity remains upheld as a central realm of analysis. Women's writing and femininity also require exploration so as to assess how far this circular interplay between nation and gender can be broken.

In the poststructuralist, postcolonial context of twenty-first-century Scottish criticism, doublings and nations have a different resonance and national identity does not necessarily invoke homogeneity. This is evident in Germanà's argument contextualised by the Caledonian antisyzygy. She states in her opening discussion:

the double is a manifestation of the hybrid space of the postcolonial nation: in this sense, duality speaks of binary patterns of differentiation and, simultaneously, blurs the discernment between the terms of the proposed opposition; with its destabilising power, the double points in fact to the heterogeneous essence of (national) identity. (2010, pp. 98-99)

In this framework, Scotland's duality infers something particularly 'post'. Jones finds this angle significant: 'the fractured and uncertain nature of Scottishness is of fundamental significance; in their dualisms Scottish people have apparently been living excessive "post" lives – post-modern, post-national' (2009, p. 16). These

approaches show the potential in Scotland's trope to open thinking on Scottishness and on nationhood more generally. Part of Germanà's discussion is set up within the framework of Irigaray's ideas on the 'feminine', which clearly hold resonance when placed alongside Caledonian antisyzygy: '[woman's] sexuality, always at least double, goes even further: it is plural . . . she cannot be identified either as one person, or as two. She resists all adequate definition' (cited in Germanà, 2010, p. 102). Thus, the theme which runs so strongly through Scotland is available to be opened up in poststructuralist terms for a particular type of feminine resistance to rigid masculinity. This shows the way in which moving beyond traditional concepts of Scottishness can allow for extremely positive gendered readings to emerge from, and simultaneously disorientate, Scotland's traditional motifs.

Germanà's analysis clearly opens up ideas of Scottishness with regard to femininity. The study is also exemplary of increased critical attention being given to Scottish women's writing. Publications such as Moira Burgess's *The Other Voice: Scottish Women's Writing Since 1808: an anthology* (1987) and Gifford and MacMillan's seminal *A History of Scottish Women's Writing* (1997) were significant texts in the recovery of the tradition of Scottish women's writing. Their publication during the second Scottish Renaissance shows increased attention to the position of women in Scotland during the period. Anderson and Christianson's *Scottish Women's Fiction, 1920s to 1960s* (2000) also demonstrates a concern to renew attention to the overshadowed women writers of the first Scottish Renaissance and, indeed, through to the post-war years. Since then, Aileen Christianson and Alison Lumsden's *Contemporary Scottish Women Writers* (2000), Kirsten Stirling's *Bella*

Caledonia (2008), Carole Jones's *Disappearing Men* (2009), and Germanà's *Scottish Women's Gothic and Fantastic Writing* (2010) are the most notable examples of critical work focusing on women's writing of the second Scottish Renaissance. Liz Lochhead, Ellen Galford, Janice Galloway, Ali Smith, Jackie Kay, and A. L. Kennedy, to name only a few, formed a key part of the Scottish literary scene during the second Scottish Renaissance. As the post-devolution critical attention has explored, these writers consistently open up the parameters of nation and gender.

Galloway's *The Trick is to Keep Breathing* (1989) explores alienation on many levels; Joy recalls her experience of nature: 'The first thing I did was phone my mother from the top of a mountain shouting I'M CALLING YOU FROM THE TOP OF A MOUNTAIN as if it was significant' (p. 88). This could be available for a host of readings. One perspective might consider this a nudge towards the kind of rugged Highland Scotland that is present in MacDiarmid's work, or more popularly in the 'Braveheart' phenomenon, that offers little space for women in its masculine love affair with the wild landscape. A wider perspective might consider this a comment on the masculine discourse of the 'sublime' which regards the 'the passion caused by the great and sublime in nature' (Burke, [1757] 2008, p. 57) as the ultimate liberation but, significantly, considers this an exclusively masculine exercise. These readings are not definitive. The various possibilities show the text is open to multiple interpretations, but, more often than not, these force the question of where women are to exist comfortably within the patriarchies that consume them.

Eve Lazovits argues that Joy's tortured mind, and the 'anorexia, bulimia, alcoholism and acts of self-mutilation' that ensue from it, are the result of her guilt

in failing to successfully fulfil domestic roles (2004, p. 126). This simplifies Joy's position in her bounded environment; it assumes preoccupation with existence within this realm and a concern to fulfil a typical feminine role. On the contrary, Joy's behaviour provides a sense of one striving to feel something beyond that offered by the mundane immediacy of her contained environment. One of Joy's preoccupations is with looking out of windows; Galloway never goes as far as to infer that any liberation may be possible in this activity, but is anxious to demonstrate Joy's obsession with looking beyond her boundaries. On several occasions in the asylum Joy's doctors tell her: 'On you go. Nothing to see out there. You think too much always looking out of the window. Bad for you' ([1989] 1999, p. 125). Joy is not simply entrapped, she is also denied acknowledgment that there may be any solace or sense of freedom available; to look beyond is 'bad for her'. These ideas of being unheard and bounded are poignant within the national context but also provide offerings far beyond this. Galloway's exploration of boundedness thus allows for important exploration of the place of women in Scotland but also speaks to and for women far beyond the national context and invites readings in terms that span across and beyond these gendered concerns.

Ellen Galford, not often acknowledged as a key figure of the second Renaissance by way of her being born in New Jersey, is significant for gendered Scotland. Her novels explore lesbianism in Scottish contexts, in which they playfully yet unapologetically subvert wider myths of patriarchal heterosexism. In *The Fires of Bride* (1986), for example, Galford explores a spiritual past of Goddess worship that has been erased by the prominence of the Presbyterian Church, and offers an

obvious feminist subversion and material for a humorous satire of rigid patriarchy. On a more localised level the everyday ostracising of lesbian relationships on Cailleach – Galford's fictional Hebridean Island - provides a snapshot of the prejudices of a closed off and insular community. This element of the text simultaneously engages with wider struggles faced by lesbians doubly marginalised through their position as women and through their sexuality.

The appropriation of tradition is also Galford's theme in *Queendom Come* (1990), which tells the story of Albanna, the ancient lesbian monarch who returns to her 'Queendom' to help 'her people' in their 'time of need'. *Queendom Come*'s overarching theme of an ancient all ruling matriarch continues the idea evoked in *Fires of Bride*. Galford's feminist satire is obvious and the texts read as conscious, rallying interjections into a particularly Scottish patriarchal heterosexism. Albanna's outbursts provide compelling rage against this system. For example, on being told what marriage is, she declares: 'that's disgusting! . . . You mean women and men actually living together . . . in the same settlement, the same houses, the same BEDS??? Cohabiting with each other throughout the lunar cycle? That's abnormal! Perverted!' (1990, p. 91). Galford's satire is unmistakeable as normative conventions are turned on their head as the lesbian pronounces the cries of perversion and abnormality; hegemonic patriarchal heterosexism is mocked while the lesbian, made invisible by these systems, is empowered.

Another example of such direct satire occurs in a direct reference to Section 28. In 1988 'Section 28' was enacted and was not repealed in Scotland until 2000. It involved the addition to the Local Government Act which stated 'A local authority

shall not (a) intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality; (b) promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship' (Legislation, 1988, n.p.). Writing in 1990 it is clear that Galford intends no confusion regarding the target of her satire. When her fictional lesbian couple, Gwhyldis and Dill, have their children taken from them, they receive a letter stating: 'Under Clause 86, Subsection 33, of the Sexual Normality Act. I am obliged to tell you that you are hereby charged with corrupting minors by the maintenance of a Pretended Family Relationship' (p. 112). Galford's engagement with contemporary politics is unmistakeable as she speaks for the marginalised and subverts the systems that suppress them. The overall effect is a humorous rampage against late twentieth-century Thatcherite politics on sexuality and its impact in Scotland and the rest of the UK. This explicit championing of lesbianism and feminism as well as the text's setting within Scotland that also reaches out to wider UK politics is a welcome presence in a period that is often grappling with new conceptions of sexuality and nationhood.

In discussion with Caroline Gonda, Ali Smith discusses 'how immediately you're put down, how [lesbianism] is socially contextualised all the time . . . You're always up against the limits that other people make for you' (1995, p. 15). The work of Galford clearly responds to the kind of subjugation that Smith references. Gonda's paper also provides insightful discussion of the difficulties of categories such as 'women's writing' or 'lesbian writing', but simultaneously, her interview with writers uncovers some very important articulations of how such terms can be

useful. She notes how some will 'label themselves when forced to band into a tribe for protection' (1995, p. 21). She also makes reference to 'Maud Sulter's comment about "the need to name oneself, for oneself, rather than accept easy categorisation by other people" and add to all those easy categories the one labelled "invisible"' (1995, p. 21). This invisibility is clearly pertinent in the traditional Scottish context by way of works by Scottish women writers going out of print. This invisibility also speaks for a wider realm of difficulties regarding gendered and sexual exclusion from a particular Scottish context.

The difficulties that surround writing on themes of gender and sexuality in a traditional Scottish context are by no means resolved towards the end of the second Scottish Renaissance. Smith notes the importance of this kind of visibility in the Scottish context when she says 'coming from a small Highland town . . . writing about sexual difference would still be very difficult'. She captures the tensions regarding gender discussions in the new Renaissance when, with specific reference to Scotland, she says, 'sexual discussion, and discussion of issues particularly about sexual difference, now is something which people are beginning to be able to do' (cited in Gonda, 1995, p. 15). Acknowledged here is the sense of progression on gendered issues that was part of the new Renaissance. However, these words were published in 1995, over a decade since Alasdair Gray made his blunder regarding women's writing at the 'predicament of the Scottish writer' conference. Smith's seeing discussion of sexual difference as something people are 'beginning to be able to do' in Scotland shows that the period is not a neat linear progressive narrative where homosexuals and women came from the shadows into the mainstream. There

was certainly significant movement in the period in the area of 'women's writing' and even 'lesbian writing' but Smith still clearly perceives challenges facing it. There is, even in 1995, a continuing anxiety surrounding invisibility which forces the need to assume gendered categories.

This very real concern for gender in Scotland is articulated between Smith and Galloway in Smith's 'And Woman Created Woman', also published in 1995 in *Gendering the Nation*. In the article Smith discusses how Willa Muir, Nan Shepherd and Catherine Carswell were appropriated by their relation to famous men, and details the travesty of their novels going out of print. Her final thought is a reflection on Galloway's sombre consideration of women's writing in the new Renaissance:

> there is no real reason to think the present wave of interest in women's writing will not be allowed to go 'out of print' like the forerunners; no evidence to suggest this present honeymoon with publishers won't pass abruptly when women's writing stops being flavour of the month and there's a less immediate way to make money out of it. (cited in Smith, 1995, p. 46)

Smith brings this warning to bear on the literary scene of 1995: 'The warning might be summed up like this. Sustain the alternative, because it isn't just an alternative, it's been the real issue all along. From one end of the century to the other the gender debate has been central to woman's writing, and it still is, still relevant, still raging' (1995, p. 46).

By ending on Smith's sobering thought I also want to consider another potential 'sobering thought' for the Scottish Question, and by placing these alongside each other I am suggesting a potential link between the two. The new Renaissance showed a concern to push beyond Scotland, to expand old ideas of criticism and disregard reductive and essentialist ideas of nationhood. However, Neubauer raises a point of anxiety when he suggests the balance may be tipping backwards in the nationalist direction: 'in the cultural debate of the 1990s, cultural nationalism appears to have become far more visible . . . many nationalists take a disconcertingly unproblematic view of identity and believe that Scottish identity can somehow be "recovered" in a national culture' (1999, p. 35). He cites Craig Beveridge and Ronald Turnbull's *The Eclipse of Scottish Culture* (1989) as a 'mile stone' in this endeavour (1999, p. 35). He also focuses discussion on Paul Scott's *In Bed With an Elephant* (1985) and Neubauer accuses his argument of being 'driven by disconcerting degrees of Anglophobia and xenophobia' (1999, p. 36). Scott was one of the vice presidents of the Scottish National Party. It is arguable that the SNP – a very different political entity to the Sturgeon-led socialist party of the present day - would inevitably produce material that could stray into a reductive nationalist rhetoric. And yet, prominent texts of 1999 disconcertingly seem to show Neubauer's conjecture materialising more widely in the year of devolution.

T. M Devine writes in *The Scottish Nation: 1700 – 2000* with reference to the 'Quiet Revolution' of 1960s Quebec:

something akin to this cultural awakening took place in Scotland in the 1980s

and helped to infuse the crusade for Home Rule with a new impetus and

confidence. However, it is important to recognize that in fields like literature

at least the revival was part of a vibrant and continuing tradition that

stretched back to the era of MacDirmid and the 'Scottish Renaissance'. (pp.

608-9)

The writing of the new Renaissance is lumped together here with the first so that

Gifford's 'river of time' encompasses the entire twentieth century. This allows for no

consideration of the complexities of various texts or concerns of writers. Instead,

writing from 1980s Scotland is appropriated as nothing more than part of the

nationalist story that culminated in 1999 home rule.

Cairns Craig also demonstrates that this tendency in *The Modern Scottish

Novel*, also published 1999. He states the book 'is written in the context of Scotland's

newly regained political status and has been shaped by the explosion of creativity

that has characterised Scottish culture since the 1970s' (p. 36). For Craig 1999 is the

completion of the story; 1979 is where energy seeped from the politicians into the

writers and 1999 is where the energy and creativity of the two interim decades

resulted in the final achievement of Scottish home rule. He continues:

the argument of this book is designed to establish some of the underlying

continuities – both in terms of the issues of Scottish society and in terms of

the formal development of the novel – that link Alasdair Gray, James Kelman,

Janice Galloway, A. L. Kennedy – and even Irvine Welsh – in the 1980s and

1990s to the founding moments of the modern Scottish novel in the work of

Stevenson, Brown, Barrie and Buchan a century before. (p. 36)

Craig's reading of the formal development of the novel through these writers seems

reasonable. However, the idea of 'continuity' between them, particularly in terms of

'Scottish society', establishes a clear linear narrative through which the Scottishness

of these texts links them somehow intrinsically, not just to the second Scottish

Renaissance, but also to the nineteenth century through Barrie and Stevenson.

It is important to note here that both Craig and Devine's books were

published in 1999, the year in which the Scottish parliament was formed following

the successful referendum on devolution in 1997. In light of this landmark of

Scottish politics and society it is pertinent to question whether the expansions in

Scottish literature and criticism in the second Scottish Renaissance will become

mapped onto the wider political and national story, which states that this was part

of a proliferation of writing brought about when 'the energy that had failed to be

harnessed by the politicians flowed into other channels' following the 1979

referendum on devolution (Craig, 1989, n.p.). In line with this, we must also

question whether gendered explorations will retreat in line with a rise in

unproblematic understandings of the nation, a critical approach that has previously

produced the hard man who stands for Scotland, wounded after this political failure.

It is with such questions in mind that Whyte's conjecture of 1995 strikes a

significant note: 'if we want to bring back a Scotland that once was, what place will

there be in it for blacks or lesbians or the children of Pakistani immigrants?' (1995, p. xii). With Craig's and Devine's thinking in Scotland in 1999 in mind, this anxiety articulated by Whyte becomes palpable. Furthermore, as Scottish politics, culture, and writing are being labelled 'post-referendum' since the Scottish independence referendum of 2014, issues of national identity as well as the place of literature and culture within the changing Scottish political landscape require further scrutiny. All one can really conclude here is that this story is far from over; the gender debates and the Scotland debates are, to borrow Smith's words, 'still relevant, still raging' (1995, p. 46). Scottish literature 1999-2014, bookended by the events of devolution and the independence referendum, therefore provides a particular site through which to explore ideas of nationhood alongside those of queer theory.

Chapter Two

No Horizons: The Devolutionary Moment in Laura Hird's *Born Free* (1999)

Scottish critical reflection on the devolutionary moment has been fairly cohesive in citing it as a site of significant change for Scottish literature and culture. The most comprehensive work on the subject is the *Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature*. Published in 2007, the collection is, according to editor Berthold Schoene, a 'critical stocktaking of the ways in which the cultural and political role of Scottish writing could be said to have changed after devolution' (2007b, p. 1). Zoe Strachan is among many contributors who see this change as an opportunity for Scotland: 'in a fresh millennium and new political era the endeavour is to redefine how we feel about Scotland, to decide what it means to us to be Scottish' (2007, p. 51). This 'redefinition' of Scotland is envisaged by Strachan and many of the other contributors to the *Companion* as a positive potential that has arisen since devolution. As Fiona Wilson writes, 'the talk now is of "One Scotland, Many Cultures", that is, of national identity as a series of encounters and negotiations within the political fact of the state'. Post-devolution Scotland is imagined, then, as an opportunity for an opening up of Scottishness to 'multiple ways of knowing, being, living, and loving' (2007, p. 194). This contrasts with Whyte's anxiety, cited in the last chapter, that 'if we want to bring back a Scotland that once was, what place will there be in it for blacks or lesbians or the children of Pakistani immigrants?' (1995, p. xii). The present chapter, therefore, explores why and how devolution

opens up conceptions of Scottishness and explores the significance of this for queer theory in relation to Laura Hird's *Born Free* (1999).

Carole Jones, Berthold Schoene, Zoe Strachan, and Alice Ferrebe explore the gendered potential of Scotland's post-devolution opportunity in *The Edinburgh Companion* (2007). Joanne Winning's 'Crossing the Borderline: Post-devolution Scottish Lesbian and Gay Writing' extends this gendered concern to a specifically LGBT-focused analysis. These essays indicate increased analysis of such themes as masculinity in crisis, feminism, gay and lesbian writing, and gay and lesbian representation in a post-devolution context. Fiona McCulloch's '"Cross that Bridge": journeying through Zoe Strachan's *Negative Space*' (2008), is another significant critical interjection; McCulloch presents post-devolution Scotland as an unmapped state which, in its undetermined future, gives rise to new queer and feminist possibilities.

This body of critical work will inform discussions in subsequent chapters of the present project. However, while the crossing of borderlines and crossing of bridges are contrasting metaphors, 'crossing' remains consistent in Winning and McCulloch's titles; it suggests movement from one state of being to another. As such, there is a tendency in this work to think of the 'devolutionary moment' as a pivotal point that brought about the 'post-devolution' era. I propose that to understand the possibilities located in this 'post' era attention should first be given to the devolutionary moment as an entity in itself. I refer to 'the devolutionary moment' as the years between September 1997, when the referendum returned a yes vote and confirmed power would be devolved to Scotland, through to May 1999 when the

first Scottish election was held. It is that moment between pre- and post- that so often becomes thought of as little more than an anchor point between the two states. In fact, this moment had significant ramifications for traditional constructions of Scottish national identity and affected the possibilities available in post-devolution Scotland.

This idea of renegotiation of Scottish identity invites analysis from within queer theory; Sara Ahmed's ideas on disorientation, Lauren Berlant's writings on relationality, and José Esteban Muñoz's thinking on queer futurity will form some of the theoretical conjectures across the rest of this thesis. The present chapter, however, focuses its theoretical inquiry on specific ways in which disorientation maps onto Scotland's devolutionary moment and then establishes the significance of this largely through Lee Edelman's concept of reproductive futurism and in relation to Kristeva's notion of abjection.

Devolution and the Construction of Scottish National Identity

One of the most prominent ideas that underpinned Scottish national identity and became more prominent in discourse in the devolutionary moment is the belief in an 'original' or 'true' Scottish identity prior to the Union of 1707. T. M. Devine's words are typical of the characterisation of the devolutionary moment in relation to 1707: 'when the first Scottish parliament since 1707 met in Edinburgh in July of 1999, the Scottish nation undeniably embarked on another exciting stage in its long history' (1999, p. 617). The inclusion of 1707 infers a continuance between the Scottish parliament before 1707 and the one that met in Holyrood in 1999. In any

other context, to link a political structure from the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries with one from the late twentieth century would be a problematic manoeuvre. It seems, however, that in a national context this becomes a reasonable way of understanding a relationship of linearity between the past and the present. Devine's words thus present Scotland's 'long history' as one of a true and original Scottishness surviving under various pressures; suppressed since 1707 and resurrected in 1997-99.

Chapter one also encountered this idea through examples such as the poetry of Hugh MacDiarmid and Alan Riach's description of the 1707 Act of Union as the moment that 'dissolved Scotland into the greater economic unity of Britain and the project of a British Empire' (2004, pp. xi-xii). These instances represent a national imagination dependent upon the idea that there was an original 'Scottishness' diluted by the Act of Union. The idea was even present in the first sitting of the new Scottish parliament on 12th May 1999. Opening the session, Dr. Winnie Ewing announced: 'I want to start with the words that I have always wanted either to say or to hear someone else say - the Scottish Parliament, which adjourned on March 25, 1707, is hereby reconvened' (BBC, 1999, n.p.). This kind of rhetoric presents devolution as a bright new horizon where a 'diluted' Scotland is recovered.

However, to seek out pre-1707 'Scottishness' is to find little to grasp onto for the Scotland of 1997-99. Tom Nairn's *The Break Up of Britain* discusses the Union in terms less subject to the linear national narrative. He locates Scottish success after and because of the union, not in spite of or against it. He describes Scotland as 'a prodigy among the nations . . . it had progressed from fortified castles and witch-

burning to Edinburgh New Town and Adam Smith, in only a generation or so'

([1977] (2003), p. 97). Nairn's description of the Act of Union sheds an entirely

different light on the moment so readily envisioned as the site of Scotland's cultural

loss. He writes, 'there are many stateless nationalities in history, but only one Act of

Union – a peculiarly patrician bargain between two ruling classes' ([1977] (2003), p.

118). Neil Davidson's study, *The Origins of Scottish Nationhood* (2000), takes this

one step further and persuasively argues that Scottish national identity as we know

it came about entirely because of the Union of 1707. He criticises the 'assumption

that the concept of "nation" will fundamentally have the same meaning in 2001 as it

did in 1320, 1560 or 1707' (p. 3) and proceeds to state that 'the Scottish national

consciousness we know today could not have been preserved by institutions carried

over from the pre-Union period, but arose after the Union and as a result of the

Union' (p. 3).

Ian Donnachie and Christopher Whatley present sustained analysis of how

Scottish history has been shaped by the twentieth century national imagination.

They describe thinking upon the Union until the end of the nineteenth century in

positive terms: 'as far as the Scots were concerned, it was primarily economic, and

beneficial; it transformed Scotland. It was also judged to have been an act of great

political wisdom and foresight' (1992, p. 4). They proceed to quote G. S. Pryde who

describes the union as 'grounded on common sense and reached through fair and

open bargaining . . . one of the most statesmanlike transactions recorded in our

history' (cited in Donnachie and Whatley, 1992, p. 4). This body of critical work

exists in sharp contrast to the type of criticism that imagines the Union as a site of cultural trauma for Scotland.

The sentiment expressed by those such as Devine, Riach, and Ewing therefore brings to mind Ernest Barker's words on the nation: 'it is not the things which are simply "there" that matter in human life. What really and finally matters is the thing which is apprehended as an idea, and, as an idea, is vested with emotion until it becomes a cause and a spring of action' (1927, p. 173). However, this thing 'apprehended as an idea' is exposed when a nation looks to its past in order to seek out the 'roots' it has imagined into being. To turn in 1999 and look back to Scotland pre-1707 in order to find the original identity that devolution has supposedly resurrected can yield only absence, as Davidson states, 'since no such nationalism existed' (2000, p. 4). Davidson's words here make apparent what nationalisms often ignore: Scotland in the twenty-first century is an entirely different geopolitical entity from eighteenth-century Scotland. Thus, striving to construct a coherent linear narrative of Scotland exposes nation building as reliant on near-mythical constructions of the homogeneous nation that develops along a teleological timeline. Moreover, it relies on an imagined national past that can yield little for contemporary Scotland when that past is apparently resurrected in the devolutionary moment.

Additionally, and problematically entwined with imaginings of Scottishness as it approached devolution in 1997-1999, was the very real suppression felt in the face of Thatcherism in the late twentieth century, which was discussed in chapter one. Arguably Thatcherism was more to do with class suppression than it was to do

with national suppression. As Davidson articulates, 'opposition to Thatcherism was, however, probably no greater across Scotland as a whole than it was in, say, northeast England or Inner London' (2000, p. 1). However, 'because Scotland is a nation . . . and not a region or an urban district, opposition took a form which was impossible in most other parts of Britain' (Davidson, 2000, p. 1). The fact that Thatcher rose to power in the same year as the failure of devolution in 1979 marks the 1980s out further as representing a national grievance. Add to this the introduction of the poll tax one year early in Scotland and the suppression translates into one felt at a national level. The Thatcher years thus yielded the perfect storm for envisioning 'Scottishness' that had always been there but was consistently beaten down by that southern imperialist other.

Chapter one introduced Mark Renton's tirade against Scottishness in Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting* (1993) in order to pick apart the varied treatment of gender in late-twentieth-century Scottish literature. However, it is worth returning to Renton's famous words that 'we are colonised by wankers' (p. 78). These words reflect an increasingly common feeling across the Thatcher years and in their aftermath that Scotland was somehow 'colonised' by England. Chapter one aimed to unpack Renton's speech in order to demonstrate that there were expansive lines of enquiry available in devolutionary Scottish writing. However, the fame that Renton's speech has received, particularly in the film adaptation of *Trainspotting* (1996), also evidences a commonplace attitude towards England as Scotland's 'coloniser' in the years approaching devolution.

Mel Gibson's *Braveheart* (1995) most infamously contributed to this narrative of English suppression of Scotland. Gibson's cinematic portrayal of William Wallace's thirteenth-century defeat of Edward I of England is largely inaccurate (Ewan, 1995, pp. 1219-21), and yet the popularity of the emotive depiction of Scotland's martyred warrior who defeats 'the English' was appropriated into Scottish politics: 'the SNP frequently refers to the *Braveheart* effect, by which it means an increased interest in Scotland and an accompanying increase in sympathy for Scottish nationalism and the independence agenda' (Jackson, 2004, p. 111). The SNP overtly referenced the film in their 1995 'Bravehearts and Wise Heads' campaign, in which they aimed to raise the profile of Scottish independence, and they also used images from the film in their 1997 general election campaign (Jackson, 2004, p. 111). Additionally, *Braveheart* provides one of the most obvious examples of the warrior-like hypermasculinity which is produced in these narratives of Scotland's resistance of Anglicisation (see figure two) discussed in chapter one. The hypermasculine coding of Scotland that resists Anglicization gains traction here not just through film but also as this fictional depiction of Scotland is appropriated into the SNP's politics and propaganda. Thus, while we might recognise that there was an expansive literature published in Scotland in the late-twentieth century, the simplified idea of Scotland as colonised by England also gained more common currency at this time through film, the oppressions felt in Scotland during and after Thatcher's 1980s, and the harnessing of these by the SNP.

Figure Two

Scottish national identity before devolution, then, exists in constant jarring motion against its 'other'. National identity in general is very much reliant on this affirmation of difference. As Chris Williams states, 'discourses of nationality operate by "othering", by identifying borders between "us" and "them"' (2005, p. 16). In the case of Scotland this is arguably an identity built not simply on an affirmation of difference, but an imagining of the need to assert itself in response to suppression by its southern 'other'. Significantly, Angus Calder sees devolution as stemming from this rising sense of 'otherness' from England: 'The key to Scotland's story in the last third of the twentieth century was a swelling sense of difference from England' (1994, p. 2). Significantly, however, to follow this 'story' through is to then find that devolution collapses this binary relationship. Wilson describes Scottish national identity as 'a rhetoric of presence dependent on absence, a "Scotland" determined by what it is not' (2007, p. 194). Devolution marks the removal of that which Scotland defined itself against. The question follows, then, in Wilson's words, what 'Scotland' can look like when it is no longer 'determined by what it is not'.

Abjection and Nationhood

Devolution, then, is imagined as the revival of 'true and original' Scottish identity supressed by English colonisation and yet this process only makes it apparent that no such true and original identity exists. We might theorise that national identity is haunted by a paradox: the secure and ordered sense of 'nation' that provides a sense of common origins and shared history is maintained by a belief in simplified accounts of history and identity akin to fantasy. This construction of national identity is therefore always ready to collapse under the acknowledgement that those origins are maintained by little more than belief in that fantasy.

Mary Douglas has identified this tension within wider social structures: 'perhaps all social systems are built on contradiction, in some sense at war with themselves' ([1966] (2003), p. 141). Similarly, Sara Ahmed recently referred to the structures of heteronormality and the organisation of people along national borders as inherently fragile due to their maintenance via social construction at her talk 'Queer Fragilities' given at the University of Sussex (2016). Kristeva's notion of abjection also provides a fitting language for thinking about the tensions inherent in the construction and maintenance of national identity. Kristeva writes that 'what is *abject'* is 'the jettisoned object [that is] is radically excluded and draws me towards the place where meaning collapses' (1982, pp. 1-2). These terms could apply to the maintenance of essentialist national identity. We must dispel any acknowledgement of the fantasy that underpins the construction of national identity, for to acknowledge its imagined nature risks the collapse of that naturalised image of the unchanging and cohesive nation.

Braveheart provides a particularly prominent illustration of this process. The film displays the fantasy of nationhood as Mel Gibson, an American actor/director, feeds Scotland a vision of itself, largely set in Ireland. All of this is displayed on the cinema screen, the ultimate reminder of the fictional display of this image of the nation. And yet the SNP's reference to the '*Braveheart* effect' evidences the fact that the film's fictional quality is excluded in favour of the simplified and essential version of Scottishness, tied to a suppressed Highland identity, that it supplies.

A similar, though less overt, instance of this happened at the opening of the Scottish parliament. It is reasonable to suggest that we do not need to turn to historians such as Davidson to realise that Scotland in 1707 would have been a very different socio-political entity to Scotland in 1999. Yet Winning's words that 'the Scottish Parliament, which adjourned on March 25, 1707, is hereby reconvened' (1999, n.p.) are emotive precisely because their oversimplified account of history is ignored in favour of an imagined linearity between the Scotland of 1707 and the nation of 1999.

Therefore, the fiction that underpins national identity must be, to borrow Kristeva's words, 'radically excluded' in order to maintain the construction of this identity as rooted and essential. And yet Kristeva's notion of abjection helps articulate the way that an excluded acknowledgment of its social construction haunts national identity; it is the 'jettisoned object' that looms close to this maintenance of 'national origins' and, if confronted, 'draws [it] towards the place where meaning collapses' (1982, pp. 1-2). By extension, we can hypothesise that in

moments where the nation becomes the subject of discussion, such as devolution, this process of abjection looms particularly closely.

Matt McGuire questions what Scottish national identity can look like when it is no longer 'constructed in reaction to oversimplified stories of historical subjugation' (2009, p. 167). The devolutionary moment, then, presents a site in which old formations of Scottish national identity can yield only absence; to look to pre-union times that devolution has apparently 'recovered' is to find a nothingness. Additionally, devolution collapses the binary with hegemonic England through which Scottish identity has been formed. As for the hard man, there is no longer a reason for his rage, for his reaction. Devolution is therefore a moment in which the framework for national imagining disappears at the same time as the construction of Scottish identity becomes more visible. It therefore confronted Scotland with the haunting jettisoned acknowledgement of the construction of its national identity and in doing so these processes of meaning-making collapsed.

This is not to state that Scotland would have been better to remain in its pre-devolution situation in which it had a clear framework for the construction of Scottishness. Taking its cues from Lauren Berlant, Sara Ahmed, and Lee Edelman, a central conjecture of this thesis is that coherence is not necessarily fundamental to that which is liveable or might be deemed successful. Certainly, within the received narratives of belonging and home that centre on ideas of family and nation, incoherence appears traumatic and necessary of resolution. However, this thesis aims towards a position in which these deeply ingrained ideas of coherence,

identity, and success as they are tied to family, belonging, and nation are challenged and opened to potentially alternative ways of being.

Disorientation and Scotland's Devolutionary Moment in *Born Free*

Laura Hird's *Born Free* (1999), set in Edinburgh in 1999, is narrated through four different focalised narratives of one family. Each narrative gives the reader access to the individual family members' separate experiences of the breakdown of the family unit; Angie, the mother, has an affair and enters the downwards spiral of alcoholism, Vic, the father, tries to maintain the family structure in spite of his own stagnant and emasculated existence, and Joni, fifteen, and Jake, fourteen, each negotiate their way through their own confused adolescence, experimenting with drink, drugs, and their sexualities. Finally, the novel denies the reader any comfortable resolution in its ending with Vic's dubious seduction/rape of Angie while she is crying (p. 275). This scene toys with the idea of traditional romantic resolution that restores the couple at the head of the family unit and yet it is haunted by the horror of Angie's grief – and Vic ignoring this – during the encounter. Presented is a circularity of helplessness in which nothing much is hoped for other than annihilation or escape; neither of which can ever be realised.

If devolution radically destabilises Scottish identity built from its marginal stance, this clearly has ramifications for Scotland's machismo widely agreed to stem from this reactionary position. As discussed in chapter one, and illustrated through the present chapter's example of *Braveheart*, Scottish hypermasculinity stems from the need to gender the warrior-like uprising of Scottishness in the face of a cultural

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loss perceived as emasculation. Thus if devolution strips away the need for that reaction it would follow that the hard man may struggle to survive as an emblem of Scottish identity.

It is worth clarifying here how I hope to approach Scottish masculinity in the present chapter. There was of course very productive resistance to machismo in Scotland over the twentieth century which has been discussed in chapter one. The recovery of the Scottish women's tradition and rise in Scottish women's writing has been immeasurably positive in countering traditional masculinised Scottishness. However, critically, the Scottish women's tradition exists as a response to that framework of Scottish masculinity and thus its 'recovery' acts as a reminder of that dominant tradition that rendered it invisible. Additionally, the 'hard man' has been interrogated by readings such as Jones' analysis of the 'unstereotypical hard men' in Kelman's work. My own reading of sexual ambiguity in Welsh's *Trainspotting* in chapter one has also reconsidered assumptions regarding the hard man. But these analyses nonetheless exist as counter-readings to the generally agreed idea that these texts display late twentieth-century Scottish machismo. Devolution could therefore act not simply as a point where masculinity is renegotiated, but as a potential site of emancipation from this entire critical framework; this idea will inform readings of gender across this thesis.

Vic, the father of the family in *Born Free*, could readily represent a crisis in, or even death of, typical masculinity. Vic consistently tries to fulfil a typical 'father-son' relationship by suggesting activities such as football and fishing with his fourteen-year-old son Jake. Jake's resistance to this prevents fulfilment of this fatherly role

and leaves Vic enfeebled: 'I ruffle his hair. He looks at me with pity' (p. 10). As for his teenage daughter, his attempts to engage with her only ever result in his being beaten down: 'any reaction other than total submission towards Joni seems to antagonise her' (p. 10). His typical father role is nullified and Vic similarly fails to be the 'real man' that his wife, Angie, constantly demands that he be. She shouts: 'you don't even attempt to act like a real man' (p. 147) and during an argument says: 'oh, are you going to punch me now? Go on then, go ahead. Convince me there's a man in there somewhere' (p. 252). Vic's impotence is a key feature of his seeming failure in Angie's eyes. Her statement, 'I half expect to find Vic's tiny severed penis lying beside the fridge' (p. 224), is exemplary of her general characterisation of her husband throughout the novel.

The image of castration is clearly significantly for notions of masculinity. Alfred Alder's psychoanalytical work on inferiority provides helpful terms for exploration of masculinity as it relates to Scotland. In 'compensating for the feeling of Inferiority', Adler writes, 'here are found the first indications of the awakening desire for recognition developing itself under the concomitant influence of the sense of inferiority, with its purpose the attainment of a goal in which the individual is seemingly superior to his environment' (1928, p. 72). This is significant for thinking on Scotland's masculinity, in which perceived subjugation in colonial imaginings such as *Braveheart* produce a hypermasculine response. Similarly the very real suppression that was felt in national terms in Scotland at the time of Thatcher's Britain produced Scotland's hard man. As discussed in chapter one, the hard man and his machismo stems from an effort to assert oneself against the perception of

inferiority produced by the perception that Scotland is unfairly colonised and supressed by its superior southern neighbour. Importantly, then, the hard man is produced out of this reaction.

Allusions to Vic's castration might place him alongside notions of inferiority in Scotland but, significantly, he does not react to this experience of inadequacy and, in particular, does not consolidate his identity or his masculinity against this. Vic's stagnant castrated state therefore provides an appropriate image of the post-devolution crisis of Scottish identity; its binary relationship to its southern 'suppressor' is diminished and it is forced into an inward looking and disorienting space. Vic, unlike the hard man, provides no reaction, no call to arms, no strengthening of identity in the face of annihilation; he is just 'there' endlessly stagnant is his positioning in an absent, castrated space.

Vic does not even lament his failure to fulfil 'masculine' roles. For example, he says of sex: 'I'm not even sure that I miss it that much. It's one less pressure. I've never felt I was very good at it anyway' (p. 43). He leads a stagnant existence where the inevitability of his failure seems to have been accepted by him long ago. He comments: 'Madness's *Embarassment* is playing and I think they're singing about me' (p. 10). Impotent and embarrassed, Vic can be read alongside the threatened state of Scottish masculinity, but his failure in assertion presents a new relation: a failure in the reaction that would produce hypermasculinity. Set in the year of 1999, this can hold particular resonance for reading devolutionary Scotland. Of course, this thesis resists the critical tendency to make national allegories of characters in Scottish literature. This reading of Vic, however, shows that, even if we are to follow

the traditional critical conjecture of reading Scottish masculinity as exemplary of the nation, Vic disrupts the long line of hard men in Scottish literature; he does not consolidate a reactionary masculinity but instead presents a move into something absent, intangible, and incoherent.

Importantly, Vic's emasculation is one facet of the failure of structures that are traditionally supposed to underpin his identity. Throughout the novel he expresses some of the most explicit statements on the breakdown of the family: 'thank God I'm on special leave. It's usually reserved for deaths in the family, rather than the death of the family' (p. 243). Vic remains in a constant tension between his attempts to fulfil the appropriate roles of 'father' and 'husband' and his loss of faith in the family structure. His emasculation is part of a wider stagnant absence in which he merely exists as a lost figure while traditional structures of family and selfhood crumble around him. Thus, rather than seeing Vic as yet another player in a long line of characters that either affirm or weaken Scottish masculinity, he might instead be seen as part of a wider breakdown in ideas of nation, family and the coherence provided by these structures.

Ideas of lineage are introduced through the father-son relationship and are explicitly tied to *Born Free*'s devolutionary setting when Vic attempts to show Jake the site where the new Scottish parliament is to be built. Jake describes the moment: 'dad wants to show us where the new Parliament's going to be but I'm getting sick of his shitey guided tour and start complaining' (p. 87). These words introduce some of the wider ideas engaged with in the text. Most obviously, the text is consciously situated in the devolutionary moment; it can be engaged with ideas of devolution

and not simply because it was published in 1999. The general apathy and disinterest with the new Scottish parliament extends beyond the characterisation of a teenage boy and is symptomatic of the wider tone of the novel. The image of a father attempting to show his son the new Scottish parliament also calls to mind the kind of ideas that Lee Edelman brings forth in *No Future* (2004).

In *No Future*, Edelman outlines the concept of reproductive futurism. This is the idea that the figure of 'the Child' becomes the emblem of an imagined future or imagined horizon that must be fought for, always for the sake of 'our children's children'. As Edelman states: 'That Child remains the perpetual horizon of every acknowledged politics, the fantasmatic beneficiary of every political intervention' (2004, p. 3). He uses the illustrative examples of Annie singing 'Tomorrow!/ Tomorrow!/ I love ya/ Tomorrow/ You're always/ A day/ Away' (2004, p. 18) as well as *Les Misérables*'s 'anthem to futurism', 'One Day More' (2004, p. 11), to reach the conclusion that 'we are no more able to conceive of a politics without a fantasy of the future than we are able to conceive of a future without the figure of the Child' (2004, p. 11). The symbolic figure of the child clearly has a lot to do with the privileging of heteronormality in society, as well as the idea that the family is the fundamental unit of society. However, Edelman's words here show that this is part of the wider process by which the Child becomes symbolic of a fantasised horizon of the future. This is what Lauren Berlant refers to when she says: 'a nation made for adult citizens has been replaced by one imagined for foetuses and children' (cited in Edelman, 2004, p. 21). An important feature of reproductive futurism is the need for this horizon to remain forever unattainable. That is, the figurative Child must never

'grow up', or, in the words of Annie, 'tomorrow' must always necessarily be 'a day away'.

Reproductive futurism is particularly significant in national terms. Hastings Donnan and Thomas Wilson voice a common trope of nationalism when they state 'nationalism is linked in varying degrees to a past, present or hoped-for future national territory and nation-state sovereignty' (1999, p. 6). Drawing this together with Edelman's reproductive futurism provides a way of envisioning the devolutionary moment; the national gaze towards the future clearly participates in the structures of meaning-making inherent in the maintenance of national identity. It affirms ideas of the healthy body politic associated with 'the national interest' as the prosperity of the nation relies on investment in the notion of benefit for 'our children's children'. Simultaneously, reproductive futurism also underpins the horizon fantasy of nations like Scotland which operate on the notion that better is yet to come. Devolution was clearly the horizon fantasy for Scottish national identity over the twentieth century. Therefore, it seems that in the achievement of devolution Scotland moves unwittingly *beyond* that fantasy of the future. In other words, if home rule was the metaphorical 'sun that'll come out tomorrow', it could never fulfil the fantasy it inhabited. Moreover, it negated former constructions of Scottish identity based on its prior marginality. In the years 2012-2014, Scottish independence replaced devolution as the new fantasy of a better future for the nation and post-referendum independence still functions as the future space in which a better Scotland will be possible. This new horizon only became envisaged with any seriousness when the SNP came to government in 2007. Thus, the years

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after devolution but before the independence discussion act as a space that is, in these terms, 'beyond the horizon' of devolution and 'before the horizon' of independence.

These writings on national identity and queer theory clearly intertwine as the construction of identity is reliant upon the longevity and stability that underpin society's investment in reproductive futurism, of which the nation is clearly a prominent example. These ideas form the basis for much of my exploration in this thesis; specifically, Lauren Berlant's notion of the good life will inform chapter three's reading of the contemporary nation in Ali Smith's *The Accidental* (2005). For the present chapter, however, these terms provide helpful points for analysis of Vic's attempt to show his son Jake the site of the new Scottish parliament. Inherent in the image is the idea that this new symbol of increased national sovereignty can be a point of enlightenment felt by Jake and his children and their children beyond that. Edelman posits a 'queer' project as that which resists this formation:

> impossibly, against all reason, my project stakes its claim to the very space that 'politics' makes unthinkable: the space outside the framework within which politics as we know it appears and so outside the conflict of visions that share as their presupposition that the body politic must survive. (2004, p. 3)

Edelman refers here to that which is rendered 'unthinkable' within the existing structures of our society that are anchored on linearity and coherence. Jake's

disinterest in his dad's 'shitey guided tour' suggests the potential of the text to disrupt reproductive futurism. In this moment the son turns from his father's example of a better future, disallowing the fulfilment of this fantasy. Jake's position as a teenager also reminds us that the symbolic child soon moves into adolescence and becomes able to answer back to our collective investment in the sanctity of their future. Jake here serves as a reminder that the category of the child is simply fantasy; the child will always grow up and becomes capable of articulating the uncomfortable idea that they do not share the same investment and even that they do not wish to be fought for. As such, the text disrupts the fantasy figure of the child and the belief in longevity offered up by the fantasy of their future.

It is also significant that in this moment Vic wants to show Jake 'where the new Parliament's *going to be*' (my emphasis). There has been much critical commentary on the symbolism of the Scottish parliament. In 'Scotland's New House', Alice Entwistle quotes Joanne Winning to state that the building represents 'a Scotland poised now at the edge of a new stronger sense of identity; looking for its coordinates both backwards into the past, and forwards into the future' (cited in Entwistel, 2007, p. 114). Jake's words remind us, however, that the building was not complete until 2004. In fact, in 1999 there was nothing at all to look at as only preconstruction happened on the site in this year (The Scottish Parliament, n.d., n.p.). If the building represents a stronger sense of identity, perhaps the absence of it in 1999 is symbolic of the absence felt in this moment. The abject collapse of meaning that yields only absence in the devolutionary moment could open thinking on Edelman's 'impossible' point outside of a politics focused on its horizon.

Dirt and Disorder: Reading Abjection in *Born Free*

Reproductive futurism brings forth the horizon fantasy as that which provides means of understanding, of coherence, and of stability in identity; as Edelman puts it: 'the fantasy, precisely, of form as such, of an order, an organization, that assures the stability of our identities as subjects and the coherence of the Imaginary totalizations through which those identities appear to us in recognizable form' (2004, p. 7). By contrast, *Born Free* presents a world free from stability and without horizon; an atmosphere of annihilation or, more poignantly, the desire for annihilation overwhelms the text. Throughout the novel, all four of its narrators repeatedly return to various expressions of the wish to be desensitised, to disappear, or to be dead. Vic states: 'I wish I was dead. The way I'm feeling, I will be by morning' (p. 148) and later 'oh to be deaf and dumb' (p. 177). When he asks his fifteen-year-old daughter Joni 'Do you want anything?', she replies 'To fall asleep and not wake up' (p. 212). Meanwhile Jake says of himself and his mother Angie: 'I just want to fucking die, I just want *her* to fucking die' (p. 221). These expressions are all in some form or another to do with the family breakdown and the trauma that stems from Angie's alcoholism. The atmosphere created is one where no horizon fantasy of the future is to be found and no bonds of family or community, let alone of nation, exist.

This fragmentation of structures of the family is mirrored in the form of the novel; it is narrated from the perspective of each of the four members of the family. This structure disorientates the linearity of the text as four first-person narratives interrupt each other and cause scenes, time-frames, and characters to shift with the

turn of a page. In this way, *Born Free* exposes the artifice of the traditional novel form's containment of the events into one developing linear plot. In these terms, then, the fragmented form of the text parallels the disintegrating family. Their worlds are separate, their voices individual and the other members of the family provoke anxiety, anger, and upset in each narrative. In its form, then, *Born Free* presents the image of a family dispersed; the narratives of Joni, Jake, Vic, and Angie present four internal worlds held together by an abstract notion of their togetherness. It is important, however, to note that this stagnant atmosphere of helplessness extends beyond the scope of the family members who each narrate; each first person narrative presents an access point to a host of additional characters that equally exist in stagnant and disintegrating states of being.

Hird repeatedly presents modes of being that do not fall in line with the type of safe societal structures that Edelman addresses in his concept of reproductive futurism. This analysis of that which falls outside such structures can be developed further through reference to Kristeva's ideas on abjection:

> There looms, within abjection, one of those violent, dark re-volts of being, directed against a threat that seems to emanate from an exorbitant outside or inside, ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable. It lies there, quite close, but it cannot be assimilated. It beseeches, worries, and fascinates desire, which, nevertheless, does not let itself be seduced. Apprehensive, desire turns aside; sickened, it rejects. (1982, p. 1)

Central to abjection then is the rupture of systems and rules, and this disturbs identity and order; to recall Kristeva's words, the abject 'is radically excluded and draws me toward the place where meaning collapses' (1982, p. 2). In these terms the abject can be considered that which arises from Edelman's 'impossible space' outside of a politics invested in the 'presupposition that the body politic must survive' (2004, p. 3).

Kristeva uses Mary Douglas' work to support her claims that dirt and impurity: 'defilement is an element connected with the boundary, the margin, etc., of an order' ([1966] (2003), p. 66). Douglas writes convincingly on dirt, and opens up thinking on the idea that our abhorrence of dirt is not to do with fear of contagion, but is to do with order: 'as we know, dirt is essentially disorder. There is no such thing as absolute dirt: it exists in the eye of the beholder . . . dirt offends against order' ([1966] (2003), p. 2). With this in mind we can read images of dirt as representative of the wider disorder of structures of meaning-making throughout the novel.

One such example of the process of abjection occurs in Joni's encounter with Emma whom she and Rosie babysit. Emma has a disability that Rosie and Joni are unable to identify. All they know is that her mental age is significantly younger than her physical age of around sixteen. The house in which Emma lives is covered in dog faeces and Joni immediately associates Emma's disability with this: 'the house is so filthy, I'm scared I might catch something. No wonder the lassie's not well' (p. 35). Images of sickness and dirtiness are central to the repulsion of abjection and the collapse of meaning experienced in the confrontation with the jettisoned object.

Similarly a fear of contagion acts as the signage that marks the abject as separate from the subject yet also threatens it. Creed calls the intertwining of repulsion and identification part of the 'perverse pleasure' that underpins abjection (1993, p. 8).

The scene culminates in Emma putting on a video and fast-forwarding it to a sex scene. Rosie and Joni become transfixed: 'I'm hooked . . . I'm glad I'm not sitting on the PVC chair as my bum's practically swimming. God, I wish I was on my own' (p. 37). Joni's arousal is disrupted by the sight of Emma masturbating in the centre of the room: 'legs spread, hand jigging away on her bare hairy fanny. It's horrible, I don't know what to do' (p. 37). Presented is the display of sexuality that Joni has envisioned for herself. However, to see it in another who she struggles to make sense of produces the abject response. In Kristeva's words: 'apprehensive, desire turns aside; sickened, it rejects' (1982, p. 1). It is important to note, however, that Emma is not made an abject figure to be purged; Joni's rejection stems from identification with the sexual expression that Emma displays. As Kristeva states, 'it lies there, quite close, but it cannot be assimilated' (1982, p. 1). This identification is important because it leads to recognition that abjection is not simply a process of purgation. This is evident through a scene that occurs shortly before the babysitting incident in which Joni masturbates in the bath while menstruating. Hird clearly presents the images of uncleanliness central to abjection: 'the water turns a dirty, browny red' and 'it makes my hand all bloody' (pp. 32-33). This links Joni and Emma so that Joni's repulsion on seeing Emma masturbate is tied to her own sexuality. The encounter that constitutes rejection and simultaneous identification with Emma, Joni's 'other', presents a space akin to the one Kristeva describes that 'draws [us]

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towards the place where meaning collapses' (1982, pp. 1-2). Edelman's

reproductive futurism helps articulate that this 'meaning' is reliant upon ideas of

longevity as they are tied to the family model.

Vic's encounter with Caroline on his bus presents another example of

abjection. Caroline is an old friend of Angie's who is mentally unstable, lives in

squalor, and often attempts or speaks of suicide. It is eventually revealed to the

reader that Caroline is the same woman who has been offering sex to the bus drivers

of Edinburgh, one of whom is Vic. In the incident where she offers herself to Vic she

is coded as inhuman; his description sets her up as 'an-other': 'there's something

about this one that starts to put me on edge. She has a disturbed look about her' (p.

111). The sexual encounter that follows presents the process of desire intermingled

with horror: 'she's hiked up her skirt and has her legs open. I just gawp at her. I'm

no longer equipped to deal with things like this but I just can't stop staring at the

unfamiliar minge in front of me' (p. 112). In spite of his revulsion Vic remains

unwillingly transfixed – 'I just can't stop staring'. Closely followed by this is the

process of repulsion and rejection: 'she must be a junkie or something . . . I wish

she'd cover up her bits and get off my bus, but I'm scared to touch her' (p. 112).

Fascination turns to horror very quickly. Caroline clearly presents the unthinkable

and the intolerable as Vic expresses a fear of contagion in his fear of touching her.

The dispelling of this abject figure is realised in the association of this non-

normative display of sexuality with the dissident status of 'junkie'. The 'unfamiliar

minge' also suggests an image of vagina dentate, which ties this image to Vic's

castrated state. The abjected image here thus also constitutes the failure of Vic's

traditional masculinity, so widely upheld as significant for Scottish identity. As such, impurity and abjection here are tied to the disorder of traditional Scottish masculinity encompassed by Vic's character.

These are only the details of two incidents of a novel littered with references to the abject. This produces a cast of lost people living lives that disturb and disgust in a space where normative ways of being no longer make sense. The extent to which this aligns with a lost Scottish identity that is 'beyond its horizon', that, in this moment has lost its old formations of identity, might only be speculative at this stage. It must be noted, however, that Hird often draws attention to Scottish references that give the 'meaningless space' in her novel a national reference.

Nationality and the Abject Space

One such example of Hird's often playful national references is the tragicomic scene where Jake crushes and then snorts Vic's Prozac through a rolled up one pound note (p. 153). The tragic image of a teenage boy snorting crushed Prozac is undercut by the ridiculous image of doing so through a one pound note. This is also, of course, a reference to the on-going use of the one pound note in Scotland following its discontinuation in the rest of the UK. The reference to the one pound note acts as something of a Scottish 'in-joke' and it is this national marker than injects the comedy into the macabre scene. This theme is continued as Jake says: 'It feels like my head's melting. Mum's going to come home and find me lying here like Sean Connery at the end of *Highlander*' (p. 153). This playful association between a fictional image of 'Scottishness' in popular culture and the helpless space of the text

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presents a disjunction between romanticised Scottishness and the kind of absent space that Hird takes as her subject matter.

This theme is continued as Angie appropriates Mel Gibson's famous words from *Braveheart* when she offers empty words of advice to her suicidal friend Caroline. Sitting in the squalor that is Caroline's flat, which Angie has only visited so she can get drunk, the two women discuss the romantic breakup that led to Caroline's mental health problems. Angie's words of advice are: 'Freedom. Y'know . . . you can take my boyfriend but you cannae take my FREEDOM' (p. 93). The macabre humour is provoked by the utter uselessness of these 'inspirational' words in such a helpless situation. In these scenes the redundancy of these images of national sentiment is exposed. They become caricatures of Scottishness that sit grotesquely amongst Hird's cast of lost people existing in their abject spaces.

The idea of there being a loss or absence that ripples out far beyond the family in question and comes to encompass the whole of Scotland is raised most explicitly in a conversation between Caroline and Angie. Caroline begins the conversation:

> "d'you know how many suicides there were in Scotland last year?" . . . "I don't know, a hundred and sixty." "Five hundred and ninety-nine. Nearly twice as many as died in road accidents. Fucking freaky, eh?" "It's a fair whack," I say, but really in comparison to the number of people who must regularly feel like topping themselves, it's toaty. (p. 94)

The image of suicide here transcends simple statistics; through Caroline's position

as a suicidal woman herself, the discussion of suicide here encroaches upon the

women, disturbing and threatening the scene as it recalls the possibility of

Caroline's own suicide. The image thus enacts an abject image of that 'jettisoned

object' that 'lies close' and 'draws me towards the place where meaning collapses'

(Kristeva, 1982, pp. 1-2). Moreover, the conversation recalls death, which is

significant as Kristeva notes that the corpse is one of the most abject things: 'the

corpse, the most sickening of wastes, is a border that has encroached upon

everything. It is no longer I who expel, "I" is expelled. The border has become an

object' (1982, pp. 3-4). The family thus come to act as a microcosm of a wider

'people' living without, as Edelman calls it, 'an order, an organization, that assures

the stability of our identities' (2004, p. 7). The placement of this novel in the

devolutionary moment, the direct reference to the creation of the Scottish

parliament, to popular representations of Scottishness, and to a specific Scottish

'lack' draw links between the devolutionary moment and the abject space that can

be aligned with Edelman's impossible queer space outside of a politics of

reproductive futurism which holds that 'the body politic must survive'.

Reading the Abject Space as Queer in *Born Free*

This leads to consideration of how the loss and abjection present in *Born Free* might

lead to direct instances of 'queerness'. Lauren Berlant and Elizabeth Freeman

attempt to envisage a way in which a reconfiguration of the nation might be

experienced by a community that actively identifies as 'queer'. However, they are

forced to recognise that this is an impossible task so long as the national investment

in heteronormality and the family model prevail. They are led to recognise that a

queer change must always inevitably come about from a national level: 'We are

compelled, then, to read America's lips' (1993, p. 197). This leads them to ask 'what

can we do to force the officially constituted nation to speak a new political tongue?'

(p. 197). Significantly, in *Born Free* none of the characters identify as 'queer'.

Instead, there is a sense of being lost, of a failure, and of a rupture that occurs widely

and, which read in line with devolution, can constitute the kind of queer process

that comes about from national level; the novel presents what Edelman envisages

for his queer polemic:

> we do not intend a new politics, a better society, a brighter tomorrow, since
>
> all of those fantasies reproduce the past, through displacement, in the form of
>
> the future. We choose, instead, *not* to choose the Child, as disciplinary image
>
> of the Imaginary past or as site of a projective identification with an always
>
> impossible future. (2004, p. 31)

Thus, by drawing links between a devolved Scotland that is inadvertently 'beyond'

its own 'horizon' and the loss and abjection that reverberates in the novel, it is

arguable that devolution offers that point through which the nation is forced to

'speak a new political tongue'.

Edelman identifies the heteronormality implicit in reproductive futurism:

'the child, that is, marks the fetishistic fixation of heteronormativity: an erotically

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charged investment in the rigid sameness of identity that is central to the
compulsory narrative of reproductive futurism' (2004, p. 21). In similar terms,
Berlant and Freeman apply this thinking to a national context: 'mainstream national
identity touts a subliminal sexuality more official than a state flower or national
bird' (1993, p. 195). Queer aims towards a rupture of these kind of structures that
underpin nationhood. Edelman writes: '*queerness* names the side of those *not*
"fighting for the children", the side outside the consensus by which all politics
confirms the absolute value of reproductive futurism' (2004, p. 3). Halberstam also
writes in *In a Queer Time and Place* that 'queer uses of time and space develop, at
least in part, in opposition to the institutions of family, heterosexuality, and
reproduction. They also develop according to other logics of location, movement,
and identification' (2005, p. 1). We are led to consider how far Hird's cast of abject
characters can fall in line with a queer project that develops in opposition to
stabilising national structures.

Thinking on the queerness that disrupts fantasies of stable linear longevity
holds particular relevance with regard to *Born Free'*s Angie. Edelman writes:

if, however, there is *no baby* and, in consequence, *no future*, then the blame
must fall on the fatal lure of sterile, narcissistic enjoyments understood as
inherently destructive of meaning and therefore as responsible for the
undoing of social organization, collective reality, and, inevitably, life itself.
(2004, p. 13)

The character of Angie could be summarised as exemplifying 'the fatal lure of sterile, narcissistic enjoyments'. These are her words after her first kiss with Ray: 'these are the best bits in life. The brief moments between knowing you're going to fuck someone and actually doing it. That ache. All life comes from that ache' (p. 55). There should be no doubt that Angie does not imply that 'life' comes from '[fucking] someone' in any reproductive sense. The phrase consciously subverts this so that the emphasis is on the 'ache', the desire. It becomes apparent that this ache is exclusive to the extra marital affair as Angie reflects on the feeling and asks 'how could I let Vic deprive me of this for so long?' (p. 56). Far from giving life, Angie later associates marriage with death: 'marriage is like basic training for terminal illness' (p. 96). The phrase 'all life comes from that ache' can then be considered queer in its absolute privileging of desire and also in its subversion of the dominant reproductive mode of being that underpins the heterosexual family unit. Angie's 'ache' also invites reading through feminist terms, although, in the only feminist reading of *Born Free* to date, Jones reads Angie as indicative of the problems inherent in the postfeminist movement in an article that is forthcoming in *Contemporary Women's Writing* (Jones, n.d.). Angie's 'ache', however, is exemplary of how queer manifests in the text; while heterosexual sex is referenced here, Angie's words undercut the associations of heterosexuality with marriage, patriarchy, reproduction, and the family. Hird's is a rupturing queerness that radically subverts those traditional 'stabilities' of society. Set and published in the devolutionary year of 1999, the radical potential of this text to disorientate conceptions of nationhood and the family unit in Scotland is significant.

Angie's advocating of 'sterile, narcissistic enjoyments' also applies to her relationship with alcohol. She states upon having her first sip of vodka following a period of sobriety: 'right away, fuck, what a feeling. I am come home' (p. 54). This reappropriation of 'home' extends to Scotland as 'I am come home' references Bonnie Prince Charile's famous response to being told to return home to France upon anxieties that the Jacobite rebellion would fail: 'I am come home, sir, and can entertain no notion of returning to the place whence I came. I am persuaded that my faithful Highlanders will stand by me' (Chambers, 1869, p. 23). Angie thus subverts 'home' away from typical associations of family or nation and instead locates the same sentimentality in alcohol. Halberstam names 'queer subjects' as being people such as 'ravers, club kinds, HIV-positive barebackers, rent boys, sex workers, homeless people, drug dealers, and the unemployed' because they:

> live (deliberately, accidentally, or of necessity) during the hours when others sleep and in the spaces (physical, metaphysical, and economic) that others have abandoned, and in terms of the ways they might work in the domains that other people assign to privacy and family. (2005, p. 10)

Angie's alcoholism makes her a 'queer subject' as it leaves her without meaning and outside of the dominant modes of western time and space. She spends her mornings fixated on where and when she can next drink and on finding new spaces such as Caroline's flat in which she can drink. She remains in a permanent state of confusion and remembers little of what she says or does. Her only temporality becomes the

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present and that is defined by how drunk she is; her only future is where and when she will next drink. Angie, then, subverts what Halberstam calls 'the domains that other people assign to privacy and family' in her naming of this state as 'home'.

This is an issue that develops as she renegotiates the term when thinking about her family and her affair: 'I can't live like this. I've not left for work yet and already I'm dreading coming home. Home – the place where Raymond fucked me the other night, that's all it is to me now. I have more affection for the bed he buggered me in than I do for my family' (p. 187). This explicit displacement of 'home' away from the 'family' and re-association of it with 'the bed he buggered me in' radically and unashamedly assumes that 'queer space' where conventional formulations of stability are shunned. Halberstam writes that 'queers use space and time in ways that challenge conventional logics of development, maturity, adulthood, and responsibility' (2005, p. 13). Angie certainly could be considered a 'queer subject' in these terms.

Hird uses Angie's voice to explore the link between marriage and nation in a specifically Scottish context. Angie reflects on Rab, the English soldier who she nearly married. Rab was sent to fight in the Falklands and on his return was stranded on a boat on the river Forth for two days because the Edinburgh dockers' union would not let the dockers work overtime. During these two days, as she puts it, 'I went out on the randan with some of my old pals and met Vic. I'd come off the pill for my forthcoming honeymoon, so that was basically it – bye bye life, bye bye happiness' (p. 24). Upon explaining this Angie says: 'my dad had always hated Rab anyway because he was English, and being a rabid trade unionist, was absolutely

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thrilled than the Edinburgh dockers' union were responsible for the break-up of our

engagement' (p. 24). With specific reference to the politics of the Thatcher years

Hird produces a scenario where national politics influence the private realm of an

individual's marriage to comic effect. Here the national politics between Scotland

and England make pawns of the characters of the novel. In this there is a playful

subversion of the way in which the nation is intertwined with marriage and the

family.

Further reference to marriage and the nation is made when Angie later

states: 'everyone said Rab was a cunt, he'd shag a split heid. Vic was honest,

dependable, worked hard and all the other Calvinist bullshit. All Rab had to offer me

was a huge cock and a filthy mind. That would have been enough' (p. 96). The

reference to Calvinism marks this out as a particularly Scottish type of dependability

and thus highlights the intertwining of the successful marriage and the successful

nation. On the contrary, Rab offers not the dependable, hard working, reproductive

marriage imagined to underpin the nation. This is symbolised through the repulsive

image 'he'd shag a split heid'. This image of repulsion acts as a dispelling force which

serves to place Rab firmly outside of acceptable values of marriage that can

underpin the nation. Angie's lament for Rab and the life she could have had similarly

places her outside of these structures, thereby further making her a 'queer subject'

according to Halberstam's definition. Her stance subverts the ideas of 'home',

marriage, and family. As Hird draws these links between marriage and Scotland

Angie's subversion comes to encompass the nation for which the privatised family

stands. Angie then quite clearly represents the queer side that Edelman calls 'those

not "fighting for the children"' (2004, p. 3). She is, in Edelman's words, 'the side outside the consensus by which all politics confirms the absolute value of reproductive futurism' (2004, p. 3). This takes on a national significance as the private and public are merged.

We must acknowledge, however, that if Angie represents 'those *not* "fighting for the children"' it would seem also that the 'children' do not want to be fought for. Halberstam's concept of 'queer time' furthers thinking on the concepts of childhood, adolescence, and maturity in line with what Halberstam would call a fantasy of longevity and prosperity. She writes:

> and so, in western cultures, we chart the emergence of the adult from the dangerous and unruly period of adolescence as a desired process of maturation; and we create longevity as the most desirable future, applaud the pursuit of long life (under any circumstances), and pathologize modes of living that show no concern for longevity. (2005, p. 5)

This reference to a fixation on longevity refers to the same kind of horizon fantasy to which reproductive futurism attends. Halberstam touches on the figurative mode of childhood but also on the desire for that figure to transfer safely into adulthood. She is concerned with the way in which we mediate development so as to ensure stability and longevity. Just as Angie can represent the 'modes of living that show no concern for longevity' so does Hird's characterisation of Joni display the 'dangerous and unruly period of adolescence'.

Hird's concern, however, is not to envisage the maturation of Joni, or to present Joni's behaviour as any kind of result stemming from her mother's alcoholism and so condemn it, but to expose the artificial use of time to mediate and control the period of adolescence. This is Joni's description of Rosie's uncle John, who goes to court for child abuse during the novel. Rosie begins the conversation:

"John left a video the other night. It's absolutely gross." You beauty! I practically leap onto the next bus. John, Rosie's uncle, is a major spunk bucket. They're always watching porn together. He's quite old, maybe thirtyish, but flirts like mad with me, y'know, says really filthy stuff, then looks all innocent. I never get to go round when they're watching videos, but I'd really love to. Not with Rosie, though, just me and him. Even thinking about it gives me hot bum flushes. (p. 2)

Innocent adolescent language is presented in obvious disjunction with the teenage desire for the older man. Seeing the incident through Joni's eyes forces the realisation that Joni forms 'an other' to the society that deems what is and what is not appropriate for a girl of her age. The legal framework for this is directly addressed by Joni when she becomes fixated on having sex before her sixteenth birthday. She says of John: 'I want to beg him to do it to me before my birthday, before its legal' (p. 137). The legal age of consent is perhaps the most rigid example of defining adolescent sexuality. The positing of desire against this obviously questions this structure. However, Joni's desperation to have sex before she turns

sixteen suggests that it is not that she wants to have sex in spite of the age of consent, but rather, *because* of the age of consent. The appeal for Joni is that which flouts these modes of stability. Joni's characterisation in this way is important because it does not fall in line with what one might expect of Angie's failure in motherhood — that the 'children' suffer. Instead Joni willingly occupies the space that rejects the politics that is supposedly 'fighting for the children' and she becomes complicit with her mother in her occupation of that 'impossible' space.

Hird's text then clearly depicts the queer projects theorised by Edelman and Halberstam. It envisages the effects of a world where structures of the family, structures of nationhood, and their interrelations are broken down. Importantly, Scotland in its devolutionary moment gives this abstract and meaningless 'space' a national reference. To place this in a critical and theoretical framework produces terms in which devolutionary Scotland is both beyond the horizon fantasy of devolution and before the horizon fantasy of independence. In light of the 2014 'no' vote on independence, Scotland may still be read in terms of ambiguity; thus the years 1999-2014 offer various encounters with those ideas of abjection and disorientation that the present chapter has explored. The abjection that is rife in Hird's text provides a way of envisaging a politics of no horizon and the ramifications this has for traditional structures underpinning the nation. To then read this in terms of Edelman's 'reproductive futurism' and alongside Halberstam's discussion of a queer project allows ways of considering how this rupture in the devolutionary moment produces something that can be envisaged as 'queer'.

To consider this text in line with the devolutionary moment offers insights as to what is at stake when we speak of that moment as providing 'new ways of thinking about Scottishness'. The text is not simply about a crisis of masculinity, or a rise in feminist sentiment; rather, it takes us beyond these debates and instead presents an image of chaos. For the Scottish context this attends to something of an absence and abjection in the devolutionary moment. This chaos can also present the space out of which the 'impossible' queer project can arise. If Scotland is to build an identity from this moment, I propose that from this point onwards this is significantly affected by the sort of absence, the abjection, and the queerness found in Hird's text, which offers a platform from which to consider the devolutionary moment more generally.

Chapter Three

Reading Scottishness in relation to the Contemporary Nation and 'the Good Life' through Ali Smith's *The Accidental* (2005)

Chapter Two, 'No Horizons', established devolution as a rupturing moment of introspection for Scotland as it reconfigured its oppositional relationship with its Other; England. Analysis of Laura Hird's 1999 *Born Free,* read in line with Edelman, queered the patriarchal heteronormative family unit. Through attention to the devolutionary setting of the text, this queer reading was aligned with that moment of introspective disorientation. The present chapter explores the significance of this destabilized Scottish national identity for wider thinking on nations and within other areas of queer theory. The first section of this chapter, 'The Contemporary Nation', situates Scotland within wider discussion of nations and globalization in the twenty-first century. It works from the basic assumption that post-devolution Scotland is not an insular entity; to position it within the twenty-first century global context enhances understanding of how its disorientating moment is more widely significant for thinking on the contemporary nation. This section analyses Ali Smith's *The Accidental* (2005) and draws on ideas from Homi Bhabha and Slavoj Žižek to negotiate thinking on globalisation and postcolonialism in relation to the twenty-first century western nation. This introduces ways of considering contemporary Scottish nationhood amongst a complicated global discourse. The second section of this chapter, 'The Good Life', furthers chapter two's analysis of the breakdown in the family model using Lauren Berlant's *Cruel Optimism* (2011).

Analysis of *The Accidental* alongside Berlant outlines thinking on family dysfunction outside the Scottish devolutionary context, delineating the significance of Scotland's post-devolution queerness amongst broader queer theory.

The following analysis of *The Accidental* outside of a specifically Scottish context simultaneously draws attention to the problematic category of 'Scottish literature' in the twenty-first century. As Susanne Hagemann wrote in her introduction to *Scottish Studies: Studies in Scottish Fiction 1945 – Present* (1996): 'it is a truism to say that the national dimension of "Scottish" literature has never been, and presumably will never be, conclusively defined' (p. 7). Hagemann's observation that it seems almost a cliché to state the difficulty of delineating Scottish literature remains accurate to date. Yet the ongoing acknowledgement of that difficulty reflects an impasse on the issue. It may be commonplace to recognise the limits of the category of Scottish literature but it is still unclear how we might blur its boundaries. Scottishness is an important site for analysis from devolution to the independence referendum, and yet the problem remains of how to analyse Scottishness without restricting the literature to that national category. Neubauer suggests that we simply abandon the category, writing that '"Scottish Literature" should not exist' (1999, p. 219). However, this simultaneously preserves an unmalleable ring-fence around the literature; it infers that a choice must be made between working within or outside of, but not between, national parameters. We therefore remain static on the issue of how to make 'Scottish literature' porous and malleable, and how to allow an analysis of post-devolution literature through that national lens without restricting the text.

The task of considering Inverness-born Ali Smith's work 'Scottish' is similarly uneasy; her writings sometimes feature Scottishness prominently, sometimes not, and sometimes it is completely absent from her work. *The Accidental* is amongst her writings that deal only occasionally in Scottish themes. This thesis embraces the difficulty in categorizing Scottish literature and considers the malleability of that category an important aspect of striving for a less rigid sense of Scottishness in the twenty-first century. Analysis of *The Accidental* here is thus intended partly to negotiate discussion through broader discourses on nations and family and simultaneously to demonstrate the ability of literature from post-devolution Scotland to move freely amongst the perceived limits of its national parameters.

The Accidental is set in the Smart family's Norfolk holiday home during a summer with the narrative centring on the intrusion of the elusive Amber (or Alhambra) on the family. The Mother, Eve, a successful writer, is experiencing writer's block while working on her latest book while the stepfather, Michael, is an academic in a literature department in London who is eventually dismissed from his post for sexual encounters with female students. Magnus, their teenage son, is depressed and fixated on the recent suicide of a girl at his school, Catherine Masson, after he and two other boys photoshopped her head onto a pornographic picture and sent it round the school's email list. Astrid, his twelve-year-old sister, is negotiating her way into adolescence after being bullied by girls at school. The family are intruded upon by Amber, a stranger who is welcomed into the family and challenges each of its members in various ways; she mentors Astrid, takes Magnus's virginity, befriends and confronts Eve, and ignores Michael as he falls in love with

her. The text is narrated in third person but comprises four different focalised narratives allowing the reader access to the viewpoints of each of the four members of the family. Thus, in its form, the text invites similar analysis of the fragmented family as *Born Free*. These narrations are organised under the headings 'the beginning', 'the middle', and 'the end', and each section opens with a first person narrative, suggestive of Amber's voice, who presents her own 'history' through the language of cinema. Simultaneously, the story is framed by the wider political events of the Iraq war and as such deals with broader themes of homeland security and the dissemination of news in the twenty-first century through the lens of the Smart family.

The Twenty-first Century Nation

As the introduction to this thesis outlined, the question of the nation's relevance in a globalised world forms a key point of interest in the twenty-first century. I argued in the introduction for the urgent need to analyse not the demise of the nation under globalisation, but the specific ways in which the nation is imagined in the contemporary. This chapter provides that analysis and focuses in particular on commercial and digital expansions as central to this enquiry.

The view that globalisation supersedes state structures in surmised in Barry Buzan's notion of 'universalist cosmopolitanism'. He writes that this 'takes individuals, non-state organisations and ultimately the global population as a whole as the focus of global societal identities and arrangements, and puts transcendence of the states-system at the centre of [International Relation] theory' (2004, p. 7).

Thus this version of 'universalist cosmopolitanism' of the twenty-first century focuses on economic, technical, and cultural change in the contemporary world as evidence for the emergence of a unitary and hyper-connected 'world society' (Anderson and O'Dowd, 1999; Maroya, 2003; Migdal, 2004). Martin Shaw identifies technological and commercial transformations as the factors behind a specifically twenty-first century world-view of 'the global society': 'at the beginning of the twenty-first century, there is a sense of living in a period of great change, which goes far beyond the coincidence of the new millennium. As ever in the modern world, there is a sense of traditional cultures and institutions under challenge from remorseless technological change and commercial expansion' (2000, p. 1). Technological and commercial expansions are certainly prominent in contemporary thinking on the borderless world. As Shaw suggests, it could be their continued dramatic expansion that accounts for the shift in register from the twentieth-century focus on heterogeneous and ambiguous borders to the increased theorisation on one-world universalism in the twenty-first century.

Parag Khanna is one of the contemporary proponents of a commercial borderless world. He argues that trade lines are overriding and therefore diminishing the significance of statelines. He outlines the position that:

> connected societies are better off than isolated ones. As the incidence of international conflict diminishes, ever more countries are building roads, railways, pipelines, bridges, and Internet cables across borders, forging networks of urban centers that depend on one another for trade, investment and job creation. (2013, n.p.)

In this he presents three generalised assumptions: that international conflict is in decline; that capitalist globalisation rooted in trade can equate to a borderless world; and finally that 'Internet cables' play an important role in this. Khanna justifies his city-centric approach by stating: 'already, more than half the world lives in cities, and the percentage is growing rapidly' (2010, n.p.). From this basis he advocates the city as the hub of commerce which can replace the nation as the organising spatial property in a commercial globalized world.

The position focused on global commercial expansion has been criticised, however, by many who argue that the globalized world Khanna envisages makes the world more accessible only to the economically privileged bourgeoisie. Homi Bhabha, for instance, has criticised such an approach: 'a global cosmopolitanism of this sort readily celebrates a world of plural cultures and peoples located at the periphery, so long as they produce healthy profit margin within metropolitan societies' ([1994] 2004, p. xiv). Bhabha's critique reflects a wealth of literature in International Relations theory that highlights global inequality. Leslie Sklair has also been a prominent voice in this debate. He identified the 'transnational capitalist class' as comprised of the technical, corporate, and consumer population and recognised the globalised world as largely organised around global capitalism (1995, p. 72). Sklair and Bhabha's positions exemplify this side of the debate's argument that globalization has made the world more accessible, but only for the wealthy bourgeois privileged by capitalism.

In addition to the economic view held by Khanna, digital and technological advancements are often taken as evidence for an increasingly borderless world.

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Critics such as Gabriel Popescu term the digital movement of information 'global flows', which change spatial organisation from 'primary interstate to primary supra- sub-, multi- and transstate scales' (2012, p. 48). Larry Ray also considers digital communications a prominent factor in crossing state lines when he refers to the 'networks that are bound together by identity and digital communications rather than closely linked and spatially fixed solidarities' (2007, p. 182). These positions are characteristic of what has been termed the twenty-first century 'digital' or 'information era'. This is a discourse still forming as the rapid development from digital to cloud technology continues to transform the twenty-first century access to information. Most thinking on these technological advancements, however, reflects Popesou and Ray's assertions as they consider the 'digital era' the driving force behind a rapidly connected globalized world.

Although published before the twenty-first century's dramatic expansion in information technology, Marc Augé's theorising in *Non Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (1995) remains one of the most coherent challenges to the view that this technological expansion can produce a radically connected borderless world. Augé considered advancements in technology, transport, and capital and identified these developments as inducing a move out of territory and into 'non-places'. In his theorising of this move into 'non-places', however, Augé does not propose the connected and unified world-order of a universalist approach to cosmopolitanism. He refers to 'the complex skein of cable and wireless networks that mobilize extraterrestrial space for the purposes of communication' (p. 79). However, contrary to present understanding of this as a

radically connecting force, Augé argues that these wireless networks allow communication 'so peculiar that it often puts the individual in contact only with another image of himself' (p. 78). In *Non Places*, then, technological advancement is a force that reduces ties between people and enhances individual solipsism.

Similarly, Homi Bhabha, whose thinking on cosmopolitanism informs this chapter's reading of Smith's Amber, has criticised this universalist cosmopolitanism which 'had faith in the virtually boundless powers of technological innovation and global communications' ([1994] 2004: p. xiv). Although notions of cosmopolitanism and the borderless world interrelate, cosmopolitanism is a complex term with its own theoretical history and as such this term is explored fully in chapter four of this thesis. The present chapter focuses specifically on the issue of the position of the nation in the globalised world. It therefore presents its own arguments which form one trajectory of thinking into issues of globalisation and the nation, and also necessarily prefaces chapter four's detailed investigation into the theory of cosmopolitanism and the relationship of post-devolution Scotland to this discourse.

For the present chapter, Augé and Bhabha assist in articulating that the view of a globalised world as a more connected or 'cosmopolitan' world is over-simplified and problematic. The post-9/11 context of the twenty-first century also presents clear problems for the idea that this world, by extension, involves the decline of national borders. As previously discussed, since the 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre, the U S spend on homeland security increased by 301% (accounting for inflation) (National Priorities Project, n.d.). This exemplifies the post-9/11 Western obsession with the threat of, and security from, terrorism that motivates

the global war on terror. Nick Vaughan-Williams writes clearly on the topic that 'the rise of the notion of "homeland" security in the context of the Western governments' attempts to counter the threat of international terrorism has led to a reinvigoration of border protections initiatives' (2009, pp. 3-4). Similarly, David Simpson outlines the way in which 9/11 became a 'rationale for instituting a homeland security culture projecting a war that can never end and a state of alert that can never be given over' (2006, p. 58). Protection of territory could therefore be considered one of the primary symptoms of the post-9/11 twenty-first century. This context clearly contradicts the assertion that we are moving towards a borderless world.

These competing views of the twenty-first century raise questions about whether Scottish devolution and its independence referendum are the strange example of increasing sovereignty in a borderless world or a symptom of the age of renewed fixation on territory and borders. In order to delineate Scotland's position in the contemporary global context, some attempt to work through this contemporary contradiction is necessary.

The Contemporary Nation in *The Accidental* (2005)

The Accidental is obviously contemporary in content; set in 2003, all four characters make various references to living in a world dominated by global expansions in commerce and technology. The view of a thinker such as Khanna that economic expansion is creating a borderless world is referenced in the text when Eve describes her experience of travelling:

She'd drunk Coke in a hotel room in Rome. She'd drunk Coke in a bar

overlooking a palace in Granada. She'd drunk Coke in a chalet bar up a

mountain in Switzerland. She'd drunk Coke on several aeroplanes. She'd

drunk Coke in a hotel bar in Nice on the Promenade des Anglais, across the

road from a group of drug addicts on the stony beach. She'd drunk Coke in

the air conditioning of a restaurant in a rich suburb of Colombo, through the

front windows of which she had seen children living in a derelict tower with

rags hanging from the holes where its windows should be. (p. 287)

Reflected here is the notion that globalization makes the world more accessible only

to the economically privileged. The reference to the 'drug addicts' and the 'children

living in a derelict tower' that Eve views from the hotel bar and restaurant

emphasise the fact that this is a world only accessible to the capitalist bourgeoisie.

Moreover, the supposedly globalized world experienced by people such as Eve is

simply a world of hotel bars and air conditioning, faceless and detached from their

locality. As such, the only thing that transcends borders is 'Coke'. Nonetheless, the

image of Coke as a global entity could be interpreted by an economist such as

Khanna as evidence of a borderless world. In *The Accidental*, we clearly find this to

be an entirely superficial image of 'globalization'. As a result, the textual image of a

world organized around the ability to drink Coke in every country presents

consumerism as the superficial illusion of global connection and consumption.

When Eve is in America the text directly presents images of the nation as

they are intertwined with the normative family home. Eve travels to the suburbs of

New York State in search of the house her father would have lived in with his 'other family'. Eve notes of the houses: 'all of them, even the ones that looked like they had had nobody living in them for quite a while, had stars and stripes hanging inert from little poles stuck by their doors' (p. 284). The prevalence of the nation in the everyday, and the intertwining of that with the privatised home, is layered into this scene. However, the image also includes houses that are 'empty' and flags that hang 'inert' on their 'little poles'. This language undermines the all-American fantasy. The house is an empty shell; a family home with no family and the typical phallic imagery of the flag on the flag pole is trivialised and emasculated.

The text continues by juxtaposing this backdrop with the post-9/11 context as Eve views a picture in the paper from the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse trials:

> She was holding the newspaper she'd bought earlier that day in New York. There was a picture on the front of it of a man in a bodybag. The man was clearly dead. He had the empty clayey look of the not-long-gone. The bodybag was zipped quite far up, but you could see his bruises, his nose, his broken teeth, his upturned dead eye. Above the bodybag was a girl in military clothes. She was pretty, she was smiling and she was giving the photographer the thumbs-up sign above the dead man's face. (p. 285)

The detailed description of the man's injuries combined with the global jovial gesture of the thumbs-up sign captures the horror of the image in the text. The setting of the scene, in which Eve views the photograph on the porch of the empty

house with the 'inert' flag on its little pole behind her, is a harsh reminder of the blind belief in the nation, in whose name this war – and its war crimes – are committed.

However, the text emphasises not the horror Eve experiences but her inability to engage with it. She notes:

> although these photographs were a signal to the eyes about something really happening, the more she looked at them the less she felt or thought. The more pictures she saw, the less they meant something that had happened to real people and the more it became possible to pile real people up like that again anywhere you wanted and have your picture taken standing smiling behind them. (pp. 285-286)

The 'information era', a primary factor for proponents of a borderless world, is referenced here in line with its contradictory post-9/11 context. The 24-hour news coverage characteristic of the digital era is referenced by 'the more pictures she saw'. Eve considers this not as enabling world-wide connection through global information flows, but rather presents it as an oversaturation of information.

Baudrillard's notion of hyperreality (1981) provides a fitting theoretical language for Smith's exploration here. Baudrillard develops the work of structuralism, for which Ferdinand de Saussure's argument that the linguistic sign or 'sound-image' has an arbitrary relation to the concept that it signifies is foundational ([1916] 2011, p. 15). Baudrillard's development of structuralism is

located in his concept of the hyperreal, which appears as a matrix of signs that either mask the absence of reality or are abstract to any notion of 'reality' and as such, it becomes impossible to distinguish between reality and the simulation of reality ([1981] 1994, p. 6). He states: 'the transition from signs which dissimulate something to signs which dissimulate that there is nothing, marks the decisive turning point' ([1981] 1994, p. 6). Baudrillard's example of Disneyland illustrates his discussion of hyperreality further; he writes that 'Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real' ([1981] 1994, p. 12). By this he means that Disneyland is presented as a world of fantasy and escapism from 'reality' and, through this contrast, maintains the illusion that there is a 'reality' outside of its gates. However, as Baudrillard continues, in fact 'all of Los Angeles and the America surrounding it are no longer real, but of the order of the hyperreal and of simulation' ([1981] 1994, p. 12). This, he states, is because modern America, and, we might add, much of the world in the age of digital and commercial expansion, functions on the same terms as Disneyland; a succession of weightless signs that no longer correlate to the real or a 'concept' in Saussure's original terms. It is this abstract and weightless circulation of signs that produce only an illusion or simulation of 'reality' that constitutes the hyperreal.

Eve's engagement with the photograph is significant in that it explicitly flags up a process of hyperreality. The photographs are overtly recognised as a sign; they are 'a signal to the eyes about something really happening' but they are detached from the 'real' in that 'the more pictures she saw, the less they meant something that had happened to real people'. Significantly, it is the quantity of images here that

produces a state of hyperreality in which this 'signal' becomes detached from 'real people' they depict. This focus on the quantity of images ties this image to the saturation of information inherent in the digital era. As Eve's narrative continues:

> Eve shook her head. She thought of the man in the bodybag whose dead face, made of miniscule dots of print, had been reproduced millions of times and sent round the world and was, right now, folded under her arm, already outdated. She thought of the smiling girl solider. She thought of the girl's own eyes, her erect obscene thumb. They were reproduced in the same kind of ink and in the same kind of tiny dots as the man's dead eye. (p. 294)

Both the dead man's face and the woman's obscene thumb are reduced to 'dots' in this image, weightless signs that have no relation to the reality that they represent. The text draws attention to the global nature of the flow of information, recognizing that these dots are 'reproduced millions of times and sent round the world'. Rather than emphasising a cosmopolitan image of global connectedness, however, the text draws attention to the disposable nature of this mass of information; it is 'already outdated'. It is this that alienates Eve from the reality depicted by the images. This scene actively subverts the notion that global flows of information can cause an increasingly connected world; if anything, these 'dots of print' that are 'sent round the world' present merely an illusion of connection that actually masks an increased segregation from the atrocities present in the realities of the War on Terror.

Moreover, the 'information' spread around the world communicates news of

violence committed as part of the ongoing project of protecting the nation and as

such the bordered and protected nation is at the heart of this simulation of global

connectedness. The narrative is uncompromising in its abhorrence for this as Eve

asks: 'was there any point in it, sitting outside on the porch of a dark empty house

with its rag of a flag hung by its front door?' (p. 294). This question acknowledges

the home and the flag, the intertwined sites of the nation, that are protected and

fought for in this war. The flag, the sign or symbol of the nation, is emptied of

meaning as it is reduced to a 'rag' while the family home – the microcosm of the

boundaried and reproductive nation – is literally hollowed out; it becomes simply an

'empty house'. In addition to its acknowledgement of the failure of global

information flows to connect us, then, this scene also demonstrates that the

information shared simply provides evidence of the continued presence of national

divisions and violence.

In a related image to the 'dots' that Eve encounters, Magnus notes that 'the

television is full of the news about Saddam's dead sons. The Americans killed them

in a shoot-out a couple of days ago' (p. 146). The television being 'full' conveys the

same image of oversaturation while Magnus' casual reference to the news conveys

detachment from news of the Iraq war. Eve's reflection on her difficulty with

engaging with the image similarly reflects desensitization from the war in the text.

In both scenes it is the bombardment of images and information characteristic of the

'digital' or 'information era' that results in this desensitisation. This numbness to the

continued presence of these images of war mirrors Augé's notion of technology as

alienating, 'a world thus surrendered to solitary individuality' (1995, p. 78). And yet

the nation forms a key part of this world; flags, national divides, and threats from

the 'other' comprise the everyday makeup of their lives. Their technological

alienation prevents them from feeling the impact of national violence and border

protection that persists into the twenty-first century. The global flow of information,

in these terms then, provides an illusion of a borderless world that simultaneously

numbs us to the continued divisions that exist in national forms. This illusion of a

borderless world does not distinguish national divisions, or violence committed in

the nation's name, but gives it an insidious presence in the twenty-first century.

The everyday presence of the nation is also inscribed into *The Accidental*

when Magnus and Astrid watch a television programme about the events of 2003.

Magnus describes the programme: 'The England Rugby team was standing, fists

raised, in front of a huge roaring crowd. The US soldiers sat around on regal-looking

chairs in the dusty remains of a blown-open palace suit. Then there was an aerial

shot of a police cordon round the edge of a small green wood' (p. 243). Through

attention to the programme Magnus is only half watching, we can acknowledge that

these are all images involving the division of land in some form or another. This

flickers in register from the casual opposition between nations in competitive sport

to the violent invasion of countries in the War on Terror. The narrative continues by

showing they can be dismissed as quickly as they can be viewed: 'Astrid sat flicking

the channels. 2003, gone in the flick of a button' (p. 246). This phrase evokes the

instantaneous, 'speed of light' digital era, in which images such as those mentioned

can be shared across the world through telecommunications and increasing digital

technologies. Critics such as Ray or Popescu might argue that the circulation of these images is a positive example of an increasingly connected world. However, the images presented here provide evidence for the continued presence of the nation in the contemporary. The emphasis is on the ease with which this reality can go unnoticed as Magnus's narrative shifts focus to the illusion of power of the technological, which can dismiss the events of 2003 in a split second movement. The hyper-connected world in which information can be shared in a nanosecond, then, could be considered, along with global capitalism, as an illusion that turns our view away from the divisions in territory that continue to exist as organising principles in the twenty-first century.

The question is therefore not whether the contemporary age is borderless or is actually fixated on homeland security; these two extremes exist in a dangerous relationship. Technological and commercial expansion provides an impression of a borderless world that allows national divisions to take on an insidious quality. War and threat to the nation are embedded in ordinary lives, yet our increased sense of living in a dramatically transforming world at the beginning of the twenty-first century makes us ever more numb to how identities are becoming increasingly bordered by ideas of nation, belonging and protection from the 'other'.

Smith uses Astrid's twelve-year-old voice to provide a sense of this contemporary moment. The post-9/11 context is directly referenced as part of this everyday fabric of threat and security. When reflecting on seeing a stage production of *Medea*, Astrid comments that 'her eyes melt in their sockets and she comes out in a rash like if terrorists dropped spores on the Tube. Her lungs melt and Astrid

yawns. She is hungry' (p. 9). The simile here, and the casualness of it, brings the ordinariness of the contemporary threat of terrorism into focus. For this twelve-year-old the most readily available way of illustrating the violence of '[eyes melting] in their sockets' is through the threat of terrorism. The absolute ordinariness of this threat is demonstrated further; it only lasts for a moment and is interrupted and forgotten swiftly through the interjection of the thought 'Astrid yawns. She is hungry'. Terrorism is inserted into *The Accidental* as a sign of the times, but it is Astrid's apathetic and distracted reaction to the image that reminds Smith's reader of the contemporary ordinariness of this threat.

Sixteen-year-old Magnus, although more questioning than Astrid, shares some of her blind mirroring of problematic notions that circulate the ordinary in the Global War on Terror. When reflecting on the discussions in school 'after the soldiers went into Iraq' he states, 'obviously some countries knew more about good order than others' (p. 50). The reference here is casual and barely worth mentioning; it is 'obvious'. This emphasises the interplay of nations in the war and reflects the neo-colonialism that is bound up with the Western invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan. The result is a world organized by the notion of external threat and security against that. The ease with which these references are assimilated into the narrative demonstrates the ordinariness of their presence and the insidious ways that notions of 'threat from the other' occupy the children of the contemporary moment.

In 'Passion: Regular or Decaf?', Slavoj Žižek provides terms that might apply to this blindness of contemporary life. He writes:

[O]n today's market, we find a series of products deprived of their malignant

property: coffee without caffeine, cream without fat, beer without alcohol.

The list goes on: virtual sex as sex without sex, the Colin Powel doctrine of

war without casualties (on our side, of course) as war without war, the

redefinition of politics as expert administration as politics without politics.

(2004, n.p.)

Žižek calls this society without commitment to the malignant property of a product,

experience, idea, or politics, a 'decaffeinated' society. His discussion moves on to

different parameters as he considers the positive potential in Islam that could resist

the capitalist Western world order. His notion of decaffeinated society, however,

provides useful terms for thinking about the nation in the contemporary.

Smith has commented on the place of war in *The Accidental*: 'although people

won't think this immediately, I think it's a war novel. We lived through a war as

though we were not at war in this country. We saw it on television but we saw a

very different version of it which would be unrecognizable to people from

elsewhere' (cited in France, 2005, n.p.). This resonates with a sense of the

decaffeinated society; the novel explores a war without war. Smith is right that the

text might not immediately be thought of as a war novel. The war does not feature

and organize the lives of the characters in any tangible sense; they encounter it on

the television and in newspapers, but Eve's acknowledgement of her struggle to

engage with the images is one of only a few moments of explicit reflection. Astrid,

for example, articulates a less critical view of her detachment from the war. She thinks about 'the people who are in that war that's supposed to be happening, though not very many people seem to have died in it, not as many as in a real war' (p. 128). Its being a war without war provides another encounter with hyperreality from Astrid as in Eve's response to the photographs from the Abu Ghraib trial when she states 'not as many as in a real war'. In this sense then, *The Accidental* is a fitting example of a war novel for the contemporary; it is decaffeinated, 'deprived of [its] malignant property', and thus a war novel without war.

Žižek's notion of decaffeination helps envisage a world in which the nation, and protection of it, continues to organise the contemporary world. This is, however, taking on a more insidious quality than ever as it persists beneath the illusion that we are living in an increasingly borderless world. The result is on-going nationalisms, and wars committed in their name, which are embedded in the ordinary to the point that we are desensitized to them. In a world where Coke can be drunk across the world, images from war and war crimes can be printed millions of times over and circulated globally, or simply dismissed with the flick of a button on a TV remote, nationalism and its associated violence holds, to borrow Žižek's concept, a dangerously decaffeinated quality. This blindness, produced through the unhappy marriage of contemporary universal cosmopolitanism and the realities of the post-9/11 homeland security culture is, in fact, the real symptom of our age. Scottish devolution in 1999 and the Scottish independence referendum of September 2014 hold an intriguing position in this framework. This prompts questioning of whether Scottish nationalism holds a similar 'decaffeinated' quality,

and whether the rupturing moment of devolution holds any significance in this global context.

Some of the concepts surrounding Scottish independence invite analysis for their relevance to a 'decaffeinated' national model. David Cameron won the battle to have a straightforward yes/no vote on Scottish independence. But concepts such as 'Indy-Light' and 'Devo-Max' still surround the debate and remain a grey area, with suggestions as recent as March 2014 that Unionists would propose a 'devo-max' model in the case of a no vote being quashed by Nicola Sturgeon (Whitaker, 2014, n.p.). Indy-Light refers to an independent Scotland that would still have some involvement with the UK — a currency share, for example. Devo-Max references the option of avoiding all-out independence by simply increasing the legislative powers attributed to the Scottish Government. The terminology of these concepts takes on a consumer language reminiscent of soft-drink advertisement. This may sound like a trivial point, but I would argue that this triviality is worth attention because it makes it very easy to dismiss such concepts as unimportant. The fact remains that when using this language we are discussing the sovereignty of a state and the legislative powers of its government. The seriousness of these issues is somehow watered down into a consumer-driven language that seems 'cool' and modern but also flippant, disposable, and ultimately harmless.

With Scotland's disorienting devolutionary moment in mind, however, we can simultaneously turn to *The Accidental* in order to explore shifts in explorations of Scottishness. Although its marginality in relation to England was diminished after devolution, post-devolution Scotland remains a marginal presence in the UK and on

a global platform. Homi Bhabha, in his refuting of universalist capitalist cosmopolitanism, emphasised the marginal subject as the true cosmopolitan. He stated that those on the periphery exist away from the 'canonical centre' and so live through necessity the transnational, 'cosmopolitan' life ([1994] 2004, pp. xi-xiii). This offers a productive way to think through post-devolution Scotland's marginality in relation to *The Accidental.*

Eve alerts Smith's reader to Amber's Scottishness: 'you're Scottish aren't you? I can hear it in your voice . . . Can you speak that – I can't remember the name of it – that other language that people used to speak up there?' (p. 91). Yet Scottishness is intertwined with a sense of 'otherness' here, which contributes to Amber's elusive presence as the stranger who enters the family home in the text. Elsewhere in the text, Scottishness continues to contribute to a general sense of her 'foreignness'. Neither Michael nor Astrid can place her accent, yet they both draw attention to her being from elsewhere. Astrid notes that 'she has a way of talking i.e. Irish-sounding, or maybe a kind of American' (p. 31), while Michael reflects that 'she had an accent that sounded foreign. Scandinavian' (p. 65). Amber's position, then, is not simply as the 'Scottish other' to the English family; she takes on a more elusive foreign quality of non-specific 'otherness'.

In the final image of the text, Amber tells the reader to 'imagine the most beautiful place in the world' and proceeds to describe the Alhambra Palace in Spain. In this image the text ends with a symbol of cultural transience:

it was Moorish. It was Arab. It was Berber. It was Muslim. It got ruined. They

restored it. It was very briefly Jewish. It was very briefly Gypsy. The

Christians threw the Muslims out. The Catholics kept the palace but put a

church on top of the mosque. Poets loved it. Writers loved it. (pp. 305-6)

There is a sense of Bhabha's marginal cosmopolitanism here, a layering of cultures

and difference rather than 'one world' unity. Amber's Scottishness in the text allows

her to be peripheral and other in a way that is not restrictive and national but multi-

layered and, in Bhabha's sense, 'cosmopolitan'. This suggests a shift in Scottish

marginality away from the masculinised national unity strengthened in relation to

England towards a more liberating way of occupying a space that is 'off-centre'.

This leads to the suggestion that, with its jarring reaction against England

diminished, post-devolution Scotland could take on a more transient marginality.

This notion of a post-devolution Scottish cosmopolitanism will be explored in the

next chapter of this thesis. The next section of the present chapter situates *The

Accidental*'s dysfunctional family model through Lauren Berlant's theory in *Cruel

Optimism*. This introduces thinking on Scotland's post-devolution queerness,

previously read in relation to *Born Free* in chapter two, within a broader context.

The Good Life

Lauren Berlant defines cruel optimism as a relation in which 'something you desire

is actually an obstacle to you flourishing' (2011, p. 1). Optimism here involves

attachment; it is 'the force that moves you out of yourself and into the world' (2011,

p. 1). This is not necessarily an 'optimistic' feeling, as Berlant writes, 'because optimism is ambition, at any moment it might feel like anything, including nothing: dread, anxiety, hunger, curiosity' (2011, p. 3). Optimism, then, involves an attachment to something, someone or an idea. Berlant writes 'it might involve food, or a kind of love; it might be a fantasy of the good life, or a political project' (2011, p. 1). The 'fantasy of the good life', which Berlant describes as 'that moral-intimate-economic thing', is the central point of focus throughout *Cruel Optimism.* She recognises that 'one of optimism's ordinary pleasures is to include conventionality, that place where appetites find a shape in the predictable comforts of the good-life genres that a person or world has seen fit to formulate' (2011, p. 2). In other words, 'the good life' references the normative narratives that give shape to our lives. It is, as Berlant writes, 'the means by which people hoard idealizing theories and tableaux about how they and the world "add up to something"' (2011, p. 2). Through Edelman we are familiar with such narratives' anchor points of heteronormative values such as monogamy and family, states that accomplish a stable fantasy of linearity and longevity.

Although they both provide scope for considering crisis in the family model, Berlant is not as negatively positioned as Edelman. *Cruel Optimism* centres around the simple question: 'why do people stay attached to conventional good-life fantasies – say, of enduring reciprocity in couples, families, political systems, institutions, markets, and at work – when the evidence of their instabilities, fragility, and clear cost abounds?' (2011, p. 2). Thus Berlant's notion of 'cruel optimism' applies to 'the good life' when the stability seemingly offered by it does not

materialise, yet the subject remains drawn to that structure of meaning-making even as that fantasy wavers. Her coming to 'the good life' fantasy through the question of attachment distances Berlant from the fervent rejection of all such politics that comprises Edelman's stance. *Cruel Optimism* is, instead, interested in why and how fantasies of the good life are clung to, how failings in this fantasy are felt, and what alternative attachments to life might look like. This theme of attachment to the good life is available for exploration in *The Accidental* and can build on my reading of the 'Scottish' family breakdown present in *Born Free*.

Amber's intrusion on and challenging of the family results in several textual instances that offer the same kind of family-break down scenario as *Born Free*. These moments involve detailed descriptions of a character's wavering faith in the structure of their family model. Michael's narrative could mirror Vic's in places, where his masculine identity is called into crisis as the family unit, and his position within it, becomes destabilised:

> He looks at his wife. She looks the same as always. He looks at the girl, at the boy. They look the same as always. He has no idea whether their hearts have been taken too, along with his, and he has no idea how to find out. To say anything at all might break the spell and cause them all to collapse at his feet, hollowed out, the mere shell of a family. And then he'd collapse too, the mere shell of a man. (p. 270)

This passage shares with *Born Free* themes of insecure masculinity as it is tied to the family unit; the 'shell of a family' would equate to Michael being the 'mere shell of a man'. Additionally, Michael recalls his position as stepfather in the family as he refers to Astrid and Magnus in the estranged terms of 'the girl' and 'the boy', adding a sense of fragility to this illusion – the shell – of the family. His reference to 'the spell' that might 'break' invokes the important distinction between Smith's and Hird's texts. Smith presents the image of a family that will cling to the structures of family, and other fantasies of the good life, in spite of the knowledge of their fraying. This is where Berlant's interest in the ways we remain attached to structures of the good life helps articulate a difference between these texts. *Born Free* encompasses the abject space outside of the order of meaning-making that Edelman theorises. *The Accidental*, read through Berlant, introduces an important intersection in the queer project; often instabilities in 'the good life' are not envisioned via a radical Edelman-like step into abject nothingness, but involve painful ongoing negotiations in attachment to that fantasy. Michael might acknowledge the fantastic nature of the family unit – 'the spell' – but he equally realises that without the 'spell' they would simply collapse.

Similar disenchantment with the family model is evidenced in a passage from Magnus's narration, in which he reflects:

everybody at this table is in broken pieces which won't go together, pieces which are nothing to do with each other, like they all come from different jigsaws, all muddled together into the one box by some assistant who

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couldn't care less in a charity shop or wherever the place is that old jigsaws

go to die. Except jigsaws don't die. (p. 138)

The final short sentence here implies a caveat; that, perhaps in the context of

Magnus's musings, families can 'die'. This association between death and the family

is reminiscent of the same kind of crumbling faith in the family model in *Born Free*'s

repeated references to the 'death of the family' (1999, p. 243). The image of the

family each being 'broken pieces' forced together in 'the one box' exemplifies a

common theme of *The Accidental* and *Born Free*; that separate individuals are fused,

often painfully, into the immovable structure of family unity. The difference,

however, is that Smith's characters negotiate ways of remaining 'in the box', while

Hird's simply freefall in the wake of its collapse.

This notion of individuals being brought together into one unit is explored

through the form of both texts. Martin Ryle comments on the 'mechanical structure'

of *The Accidental* simply to acknowledge that Smith handles it with fluency. Yet the

'mechanics' of this structure also reflect the mechanical, rigid nature of the family

unit. The text is narrated though the sequence: Astrid, Magnus, Michael, Eve, with

each sequence held under the playfully formal headings 'the beginning', 'the middle',

and 'the end'. *Born Free* shares a similar structure in that each chapter is narrated by

a different member of the family of four. In both texts the distinction between the

mechanical unity of the form and the subjective thoughts, feelings, and opinions of

each individual presents an image of separate characters knocked into the 'one size

fits all' family model. This reflects the image present in Magnus' narrative: 'like they all come from different jigsaws, all muddled together into the one box'.

The additional obvious difference between the forms of the texts is Amber's first person intrusions on the family's narratives, which clearly reflects her intrusion into the family model. *Born Free* is specific and insular in setting; it is clearly tied to the Scottish devolutionary context. Thus, the absolute trauma of the family model is intertwined with the disorientation of that particular national moment. On the other hand, *The Accidental*'s Smart family live in Islington, London, and the story is set in Norfolk. Thus, the anxieties of the good life do not share the same specificity in Scottishness as the destruction of the family in *Born Free* does. However, Amber's intrusion would suggest she can be considered responsible for the impact she has on this family.

Critics have read Amber's intrusion in line with ideas on crisis and trauma. Patrick O'Donnell, for example, notes her significance as the 'stranger' who ensues 'a *sudden* overturning that signals a disruption of temporality' (2013, p. 90). Meanwhile Ryle has read Amber's upending impact as significant in eco-critical terms (2013, pp. 8-9). Emily Horton and Phillip Tew have also read Amber's intrusion for its significance in a post-9/11 context. Horton notes its reflection of 'the trauma at the heart of post-9/11 life' (2012, p. 637) while Tew reads the text as exemplary of a 'traumatological' aesthetic in contemporary life (2007, p. 211). For the present study this could be considered queer in the same way that, for *Born Free*, Scottish devolution acts as a transformative and therefore destabilising event. Initially, however, the extent to which Amber's intrusion can be read as a force of

impact must be explored so as to develop thinking on the workings of queer

disruption.

Amber's position as something of an 'impact point' from which the crumbling

of family life ensues is ambiguous. This is due to evidence of the family's dysfunction

and dissatisfaction with 'the good life' prior to her arrival. Astrid, for instance,

conveys uncertainty in identity due to her not knowing her biological father and

carrying her stepfather's surname: '(Astrid Smart. Astrid Berenski. Astrid Smart.

Astrid Berenski)' (p. 7). Moments such as this trouble the reading of Amber's

intrusion as 'crisis point'. O'Donnell recognizes this difficulty, observing that 'Amber

may be either the active instrument of wreckage or a neutral catalyst whose mere

presence magnetizes inherent destructive forces' (2013, p. 96). O'Donnell's

description of Amber as both 'active instrument of wreckage' and 'neutral catalyst'

captures her multifaceted role in the text. The idea that Amber might function as an

impartial catalyst for the breakdown of the family nuances the presumption that she

functions as a queer point of rupture when she unexpectedly enters their lives.

Germanà has noted that while Amber might not be considered directly

rupturing to the family, she exposes its fragility: 'Amber's symbolic light illuminates

the path towards an increased awareness of the real, the loss of which all the

characters appear to be mourning, before her unexpected arrival' (2010, p. 90).

Germanà's sense of Amber's relation to the family, not as redundant, or necessarily

rupturing, but as '*enlightening*' (2010, p. 88) provides a way of understanding

Amber as exposing pre-existing cracks in the family rather than causing them. The

narratives that surround the moment when Amber takes a photograph of the family

demonstrate further this exposure of the family unit's façade. Eve reflects on her relations with her family while thinking about the photograph:

> Here was a summer 2003 holiday snapshot of the Smart family standing outside the front door of their 2003 Norfolk holiday home . . . A family, all of them, smiling. Who were they smiling for? Was it for themselves, somewhere in the future? Was it for the photographer? Who took the photograph? What did it show? Did it show that Michael had come home smelling, yet again, of someone else? Did it show that Magnus was a boy so like his father that Eve almost couldn't bear to sit in the same room with him? Did it show that Astrid was infuriating to Eve, that she deserved to have no father, just as Eve had done most of her life, and was lucky to still have a mother at all? (p. 183-4)

The family tensions descried in this passage existed prior to Amber's arrival and continued during her stay; she does not cause this dissatisfaction but simply illuminates an ongoing state of dysfunction. The photograph is the image of the family captured by the flash of a camera, held by Amber, and is an exposing force as it captures the cracks in the family unit. This image of light develops when Astrid looks at the picture under a streetlight and thinks: 'it is amazing that a photograph is forever but is really a kind of proof that nothing is longer than a split second in time' (p. 228). The light from the streetlight here works as another image of exposure. Astrid acknowledges the façade of durable family life that is performed and

simultaneously exposed in the taking of the picture as she holds the thin photograph under the light and reflects 'nothing is longer than a split second in time' (p. 228). Amber can be understood, then, not necessarily as an active rupturing queer force, but as a more passive instrument of exposure of existing fragilities in the good life fantasy of the family.

The photograph demonstrates a further aspect of Amber's role within the family. She is the enlightening force that bears down on them but is also the outsider who allows them to perform the image of 'family'. In this scene, for instance, she allows the whole family to stand together and literally captures the image of their unity. The performative aspect of this is demonstrated in the line: 'Here was a summer 2003 holiday snapshot of the Smart family standing outside the front door of their 2003 Norfolk holiday home' (p. 184). There is a sense of presentation in the language 'here was a'; it offers up something to an unknown spectator. The question 'who were they smiling for?' (p. 184) furthers this idea as it acknowledges that this is a display that requires an audience. Thus, while Amber throws light on the fragility of the family model, she also symbolises a willingness to perform that image. This is not a queerness akin to *Born Free*'s crumbling of the family model into Edelman's impossible space, but is akin to Berlant's attention to the way we stay attached to those structures even as they fray.

This notion of Amber as the family's necessary observer is raised explicitly when Eve addresses Amber: 'we are a family, Amber, as you will have seen this evening' (p. 92). This reference to Amber's having 'seen' them being a family produces the image of family as performance, and Amber as audience to that. The

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significance of Amber bearing witness to the family is evident when Eve later ponders: '*Couldn't it sometimes take an outsider to reveal to a family that it was a family?* Magnus had said goodnight like he used to. Astrid has kissed Eve goodnight. Michael has kissed Eve's back, between her shoulders. They had had quite attentive sex before he put his head under the pillow' (p. 97). In this early observation of Amber's influence she is the audience required to pull the performance of the good life together. Once again Eve references the various difficulties in the family unit prior to Amber's intrusion. With Amber's presence, however, the Smarts can find a temporary way of pulling together as 'family'. Significantly, Eve does not recognize this as performance but as something truthful that has been proven; Amber 'reveals' to the family 'that it was a family'. Thus the projection of the good life that Amber allows demonstrates that this is a performance – is constructed – but simultaneously demonstrates a process of believing and investing in that image from Eve. In these terms then, through Amber's presence, the Smarts, momentarily have a means of managing their attachment to 'the good life'.

In a similar acknowledgement of Amber's relation to the family, Magnus reflects: 'something about Amber at the centre of it like an axis is what is holding them all together right now in this room, keeping everything going round, stopping everything from fragmenting into an exploded nothing that shatters itself out into the furthest reaches of the known universe' (p. 152). Amber here provides the point onto which the family can converge. This is an image of the kind of trajectory Edelman might follow in deconstructing the family model; the only alternative is abject nothingness. It is also an image of the kind of chaotic freefall that is imagined

in *Born Free*. The image here of Amber as an axis holding them all together recalls Berlant's argument that rather than freefall, people will remain attached to fantasies of the good life in an ongoing negotiation.

Amber's position as the force that allows the family to pull together rather than fall apart provides an important conjecture in queer theory. Queer tends to imagine disruption to hegemonic heteronormative structures through some sort of disorientating or rupturing moment, as chapter two does in its analysis of the disorientating devolutionary moment. While these moments hold powerful queer potential, they unavoidably assume a tone of the rare and exceptional. This focus on the queer destabilizing moment positions structures such as the family model as easeful and natural when otherwise unaffected by the queer moment. Berlant's theory, applied to Amber's position in *The Accidental*, presents the family model as a construction that requires effort to maintain. This decentres the sense of the good life as 'natural' and 'normal' without committing queer to the situation of the exceptional circumstance.

Berlant theorises specifically on this sustained yet failing attachment through her concept of 'crisis ordinariness'. She is explicit that she departs from traditional trauma theory when outlining crisis ordinariness. She summarises this discourse as follows:

> in critical theory and mass society generally, 'trauma' has become the
> primary genre of the last eighty years for describing the historical present as
> the scene of an expectation that has just shattered some ongoing, uneventful

ordinary life that was supposed to just keep going on and with respect to

which people felt solid and confident. (2011, p. 10)

Her point of contention here is that the crisis narrative infers, by default, that

outside of the point of trauma the good life was an ongoing, easy, and natural

occurrence. 'Crisis ordinariness' therefore exposes the good life as a constructed

entity that requires constant negotiation with the everyday crisis of making that

model fit. As Berlant writes: 'under a regime of crisis ordinariness life feels

truncated, more like desperate doggy paddling than like a magnificent swim out to

the horizon' (2011, p. 117). In thinking about crisis as it manifests in the everyday

Berlant recognizes that the 'everyday' structure of the good life is not the 'natural'

organising principle for a life that is normal, and necessarily happy. Amber's more

passive position as that which provides the necessary outsider who bears witness to

the family's performance emphasises the everyday good life as troubling and

unnatural, requiring difficult negotiation.

The perspectives of Edelman and Berlant could be broadly combined for a

queer project to trouble the image of the good life as both natural and easeful. This

is a kind of queer project Berlant describes when she refers to *Cruel Optimism*'s

willingness 'to desubjectivize queerness and to see it in practices that feel out

alternative routes for living without requiring personhood to be expressive of an

internal orientation or a part of a political programme advocating how to live'

(2011, p. 18). Berlant departs significantly from Edelman, however, in that she aims

to think through 'alternative routes for living', where Edelman does not.

Berlant and Edelman develop their thinking on their respective approaches to crisis further in their dialogue *Sex, or the Unbearable* (2013). Chapter four engages with the specifics of Edelman and Berlant's theoretical explorations of relationality and estrangement. For the moment, however, their reflections on their dialogue elaborates their contrasting positions towards the idea of crisis, oridnarniess, and optimism. Berlant reflects on the process of relation that constitutes her dialogue with Edelman:

> I have learned to derive pleasure, induce attachment, and maintain curiosity about the enigmas and insecurities that I can also barely stand or comprehend. This is what it means to say that excitement is disturbing, not devastating; ambivalent, not shattering in the extreme. (2013, p. 125)

This is reflective of Berlant's view that crisis ordinariness might not involve something 'shattering in the extreme' but rather an on-going process of renegotiating an attachment to life even as our received structures for understanding ourselves and our place in the world fail us. Berlant's description of her dialogue with Edelman provides one isolated example of that 'optimism' that, in her view, helps us to proceed through those failures; those 'enigmas and insecurities that [we] can also barely stand or comprehend' are at the centre of that maintenance of an attachment, and even at the centre of an attainment of pleasure through those failures. Berlant is clear that her proposals for considering new ways of attaching to life are not shared by Edelman (2013, p. 5) and similarly Edelman

accepts Berlant's rejection of his ideas on the 'shock' involved in the experience of contingency: 'Lauren would see the word "traumatic" as making grandiose what she invites us to de-dramatize' (2013, p. 9). So while Berlant and Edelman both focus on the transcendence of normative structures of meaning making, Berlant theorises the possibility of a renegotiation of them into a liveable position, while Edelman simply turns his back on them, caring little for the space into which he moves.

Clearly, Edelman's theory is compromised in the paradoxical fact that its impossibility is the root of both its persuasiveness and its unattainability. Meanwhile, Berlant's position certainly appears more attainable; yet, it does lack some of the transformative potential of Edelman's position. Berlant would argue that this perceived 'lack' stems from attributing too much power to the radical, rupturing, and transformative event. She would view a re-inscribing of power into the everyday 'crisis ordinariness' as a productive move. However, the everyday is tricky territory as it seems always ready to be recast into the normative model of the longevous and successful good life. In other words, no matter how much queer observes the fragile negotiations in maintaining that fantasy, 'the good life' is nonetheless upheld as the dominant fantasy for living. That said, Berlant's position avoids the bind of casting the good life as otherwise 'natural' outside of queer rupture. Thus, it seems that queer requires methods of casting heteronormative structures as unnatural but still relies on the transformative event to push the fragile models that Berlant presents into a dramatically refigured space.

Born Free and *The Accidental* provide a successful mediation between the two positions. *Born Free* provides a way of thinking about Edelman's impossible and

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destructive queerness, as it originates from a 'real' socio-political moment for Scotland. And simultaneously, the connections between this moment in Scottish politics and Edelman's 'impossible space' are made possible primarily because the novel – and creative writing more generally – opens a space for experimentation with ideas that are not so readily permitted or contemplated in 'reality'. In these terms, *Born Free* provides a way of realising Edelman's 'impossible' rupture as it links to Scottish devolution. As such, the Scottish devolutionary moment can be positioned as a particular point of interest for queer theory; it provides a 'real' example of disorientation in which the 'impossible' space materialises. *The Accidental*, however, helps clarify that the queer breakdown of the family model in *Born Free* does not infer a happy and naturalised model outside of this breakdown. Through holding both Edelman and Berlant together in analyses of these texts we can position the family unit as unnatural and requiring negotiation broadly, but can hold a specific type of transformative crisis in the devolutionary moment. This prompts a final turn towards Amber's more explicit queer presence amongst the family so as to explore the significance of her 'Scottishness', which potentially holds transformative significance in twenty-first century queer theory.

Just as Amber's position as Scottish and peripheral introduces a positive way of considering post-devolution Scottish marginality in a global context, these aspects can equally develop a sense of queerness. Amber's queering impact on the family is not difficult to delineate; this is most readily available when she kisses Eve:

Eve was moved beyond belief by the kiss. The place beyond belief was

terrifying. There, everything was different, as if she had been gifted with a

new kind of vision, as if disembodied hands had strapped some kind of

headset on to her that revealed all the unnamed, invisible colours beyond the

basic human spectrum, and as if the world beyond her eyes had slowed its

pace especially to reveal the spaces between what she usually saw and the

way that things were tacked temporarily together with thin thread across

these spaces. (p. 202)

Eve's movement to the 'place beyond belief' relfects Edelman's 'impossible space'.

The naming of this place as 'terrifying' emphasises ingrained and naturalised

heterosexuality as normative. The kiss disturbs the fantasy of normativity created

through Eve's maintenance of the good life. This space, however, is not as negatively

positioned as Edelman's; it is vibrant and full of 'invisible colours', thus, this space

beyond the normative, however terrifying, is also vibrant and wondrous.

This attributing a fantastic and colourful image to that outside space

contrasts with the typical view of Edelman's impossible abject position. Edelman's

theoretical position has troubled certain corners of queer theory, which has named

his position, along with Leo Bersani and, to an extent, Berlant, as constituting the

'negative' or 'anti-social' thesis in queer theory.[1] Edelman's uncompromising and

impossible position in *No Future* has contributed to the general view that he is, in

his own words, 'theory's equivalent of Darth Vader, a form of the father we love to

[1] For an overview of these debates see Robert Caserio *et al.,* 2006.

hate: withholding, histrionic, life-negating, and full of inhuman enjoyment' (2013, p. 58). This characterisation of him as the dark 'anti-social' cloud that looms over queer theory stems from his absolute rejection of what he terms a 'politics' organised according to heteronormative hegemonic structures. However, Amber's kiss and the space full of 'all the unnamed, invisible colours beyond the basic human spectrum' provides a way of inscribing a language of the fantastic, rather than the negative - 'life-negating, and full of inhuman enjoyment' - in the space beyond those normative structures.

The space Eve experiences through Amber's kiss is described through a language of the fantastic because it is not tied to the fervent rejection of the Child that comprises Edelman's work. However, elsewhere in the text, Amber is questioned by Eve about her state of living as an unemployed wanderer who has no home and sleeps beneath the stars in her car. In Halberstam's terms, discussed in chapter two, Amber is a queer subject in this way. In Berlant's terms, Amber also constitutes a way of living beyond 'the good life'. Her response, however, relates to Edelman's notion of the Child as the future-affirming centre-point of this life. Her explanation is retold by Eve:

> when she was in her twenties Amber MacDonald worked in the city in a high-flying position in investment assurance and insurance interests. She had a Porsche. It was the 1980s. One sleeting winter night, the week before Christmas, she was driving along a narrow car-lined street in a small town with the radio on playing a song called Smooth Operator and the windscreen

wipers doing their rubbery swipe over the windscreen, and a child, a girl of

seven wearing a little winter coat, its hood edged in fur, stepped between two

cars on to the road in front of her and Amber MacDonald's car hit the child

and the child died. (pp. 100-101)

This story verges on the ridiculous in its absolute extreme description of the death

of the innocent child as the only permissible justification for Amber's repeal of the

good life fantasy. The story is almost a caricature of the romanticised figure of the

child and, in this way, Smith invites her reader to question whether the story is true

or not and to reflect upon the idea of success, its demise, and the sacralised figure of

the child. Amber's position as a successful member of the bourgeoisie who lives the

good life through success at work and upward mobility is emphasised here. The

death of the child is set up as the rupture in that life. Amber, narrated through Eve,

continues: 'I decided that from then on I would never live in a place that could be

called home again. How could I? How could I live the same way after?' (p. 101). The

rhetorical questions here affirm the giving up of the 'good life' as the only possible

response. This presents the idea that the good life – and the stability of home –

simply cannot proceed in the wake of the death of the child. This supports

Edelman's observation that the Child is the centre-point around which all normative

politics converges. Amber's story confirms the mantra of that life; when the child is

dead, the good life can no longer exist.

　　　　This theme continues as Eve recalls Amber ending the story: 'She looked up,

looked Eve right in the eye. *Well?* she said. *Do you believe me?*' ([emphasis in

original] p. 101). This insertion of the question of belief into the story suggests an unreliability in the illusionary Amber's explanation. This implies that Amber has selected the story as the most believable explanation for her withdrawing from the good life. The implication is that Amber appeals to Eve's faith in the Child as the centre-point of the life-affirming good life structure. Thus, through this unreliability of Amber, the text acknowledged those collective fantasies of the good life underpinned by the figure of the Child, which assume that only a rupture to this model could permit a life outside of it.

The text's potential to further thinking on both Edelman's and Berlant's theories continues as Amber also provides the perfect symbol of Berlant's alternative to the good life. Berlant advocates the space of 'impasse' as an alternative way of living outside of the model of the good life. Developing the concept of 'impasse' from its immediate meaning, she writes: 'usually an "impasse" designates a time of dithering from which someone or some situation cannot move forward. In this book's adaptation, the impasse is a stretch of time in which one moves around with a sense that the world is at once intensely present and enigmatic' (2011, p. 4). Impasse thus offers a sense of living outside of the linearity of time that demands ongoing development and success as measured by the good life. Berlant suggests that 'speaking of cruel optimism, it may be that, for many now, living in an impasse would be an aspiration, as the traditional infrastructures for reproducing life – at work, in intimacy, politically – are crumbling at a threatening pace' (2011, p. 5). Thus, if attachment to the good life involves a relation of cruel

optimism that Berlant describes as 'desperate doggy paddling', living in an impasse could similarly be described via this image as a process of floating aimlessly.

The Accidental includes repeated reference to Amber that conveys her living in, and representing, an impasse. She explains her arrival at the Smart's holiday home by claiming her car broke down, and is frequently described as wandering, sitting on the grass, sleeping in her car, or doing 'pointless' things thereafter. In one instance, during sex Magnus asks: 'why do you always wear that stopped watch?' (p. 143), which is followed by the description: 'then, with her watch hand, she reaches down. What she does next blanks his mind completely of time. Time is nothing at a time like that' (p. 144). This scene is mirrored at the end of the novel when Magnus reflects on the 'the sweet headfuck of the endless, ended time in that house, in that church, in Amber' (p. 252). Amber embodies and offers to Magnus the transcendence of linear time. In these descriptions Amber represents unmoving or simply wandering and thus represents Berlant's impasse outside of the traditional 'good life' structures organised around 'success' defined by longevity and linearity.

Ryle similarly notes this characterization of Amber as disruptive of the longevous principles of the good life: 'Amber's visitation is unsettling partly because everyone finds themselves experiencing too much pleasure in the everyday – food, conversation, imagining, sex, strolling'. He reads this in neo-pastoral terms: 'this celebration of immediacy and conviviality', he writes, conveys the simple message that 'a greener life might give us more pleasure' (2012, p. 15). Berlant would draw the same conclusion on the impasse, not necessarily as offering more 'pleasure', but as being a space in which we might 'flourish' outside the relation of cruel optimism

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that encompasses the good life. On the temporality of the good life, Berlant refers to

'survival time, the time of struggling, drowning, holding onto the ledge, treading

water – the time of not stopping' (2011, p. 169). In these terms Amber represents

the time of stopping, of living in the 'now' and not in the 'later'. Read through

Berlant, then, Amber exposes the negotiation and maintenance of the good life in

her relation to the family and additionally embodies the alternative way of living

that Berlant proposes in her concept of the impasse.

Amber's multifaceted queerness prompts thinking on how her Scottishness

could be aligned with a queer position. Scottish marginality is not traditionally

associated with queerness. Throughout the twentieth-century Scotland's

marginality to England prompted a hypermasculine and, by inference,

heteronormative Scottish national identity. This hypermasculinity, produced from a

perceived inferiority to England, actually distanced Scotland from any sense of

queer. Smith articulated this point in an interview with Caroline Gonda: 'people are

particularly keen to categorize themselves as different . . . from English . . . To be

Scottish is to be separate; that's why . . . Scottish women's writing has only really

been given a place . . . in the last ten years . . . The idea that there are other forms of

difference apart from this one' ([ellipses in original] 1995, p. 5). Smith here presents

the widely held view that Scotland's being peripheral to England could only produce

a reactionary Scottishness that could not hold other differences within it.

Alice Ferrebe describes the hard man produced in late-twentieth-century

Scotland as 'these retrograde figures, loping through dilapidated urban landscapes'

and is clear that they 'signal a specific kind of male-authored reaction to Scotland's

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perceived emasculation by a culturally and politically dominant England' (2007, p. 275). Amber, the wandering Scottish outsider who kisses Eve and has a queering impact on the English family model, is a far cry from these hard man figures produced from Scottish marginality in the twentieth century. On viewing Amber in 2005, we might easily forget the hard man literature in which Scottish marginality produced hypermasculinity that supressed women and queerness at all costs. Amber is striking because of the ease with which her marginal Scottishness can be aligned with her marginal gender and marginal queerness.

It would seem that in that post-devolution space, where Scottish marginality in relation to England is diminished, there could be room for that marginality to become more associable with 'queer'. This provokes the acknowledgement that Scottish and queer might actually, and radically, share some affinity in the twenty-first century. Scotland's queer moment can therefore refer both to Scotland's own disorientation of its masculinised nationhood, but could also extend to it becoming a 'queer' presence via a re-shifting of its marginality. In addition to offering a marginal sense of cosmopolitanism, then, Amber raises the idea that Scottishness can be included in her symbolism as a queer disruptive entity. This idea will form subsequent explorations of Scottishness and queerness in chapter five of this thesis. Chapter four prefaces these ideas through analysis of cosmopolitanism in the post-devolution Scottish context in relation to the 'negative' trajectories of queer theory developed in the present chapter.

The present chapter introduces ways of thinking on the contemporary so as to ascertain post-devolution Scotland's position within that. Thinking about the

wider discourse on nations provides detail for the contradiction between the 'borderless' and 'homeland' view of the twenty-first century. *The Accidental* provides a means of negotiating these contrasting images and, read in relation to Žižek, presents 'decaffeinated nationalism' as a way of conceptualising the presence of the nation in the contemporary. This allows thinking about Scotland, with its national transformations of devolution and the independence referendum, as a particular point of interest for thinking about the nation in the twenty-first century. Early analysis of the independence referendum suggests Scotland can provide a specific example of this decaffeinated nationalism. However, focus on the queer moment of devolution suggests Scotland's potential to enact a cosmopolitan marginality that could counter the insidious presence of the nation in the 'borderless world' of global capitalism. Analysis of *The Accidental* in line with Berlant's notion of 'crisis ordinariness' in the 'good life' raises the important point that the devolutionary queer moment does not rupture a model for living that could necessarily otherwise be happy and natural. Negotiation of Berlant and Edelman's notions of crisis, however, allows the devolutionary moment to be considered a particular point of interest for queer theory, as it provides a tangible example from which Edelman's 'impossible' queerness can ensue. Analysis of Amber's queer Scottish position provides further ways of considering a refiguring of Scotland's marginality as something 'queer' in the wake of this disorienting moment.

 The Accidental therefore blurs the boundaries of Scottish literature, providing ways of thinking about nations and the family model that offsets an insular Scottish context. In doing so, it provides a useful perspective for thinking

about how Scotland's post-devolution queer space, identified in chapter two, might

be best explored. Broader discourse on nations brings forth the notion of marginal

cosmopolitanism while wider discussion in queer theory presents a queer

marginality as productive points for exploration of Scotland's post-devolution

potential. Assessing queer cosmopolitanism in post-devolution Scotland is therefore

the task of the next chapter.

Chapter Four

Disorientating Cosmopolitanism in Zoe Strachan's *Negative Space* (2003)

Chapter three explored the contemporary nation in order to clarify thinking on the

significance of twenty-first century Scottish nationhood within its wider global

context. The chapter navigated contemporary Scottishness amongst the competing

views of the twenty-first century as, on the one hand, borderless yet, on the other,

entrenched in notions of 'homeland'. This background, in line with analysis of Ali

Smith's *The Accidental* (2005), argued that divisive nationalism manifests

insidiously beneath the mere illusion of a borderless world. Analysis of *The*

Accidental's wandering queer Scottish stranger, Amber, in relation to Homi Bhabha's

proposal that ways of living that are 'off-centre' hold potential to 'move in-between

cultural traditions, and [reveal] hybrid forms of life and art that do not have a prior

existence within the discrete world of any single language or culture' ([1994] 2004),

p. xiii), suggested that disorientated devolutionary Scotland could offer some

'cosmopolitan' potential that need not be bound to territorial nationhood or a

homogeneous and alienating global model. Further analysis of *The Accidental* in

relation to Lee Edelman and Lauren Berlant's writings suggested Scotland's post-

devolution years as an example of an 'actually existing' disorientating queer crisis

from which the wandering queer cosmopolitan figure could emerge. The present

chapter therefore centres on the links between queer crisis and cosmopolitanism

within the disoriented post-devolution Scottish context through theoretical

exploration of the intersections between cosmopolitanism and queer theory and then through analysis of Zoë Strachan's *Negative Space* (2003).

Cosmopolitanism

Chapter three referenced a 'universal cosmopolitanism' in its discussion of the 'borderless world' and therefore dealt with a specific form of 'cosmopolitanism' in its discussion of the nation and concepts of borderlessness. Writing on cosmopolitanism is, however, a large and complex discourse and the present chapter's focus on disorientation and cosmopolitanism therefore first requires exploration of the large body of literature focused on that ambiguous term.

Cosmopolitanism brings about initial conceptual problems due to the general agreement that the term, by its very nature, should resist definition. As Sheldon Pollock *et al.* write, 'cosmopolitanism is not some known entity existing in the world . . . we are not exactly certain what it is, and figuring out why this is so and what cosmopolitanism is raises difficult conceptual issues' (2002, p. 1). They note that this uncertainty centres around the notion that cosmopolitanism 'must always escape positive and definite specification, precisely because specifying cosmopolitanism positively and definitely is an uncosmopolitan thing to do' (2002, p. 1). While this refusal to delineate the concept seemingly attributes cosmopolitanism much of its theoretical power, as we will see, this ambiguity has led to a vagueness in the term that can hinder reaching a workable definition of it or gauging movements and patterns in cosmopolitan theory.

Bruce Robbins, however, provides useful terms for placing competing views of cosmopolitanism under broad categories. These make it possible to discuss different kinds of cosmopolitanism and in doing so Robbins finds it possible to track a journey in its meaning. He refers, for example, to the 'old cosmopolitanism' of universalism (1998, pp. 1-2). This is the cosmopolitanism that views the world as a 'global village', which, however aspirational, tends to morph into a homogeneous world-view that falls into the pitfalls of global inequality. Writing at the end of the twentieth century, Robbins tracked an increased movement away from the universal to an emphasis on hybrid, specific, or vernacular cosmopolitanism (1998, pp. 1-2). This seeks to emphasise the peripheral and local as sites of hybridity that can resist the problems that ensue from 'one-world' universalism but can nonetheless transcend territorial nationalism. Alongside Bhabha's 'vernacular' or 'marginal' cosmopolitanism ([1994] 2004, pp. xi-xiii), Robbins references Paul Rainbow and Benita Parry's respective emphases on transnational cosmopolitanism, David Hollinger and Mitchell Cohen's 'rooted' cosmopolitanism, and Arnold Krupat's (1989) envisioning of 'heterodoxy not to the level of the universal, but, rather, to the level of the "inter-national"' (cited in Robbins, 1998, p. 1). He also references Kristeva's application of psychoanalysis to cosmopolitanism. In this approach Kristeva similarly emphasises a cosmopolitanism that stems from looking inwards rather than to a one-world universalism. Her statement that 'only strangeness is universal' (1993, p. 21) exemplifies her conjecture that to recognise strangeness within ourselves is the only way to bypass territorial belonging and the 'othering' of the foreigner. She establishes this position towards the end of *Nations*

without Nationalism: 'I am convinced that, in the long run, only a thorough investigation of our remarkable relationship with both the *other* and *strangeness within ourselves* can lead people to give up hunting for the scapegoat outside their group' ([emphasis in original] 1993, p. 51). There has been a clear identifiable movement, then, that seeks to draw attention away from cosmopolitan's 'universal' approach. It instead proposes various forms of looking inwards, across, and between modes of belonging as productive ways of transcending primordial nationhood without succumbing to a homogeneous and exclusionary global model.

Robbins' outline of this body of work that prioritises hybridity, marginality and 'strangeness' in cosmopolitanism, however, remains strangely fixed in the twentieth century. Robbins observes a revival of 'old' universal cosmopolitanism at the point of writing his introduction: 'recently . . . philosophical arguments in favour of universalism have returned with a vengeance, bringing with them renewed advocacy of cosmopolitanism in the older sense' (1998, p. 2). Robbins' observation would appear to have materialised even more since its assertion in 1998; the term in recent years has been used generally to refer to an outward-looking vision of universal human empathy. Berthold Schoene, in his application of the term to a Scottish context, for instance, uses 'cosmopolitanism' very generally to mean simply 'not native' or 'outward looking'. He asks: 'ought Scottish literature to continue to be burdened with an alleged national specificity, or should it be allowed to go cosmopolitan rather than native?' (2007a, p. 8). The meaning of 'cosmopolitan' is inferred here only through its opposition to 'national specificity' and 'native'. This generalised use of the term avoids the apparently problematic territory of defining

it and the term comes to mean something generally akin to 'outward-looking'.

Schoene's use of the term here is exemplary of much critical use of

'cosmopolitanism' in recent years, which, perhaps paradoxically due to a reluctance

to define the term that apparently should not be defined, uses 'cosmopolitanism' as

if it holds some pre-agreed meaning. This undefined cosmopolitanism of recent

years roughly infers, as Schoene's does, a process of looking outwards beyond the

national and connecting with the world.

Writers who do outline this new universalist cosmopolitanism in more detail,

however, are more attuned to the problem of such a model becoming assimilated

into a capitalist form of globalization. Fiona McCulloch writes that it offers 'a

potentially curative human empathetic response to capitalist globalization and its

alienating entropic affects on our ever shrinking planet' (2012a, p. 2). McCulloch's

words here demonstrate this new universalism's emphasis on the application of

ethics to cosmopolitanism and human empathy as an important feature in its

version of a cosmopolitanism that can promote a non-capitalist heterogeneous

global model. If it is possible to speak of a cosmopolitanism of the contemporary,

then, this is a cosmopolitanism often shrouded in awareness of the term's

evasiveness, but that generally looks outwards universally and, where specified, is

conscious to position itself against global capitalism in attempts to reach an

alternative empathetic vision of 'the world as one'.

Rosi Braidotti *et al.*'s *After Cosmopolitanism* (2012) does recognise the

problematic tension between the utopian aspirations of the universalist tendencies

in contemporary cosmopolitanism and the pragmatic application of this theory in

the twenty-first century. They call for 'an understanding of cosmopolitanism that is more attentive to the material reality of our social and political situation and less focused on linguistic analysis and metaphorical implications' (2012, p. 3). The contributors to this collection consider different approaches to renewed thinking about a materialist cosmopolitanism. In particular, Paul Gilroy's interjection provides a productive line of enquiry into this debate as he expands thinking on the necessity of opening a dialogue between cosmopolitanism and postcolonialism (2012, pp. 111-131). Chapter six of this thesis engages directly with Gilroy's ideas through its reading of Scotland's postcolonial position. Yet, chapter six's observation that Gilroy addresses a tension that is by no means resolved is true of the essays in *After Cosmopolitanism* more broadly. That is, the collection rightly identifies the problem of a pragmatic application of a cosmopolitan theory to our political and social realities. However, while the collection is productive in that it identifies that problem, its essays do not outline any clear means of resolving this. Rather than take this as grounds to dismiss the possibility of cosmopolitanism 'more attentive to the material reality of our social and political situation' (2012, p. 3), the present chapter recognises the necessity of maintaining this line of enquiry as an on-going project. As such, this chapter is positioned as an interjection into that on-going debate. It aims to mediate between ideological and 'realistic' cosmopolitanism by using the 'negative' trajectory of queer theory. In doing so, it argues that we have overlooked crisis or trauma as a necessary demand made by cosmopolitanism's aspirations towards fluctuating and fluid identities that can transcend rigid and bordered identities. Post-devolution Scotland functions as a case study in this exploration and

it is suggested that Scotland's disorientation offers a particularly prominent example of what we might term a 'negative cosmopolitanism'.

<u>Cosmopolitanism's 'Linguistic Analysis'</u>

Rosi Braidotti *et al.*'s call for cosmopolitanism 'less focused on linguistic analysis and metaphorical implications' (2012, p. 3) is certainly relevant for the writing on cosmopolitanism in Scottish criticism. Both McCulloch and Schoene emphasise the ambiguity of cosmopolitanism. McCulloch (2012a) writes: 'cosmopolitanism . . . exists as a transpositional space of dislocation, always in the process of becoming in its nomadic thinking but never arriving at its final destination' (p. 4). Where Bhabha and those sharing his perspective in the twentieth century emphasised hybridity and ambiguity in modes of identity and belonging, McCulloch's cosmopolitanism emphasises, instead, ambiguity in meaning. Schoene similarly writes: 'what cosmopolitanism is, or might be, remains as yet to be clearly defined' (2009, p. 2). Once again, it is the ambiguity of definition that is emphasised here instead of ambiguity that can allow a decentring in rootedness and identity. McCulloch responds to Schoene's observation, writing that he 'concedes' this ambiguity in meaning and so 'apparently [concurs] with observations that [cosmopolitanism] is a fluid entity' (2012a, p. 7). In this, McCulloch clearly equates 'fluidity' with evasiveness in definition. Thus, where cosmopolitanism once gained traction through its attention to peoples and ways of living that are 'between', 'off-centre' and 'hybrid', recent understandings of the term's ambiguity – and the apparent potential in this – arguably stop short at its semantic evasiveness.

Moreover, this resistance to 'pin down' cosmopolitanism often causes it to blur with what it is trying to resist. McCulloch (at times) provides a very insightful sense of cosmopolitanism as it is related to the marginal. Drawing on examples such as Oscar Wilde's use of the term in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and the Nazi understanding of its victims as 'cosmopolitans', she writes persuasively that 'the link forged between art, foreigners and cosmopolitanism highlights an outsider status from mainstream society in which fringe positions, like homosexuality, can be considered' (2012a, p. 9). In this conjecture she aligns cosmopolitanism with a more hybrid view, which embodies ways of living 'off-centre' and makes connections with queerness. This could signify a development of the term as theorised by Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* (1994). However, she also presents examples of 'cosmopolitans' that actually represent the technological capitalist global world that it seeks to resist. She writes: 'geopolitically nomadic citizens can range from those engaging in the luxury of world travel, to those engaging in instant electronic communication across vast spatiotemporal planes, to transnational peoples forcibly relocating due to conflict, environmental disaster or economic necessity' (2012a, p. 10). As discussed in chapter three, the contemporary borderless world is driven primarily by capitalist expansion and technological innovation. Thus global capital negates cosmopolitanism's aim towards global connectedness as it makes the world accessible only to the economically privileged. Meanwhile, as discussed in the previous chapter, technological advances can be understood not as connective forces but as alienating ones that numb us to the persistence of national divisions in the contemporary. McCulloch's grouping of the bourgeoisie of who engage 'in the

luxury of world travel' alongside both 'those engaging in instant electronic communication' and 'transnational peoples' fails to distinguish between 'connection' and 'alienation', instead viewing any apparent movement across borders as cosmopolitan. These examples pull McCulloch's use of the term in line with the version of the global that she seeks to resist, which she describes elsewhere as 'capitalist globalization and its alienating entropic affects on our ever shrinking planet' (2012a, p. 2). Thus, in its ambiguity, contemporary universal empathetic cosmopolitanism blurs here with the kind of globalisation it opposes.

Schoene's sense of cosmopolitanism similarly suffers from a lack of definition. At times, as McCulloch does, he appears to take something useful from a 'vernacular' or 'rooted' cosmopolitanism. He writes, for example, 'in the twenty-first century the task is to venture beyond our horizons into the world at large and understand the domestic and the global as weaving one mutually persuasive pattern of contemporary human circumstance and experience, containing both dark and light' (2009, pp. 15-6). This is a particularly persuasive moment that seems to mediate Bhabha and Kristeva's senses of cosmopolitanism with the more recent approach of universal human empathy. However, elsewhere he frequently blurs his definition with a sense of globalisation closer to that which is driven by consumerism and technological advancement. He writes that 'sociological research on the increasing tightening of a global web of communal interaction and interdependency has proliferated massively, prompting an equally dramatic growth in cosmopolitan theory' (2009, p. 1). Making a similar assumption to McCulloch here, Schoene upholds technological innovation as an example of an increasingly

'universal' world that can directly correlate with 'growth in cosmopolitan theory'. Thus when he comes to write that 'there is nothing that ought to prevent us imagining the world as one community or capturing it inside the vision of a single narrative' (2009, p. 13), his view of 'the world' remains unclear; both 'the world' as universally empathetic but also as shrunken and alienating are held in this image. In this idea of holding the world 'inside the vision of a single narrative' he verges closely to a homogeneous view of the global that is all too ready to morph into that exclusionary unitary universalism.

Ambiguity may be, in McCulloch's view, the source of cosmopolitanism's power and energy. However, both her and Schoene's writing demonstrates that an insistence to keep that definition open can lead to a vague sense of the global that can all too readily converge with the one-world universalism it seeks to resist. The result of this ambiguity, then, is that cosmopolitanism becomes a discourse of contradictions. This chapter thus welcomes clear a conceptualising of its cosmopolitanism and its relevance to a Scottish context. This will inevitably be met with criticism that this is an 'uncosmopolitan' thing to do. However, it is my intention that this approach will bypass the contradictory versions of cosmopolitanism that emerge from an unwillingness to define the term.

This chapter argues for a queer cosmopolitanism not altogether dissimilar in its vision to McCulloch's queer cosmopolitanism developed from Rosi Braidotti's work on nomadic subjects. McCulloch argues that cosmopolitanism should 'endeavour to ethically and collectively empathise with "habits of a vast universe", thus enabling "a sense of positive if complex and multiple belonging"' (2012a, p. 9).

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While a vision of 'habits of a vast universe' verges too closely on utopian world-wide connectedness for my position, it does articulate a willingness to get beyond territorial nationhood, which is one of this chapter's primary concerns. As this thesis has outlined thus far, this aim to reconfigure nationhood stems from a recognition that the nation is not simply a divisive entity but is also the image of the rooted body politic around which heteronormative stabilities converge. In this sense this chapter's queer cosmopolitanism also shares McCulloch's vision of 'complex and multiple belonging'; however, this approach is grounded more in allowing endless queer possibilities to envelop identities than it is in any notions of universal connectedness. Envisaging, as this chapter does, a transformative and refiguring cosmopolitanism thus requires exploration of how cosmopolitanism and queer theory have respectively positioned their transformative politics.

The Futures and Presents of Cosmopolitanism

Queer theory and cosmopolitanism share a difficulty in approaching transformative possibilities without binding them to the future. These theoretical approaches embellish thinking on the relation of the future to transformation and can clarify thinking on the approach of a queer cosmopolitanism in post-devolution Scotland. The respective problems of the 'realistic' and 'utopic' approaches to cosmopolitanism are embodied in the disagreement that comprises McCulloch's utopian position and Schoene's calls for cosmopolitanism 'rooted in the realities of the present' (2009, p. 10). McCulloch is adamantly utopic in her approach and uses the universe as a platform to present her aspirational cosmopolitanism. She writes:

'The infinite cosmos, uncharted and without territorial borders, serves as an ideal trope for cosmopolitanism's capacity to dismantle divisions and mobilize itself as an endless and renewable energy' (2012a, p. 2). In this image of the cosmos McCulloch evokes a sense of a powerful cosmopolitanism that can reach far beyond the immediate concerns of the global and can promote its universal connective qualities infinitely. This image embodies the new empathetic cosmopolitan tendency to promote dissolving territorial divisions yet resist a restrictive and unequal global model.

McCulloch's highly aspirational and utopic approach, like much cosmopolitan theory, appeals to the future as another site of 'unmappable infinity' in which cosmopolitanism can realise its full potential. Quoting Werbner and Yuval-Davis, McCulloch writes: 'it is more cosmopolitan to think in terms of citizens of the world "because unlike nationalism which grounds itself in past myths of common origin or culture, citizenship raises its eyes towards the future, to common destinies"' (cited in McCulloch, 2012a, p. 6). This attention to the unmappable potential of the future is a theme of utopian cosmopolitanism, for which Pollock *et al.*'s statement that 'cosmopolitanism is yet to come, something awaiting realization' (2002, p. 1) could stand as a mantra. While McCulloch's utopic position foregrounds the aspirations of cosmopolitanism, the futurity of this ambitious approach simultaneously pushes it into the unreachable space of 'always in the future'.

Schoene, in contrast to utopian futurity, advocates cosmopolitanism that is 'rooted in the realities of the present rather than mobilising for the future fulfilment of any one or other set of utopian ideals' (2009, p. 10). In this approach, Schoene

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posits 9/11 as the moment that extinguished any perfect vision of a connected world of human empathy. In his promotion of a realistic approach, Schoene goes so far as to argue that utopic cosmopolitanism, which he describes as 'strikingly naïve' (2009, p. 2), should be dismissed altogether. He advises that 'everyday life in the immediate present is prioritised over the pursuit of any grand utopian designs of unanimity and perfection' and continues 'indeed, perfect harmony and consensus ought never to be the ultimate goal of community and are probably best discarded altogether' (2009, p. 18). On the one hand, Schoene's position does bypass some of the unattainability of a utopic position, yet simultaneously this appeal to the realities of the present strips cosmopolitanism of its transformative potential. This bind plays out in 'Cosmopolitan Scots' (2008) when Schoene looks to a potentially independent Scotland as the site of a cosmopolitanism implemented through 'a real-political strategy' (2008, p. 76) in which 'Scottish cosmopolitanism might introduce itself' and therefore be distanced from 'independence of a traditional kind' (2008, p. 75). While he avoids 'strikingly naïve' utopianism, Schoene strips cosmopolitanism of its potential in this 'actually existing' context, conceding that 'within a globalised world a nationalist Scotland might lack the imaginative power to project its future beyond a mere assertion of independent nation-statehood' (2008, p. 89). In this appeal to a pragmatic cosmopolitanism, then, Schoene presents an equally unattainable vision as he reaches only defeatist and compromising conclusions.

Queer theory also embodies the same tension between a utopian vision for the future and a pragmatism rooted in the realities of the present. Utopic queer theory is most famously represented in José Esteban Muñoz's *Cruising Utopia: The*

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Then and There of Queer Futurity (2009). Muñoz's emotive introduction to the

concept of queer futurity mirrors utopic cosmopolitanism's futurity:

> Queerness is not yet here. Queerness is an ideality. Put another way, we are
>
> not yet queer. We may never touch queerness, but we can feel it as the warm
>
> illumination of a horizon imbued with potentiality. We have never been
>
> queer, yet queerness exists for us as an ideality that can be distilled from the
>
> past and used to imagine a future. The future is queerness's domain. (2009, p.
>
> 1)

Utopian cosmopolitanism clearly aligns with the utopic side of queer theory.

Muñoz's opening passage could be mistaken for a description of utopic and evasive

cosmopolitanism simply by replacing the word 'queer' with 'cosmopolitanism'.

Muñoz's words 'we may never touch queerness' emphasise and embrace the

unattainable position of utopian futurism. It is from this position that he draws his

utopian queerness's power; he shifts unattainability into unfixed aspirational

possibilities as he elaborates: 'we can feel it as the warm illumination of a horizon

imbued with potentiality'. Both queer and cosmopolitan utopianisms derive their

persuasiveness and power from these appeals to the future as a site of as yet

unleashed potential. However, both theories are haunted by the necessary

admission that any appeal to the future is also always out of reach. As such, their

insistence on futurity forces acknowledgement that 'we may never touch' either

utopian queerness or cosmopolitanism.

Utopian queer theory similarly shares with utopian cosmopolitanism opposition from a 'realistic' queer approach that is rooted in the present. This is the pragmatic conjecture of queer theory that has dominated LGBT politics in the twenty-first century. This branch of queer politics fights for equal marriage and gay adoption rather than challenging the patriarchal heterosexist society that upholds marriage and the family unit as its gold standards. Pragmatic LGBT politics celebrates inclusion in these structures rather than aiming for a transformation of them. Therefore, this future is not a queer future; the reproductive and monogamous marriage that underpins the family unit remains and LGBT people are permitted a place within these structures. Thus, in direct parallel to cosmopolitanism, queer theory also experiences this drive to ascribe transformative theory to the future while placing compromising 'realistic' politics in the present.

It seems pertinent to question why theory that envisages radical transformation must always be positioned within the future and why a politics rooted in the 'realities of the present' should be shrouded in a sense of compromise with pre-existing structures, however problematic they may be. This question unveils what is often underattended to in these debates: that the futurism of utopian politics is not a powerful element of its aspirational nature, but is in fact a necessary outcome of the difficulty of imagining any radical transformation within the structures of the present. It is a transformation only imaginable outside of the stabilities that persist in the present. That queer politics and cosmopolitanism rooted in the present are shrouded in compromise only serves to emphasise the level to which the hegemonic stabilities of family, longevity, and nationhood

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organise and dominate the social order; they demand either compromise or that any imagined reordering of them be cast off to a fantasy of the future.

There has, however, emerged from within queer theory a third stance, focused on that which is 'negative' or 'anti-social', which imagines radical transformation in the present. Lee Edelman's *No Future* (2004) is canonical within this theory and it is this polemic that Muñoz responds to in *Cruising Utopia* (2009). Edelman and Muñoz's respective visions of the future further thinking on the relation of 'the future' to the heteronormative structures that both theories seek to renegotiate.

As discussed in chapter two, Edelman outlines that the future is determined by reproductive futurism, which holds the Child as the sacred product of the reproductive family unit that underpins the nation and healthy body politic more widely. As such this is a future that is already claimed by the heteronormative structures that he contests. Edelman therefore finds no potential imbued in the horizon and instead looks to the impossible space outside of 'politics as we know it' as queer's necessary position. In contrast, Muñoz's future is not the predetermined future that Edelman contests; it is undetermined, and as such is the space of unknown potential in which his aspirational queerness can be positioned. There are two versions of the future at stake here. One is a future that is predetermined; it is imagined via appeals to lineage and longevity that are anchored by the hegemonic structures of patriarchal heterosexist family, which underpins ideas of nationhood. The second is Muñoz's futurism that is marked by hopeful idealism that promises the feeling of potential (2009, p. 1). Importantly, this is a future unaffected by the

sway or imaginings of normative societal structures. The degree to which utopian futurism can be invested in, then, relies heavily on how far we accept Edelman's understanding of the future as always already claimed by reproductive futurism that underpins heteronormality and the blood and soil imaginings of nations.

Cosmopolitanism theory, broadly, challenges the essentialist and territorial imagining of nations in its aim to emphasise a universal human connection. Similarly, queer theory, broadly, challenges heteronormative social and political life. Thus, queer theory and cosmopolitanism outline heteronormality and nations as powerful organising stabilities in the present; these theories exist to challenge these hegemonic structures. With this in mind, we might expect queer and cosmopolitan theories to challenge heteronormative and national claims on the future as part of their wider opposition to these hegemonic norms. However, the utopian queer and cosmopolitan approaches, outlined by Muñoz and McCulloch respectively, imagine the future as an undetermined space for potential transformation and do not recognise that the future is determined by the national and heteronormative structures that they contest. The 'negative' side of queer theory, introduced in chapter two and explored through chapter three's discussion of the nuances of 'crisis', then, opens thinking on the possibility of an aspirational politics that simultaneously rejects the future that is always already bound to the hegemonic structures that it opposes.

Muñoz states that 'antirelational approaches to queer theory are romances of the negative, wishful thinking, and investments in deferring various dreams of difference' (2009, p. 11). In response to such opposition, Edelman discussed the

confronting aspects of his theory in his keynote lecture for the symposium *Queer Futurities - Today. Utopias and Beyond in Queer Theory*, entitled 'Against Survival: Queerness in a Time that's Out of Joint' (2009), which preceded his essay of the same title (2011). In his abstract for the lecture, he writes:

> Negativity, like the queer, is intolerable, even to those who think themselves queer. Its insistence on non-identity spurs our continuous efforts to positivize what resists all normalization. Though Adorno observed that 'society stays alive, not despite its antagonism, but because of it', the queerness of non-identity provokes repeated attempts to redeem it by turning it into something pragmatic and comprehensible, like political action or collective practice. (2009, n.p.)

Edelman's appeal to antagonism here is revealing; the negative is envisaged as antagonistic because it imagines a transformative disruption of the norms of our lives without having the good grace to place such imaginings safely in the future. The inscription of emotions into these approaches is revealing; to aim to the future is 'utopic' and is therefore 'positive' whereas to envisage disruption to the current status quo is 'negative'. It seems that opposition to Edelman's negative approach, then, reveals more about investment in the unchanging stability of the reality of our present than it does about the negative's apparent 'anti-social' side. Instead of dismissing the 'negative' conjecture as 'nihilistic' and 'life-negating', transformative aspirational theory would do better to recognise these unsettling associations as

products of the ingrained stabilities that order our lives. In other words, an essential feature of re-ordering the stabilities of the heteronormative nation in the present is recognising that this process is necessarily antagonistic and is thus likely to involve trauma if it is to address the realities of the present without succumbing to assimilative compromise.

Negative Cosmopolitanism

Drawing negative queer theory in line with cosmopolitanism can thus open up thinking about a 'cosmopolitanism' that focuses not on transcending space in a transnational or cosmopolitical move but on rethinking place; on making it changeable and malleable in the realities of the present. This might not be a comfortable process; it might be disorientating, and even horrifying. This approach looks to the disorientation of place as a way of reaching a workable transformative cosmopolitanism that, taking its cues from 'negative' queer theory, side steps the realistic/utopic bind.

With reference to Rosi Braidotti's philosophical nomadism, McCulloch writes: 'cosmopolitanism thus exists in a transpositional space of dislocation, always in the process of becoming in its nomadic thinking but never arriving at its final destination' (2012a, p. 4). A negative cosmopolitanism would aim to explore how this transpositional space of dislocation could be felt in the present so that we might actually '[arrive] at its final destination'. Change is necessarily disruptive and disorientating and these are the key features of what this chapter terms a 'negative queer cosmopolitanism'. Building on the disorientation present in the Scottish

devolutionary moment, this negative approach looks to what happens when we stop trying to transcend place and instead, however unsettlingly, explore a reconfiguration of place, home, and nation as they organise our identities.

Doreen Massey distinguishes between 'place (as meaningful, lived and everyday) and space (as what? the outside? the abstract? the meaningless?)' (2005, p. 6). Pollock *et al.* elaborate on how place is 'meaningful, lived and everyday'; they referred to 'nationalist emphases on a family of ideas all of which, in the end, connected identities to imaginations of place, home, boundary, territory, and roots' (2002, p. 2). Laurence Grossberg similarly emphasises the stability instilled in 'place' and its links with identity. He writes of place and space: 'the former identifying sites of fullness, identity, "the inside" and human activity, the latter identifying the emptiness between places in which nothing happens except the movement from one place to another' (1996, p. 175). Negative cosmopolitanism aims towards a radical destabilization of the meaning of 'place' so that the stability of 'meaning', 'identity', and 'belonging' can be disoriented in order to release a queer cosmopolitanism.

Marc Augé articulates a similar sense of place as a structure of meaning-making when he refers to 'signifying spaces in the world' in which 'the individuals and groups inside them are just an expression, defining themselves in terms of the same criteria, the same values and the same interpretation procedures' (1995, p. 33). This clearly illustrates the way in which 'place' is merely a set of spaces that are associable with concepts such as home and national identity, ideas that inscribe ideas of sameness and belonging and therefore stabilise and inform identity. Of

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course, Augé's study offers a departure from this understanding of place as he argues that supramodernity produces non-places. These are the sort of places, Augé writes, 'we inhabit when we are driving down the motorway, wandering through the supermarket or sitting in an airport lounge' (1995, p. 96). Augé suggests that these non-places are a symptom of the reorganisation of place in the supramodern world in that 'they are defined partly by the words and texts they offer us, their "instructions for use"' (1995, p. 96) and as such they present 'spaces in which individuals are supposed to interact only with texts' (1995, p. 96). This is one example of Augé's sustained examination of the way in which individuals interact with space in the supramodern world.

Augé has recently developed his thinking on this topic in *The Future* (2014), where he argues that the future is pre-determined by market-society. He therefore develops the ideas explored in *Non-Places* to recognise that our imaginings of temporality, like spatiality, influence and organise individual and collective lives. From this point he mediates on whether the future is always already claimed by the market or whether we can entertain the idea of multiple futures in order to bypass the temporal and spatial control of global capitalism on our collective lives (2014, p. 105). The present chapter clearly coheres with the idea that temporality is an important point of focus for developing transformative politics in its discussion of the idea of the future as it relates to pragmatism and utopianism in cosmopolitanism and queer theory. However, this thesis departs from Augé's exclusive focus on market-society in its focus on the significance of nationhood as a phenomena that exists alongside forces of globalisation. This thesis takes issue with Augé's central

suggestion that this world of 'non-places' should refresh our understanding of the significance of place or 'signifying spaces in the world'. As chapter three established, even if the contemporary digital world appears to manifest in Augé's notion of supramodernity, this does not diminish the nation as an organising principle but, rather, distracts from the continued implicit presence of the nation as an organising principle in our world. As such, analysis of the disorientation of place as it informs identity through borders, through national identity, and through the concepts of the good life tied to the home is a pertinent line of enquiry for the present chapter.

This disorientation of place is different to the notion of 'displacement' that is the feature of a lot of work on statelessness and cosmopolitanism. Bhabha's attention to those who live 'off-centre' as true cosmopolitans comprises this stance; it looks to the lived experience of being 'out-of-place'. This conjecture is similarly explored by work on migrant experience, which is extremely valuable for drawing attention to ways of living that are not 'rooted'. Sara Ahmed writes on the migrant experience:

> the disorientation of the sense of home, as the 'out of place' or 'out of line' effect of unsettling arrivals, involves what we could call a migrant orientation. This orientation might be described as the lived experience of facing at least two directions: toward a home that has been lost, and to a place that is not yet home. (2006, p. 10)

Negative cosmopolitanism rethinks this space of being 'lost' away from being exclusively tied to 'migrant orientation' and instead seeks out ways in which 'home' can become lost and disorientated in instances that would typically be 'placed'. The disorientating Scottish devolutionary moment is particularly pertinent for this notion of negative cosmopolitanism. It promised increased sovereignty and statehood for Scotland and is therefore a moment where coherence or affirmation of that place was expected. Yet Scotland found itself 'displaced' when its traditional identity formations were negated in devolution. Scotland thus became, to borrow Ahmed's words, the 'home that [had] been lost' and simultaneously the 'place that is not yet home'. It is thus a 'migrant orientation' that does not involve movement from one place to another.

Ahmed's approach to space is concerned with thinking through a phenomenological approach to queer sexuality. She asks: 'what would it mean for queer studies if we were to pose the question of the "orientation" of sexual "orientation" as a phenomenological question?' (2006, p. 1). Her study is therefore more focused on theorising a spatiality of sexual 'orientation' than it is with thinking on the disorientation of place. She muses, for instance, 'if orientation is a matter of how we reside in space, then sexual orientation might also be a matter of residence; of how we inhabit spaces as well as "who" or "what" we inhabit spaces with' (2006, p. 1). She is therefore concerned with space as it is related to individual consciousness and bodies rather than as it is formulated into 'meaningful' places such as the nation. Central to her queer approach, however, is the concept of

disorientation. This holds as much pertinence for the present study as it does for Ahmed's phenomenological exploration of sexuality.

Ahmed writes that 'disorientation is a way of describing the feelings that gather when we lose our sense of who it is that we are' (2006, p. 20). This concept of disorientation is particularly relevant to the Scottish devolutionary moment. Ahmed's words elsewhere seem to summarise the kind of disorientation explored in chapter two's analysis of Laura Hird's *Born Free*: 'they might be the site of trauma, anxiety, or stress about the loss of an imagined future' (2006, p. 19). Negative cosmopolitanism embraces the trauma of that disorientation so as to explore a dislocated sense of 'Scottishness'. This approach does not aim to embrace Scotland's disorientation simply for the sake of negativity but aims to bring the transformative potential of cosmopolitanism away from the utopic model and into reality. It suggests that the reason cosmopolitanism has been split between the 'realistic' approach and the 'utopic' approach is a failure to acknowledge that transformation in reality inevitably involves disorientation. This need not be a trauma that must be overcome, that must be 'reoriented', but rather a trauma from which a more open, multiple and malleable sense of that place can emerge. As Ahmed so convincingly writes, '"getting lost" still takes us somewhere' (2006, p. 7).

This position will inevitably draw criticism from those who view negativity as life-negating, inherently destructive, and anti-social. But this position is implemented here as a way of embracing disorientation as inherently transformative in its disruption. It also feels uncomfortable in a Scottish context that has previously been so fixated on who and what 'Scotland' is or is becoming post-

devolution. However, this approach is necessary if Scotland really is to become, in

Massey's terms, a 'space' rather than a 'place' and so truly achieve the constantly

fluctuating cosmopolitan vision that utopians project into the future. In many

respects this thesis holds the same vision as utopic cosmopolitanism; of Scotland as

an endlessly becoming entity that can envelop inwards and simultaneously look to

the world beyond. This project, however, notes that realisation of this vision

necessarily involves traumatic disorientation.

Literature plays a significant role in this exploration of utopianism and

negativity. Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch famously put forth the idea that

literature and art allow for the imagination of a different world-order and he named

this quality of literature 'utopian' (1989, pp. 18-70). We might agree with Bloch's

argument that literature permits the exploration of different worlds and different

states of being. But this need not be exclusively named utopianism. Negativity and

utopianism both share aspirational and alternative visions of society and politics;

their only difference is that utopianism places this in the future while negativity

demands that we imagine these changes in the present. Literature therefore

provides a space for imagination and exploration of these alternative spaces, both

utopian and negative. Zoë Strachan's *Negative Space* provides this exploration of

negativity as it relates to twenty-first century Scotland through the themes of

overturning crisis and uprooted identity.

<u>Reading Disorientation in *Negative Space*</u>

Negative Space (2003) is narrated by a nameless woman negotiating grief following the death of her beloved brother, Simon. Grief throws her into a displaced landscape where everything, particularly her sense of self, is in crisis. The reader accompanies Strachan's nameless narrator through her disoriented state in Glasgow and then to Orkney where she accompanies her friend Alex on a women's art retreat. In this landscape some sense of solace is found as she meets and has sex with a British Asian woman, Iram, and then buries Simon's necklace and carves his name into a rock on a hill side. Following this, in the final chapter of the novel, we encounter Strachan's narrator on the train in the process of moving to London. It is here that, poignantly, while leaving an answerphone message for Iram, Strachan's narrator is named: 'Hello, it's me. Stella. From Orkney' (p. 294). There are clear points, then, for an analysis of crisis that stems from grief, of the space of Scotland, and the related themes of disorientation and the displacement of identity available in exploration of these themes.

McCulloch describes Stella's journey from oppressed woman in patriarchal heterosexist Glasgow to queer cosmopolitan citizen emancipated by the peripheral space of Orkney and her sexual exploration with Iram. Reading Simon as representative of the patriarchal Glasgow that erases Stella's identity, McCulloch identifies Stella as 'a formidable cosmopolitical force waiting to emerge from her brother's shadow' (p. 27). Like Ali Smith's Amber, who transiently shifts spatially and temporally between borders and cultures both within and beyond Scotland, Stella certainly offers a similar vision of queer cosmopolitanism in her displacement,

movement, and queer sexual exploration with Iram. Stella's 'journey', however, provides further consideration of traumatic disorientation, its relation to queer cosmopolitanism, and the significance of this within post-devolution Scotland.

McCulloch's critical emphasis on concepts of journey and growth are clearly exemplified by her title: '"Cross that Bridge": Journeying through Zoë Strachan's *Negative Space*'. Her reading of the text as a journey towards growth and resolution is articulated through her statement that: 'charting the heroine's growth, the novel mobilizes Stella away from urban Glasgow to rural Orkney' (2012a, p. 21). Stella's shifting spatiality in the novel certainly provides a setting for exploring her disoriented sense of self. Closer attention to the state of disorientation, however, complicates this 'journey of growth' narrative that the text initially invites.

McCulloch's reading focuses a great deal on Stella's time spent in the wild open landscapes of Orkney. She discusses Glasgow as the heterosexist, patriarchal setting that negates Stella's identity as a queer woman and Orkney as the emancipatory 'feminine' space in which she can move towards a sense of self. This concept of the journey from one state to another exemplifies the general tendency to think about disorientation simply as an undesirable state from which one can and should emerge. Such readings posit necessary and obvious *reorientation* as the only viable outcome to the narrative of disorientation. However, the setting of Glasgow comprises two-thirds of the novel and as such does not simply manifest as the undesirable state from which Stella can happily emerge.

References to her unfamiliar and stagnated condition are repeated unremittingly as Stella narrates her grief following Simon's death in Glasgow. Early

on she states: 'I don't know where I am, or how I ended up here. In this moment I can appreciate that ignorance really is bliss. There's something quite pleasant about not knowing, not being able to remember' (p. 4). A similar sense of displacement is presented when she reflects: 'everywhere we passed seemed to look like somewhere I recognised but didn't quite remember, as if they were places I'd only been to before in a dream' (p. 23). This state of disorientation is endemic throughout the text; even moving towards its midpoint, Stella notes: 'I suddenly and desperately wished I was anywhere but here . . . I felt squashed by the pressure of familiarity' (p. 92). This theme continues through to the later stages of the novel as Stella notes of Glasgow: 'I know this place like the back of my hand, but I feel as if I don't know where I'm going, don't know what's ahead, as if any moment I might see something strange and new' (p. 174). Stella's disorientation in Glasgow is more complex than being the starting point of a journey narrative. Strachan subverts the expectation of a linear and developing narrative as this disoriented space comprises the setting of the majority of the text. Unable to read for growth or progression, Strachan's reader is required to feel the stagnancy of the undirected flow of the narrative. This results in a sustained experience of ongoing, unchanging and traumatic disorientation.

In their description of reading the work of Silvan Tompkins, Eve Sedgwick and Adam Frank describe a similar sense of being forced to stay with a traumatic idea: 'a potentially terrifying and terrified idea or image is taken up and held for as many paragraphs as are necessary to "burn out the fear response," then for as many more until that idea or image can recur in the text without initially evoking terror' (1995, p. 498). Sedgwick and Frank's words reflect the process of disorientation at

play in *Negative Space*; the reader is forced to stay with that traumatic and lost state for the majority of the text. Indeed, in its closing stages there is a sense that this same state of disorientation can implement not horror but an opening up of possibilities.

The final chapter, in which the reader encounters Stella on the train to London, opens with the words: 'I'm relaxed, enjoying the feeling of movement' (p. 291). This phrase infers less a progressive development in the journey and more a continued sense of non-linearity. This theme continues as a conversation between Alex and Stella reveals that the move to London is relatively last-minute and that they are staying in a friend's flat for three months. Stella asks:

-What'll we do after that?

Alex thinks carefully about this,

- Fuck knows.

I decide that she's right, we should cross that bridge when we come to it.

(p. 291)

Stella here, fully embracing the unknowability of the future, distances the narrative from one of growth towards final resolution. Stella reflects further on her plan to continue modelling for life drawing classes: 'I guess it'll keep me going until I figure out something else that I want to do, if that time ever comes' (p. 292). This is not a final scene of resolution but more of an adjustment to a state of disorientation. It is as if disorientation is sustained through the setting of Glasgow to 'burn out the fear

response' and can then 'recur in the text without initially evoking terror'. We might think of Stella in the final scene of the novel, then, as moving with the ebb and flow of disorientation rather than feeling horrified by its initial upending impact.

Significantly, even the moment where Stella is named in the close of the novel is not the climactic resolution of her identity. While leaving a voicemail for Iram she says simply: 'Hello, it's me. Stella. From Orkney' (p. 294). There is a sense of de-rootedness at play here; the word 'from' takes on shifting meaning in this phrase as it puns the typical rooted sense of being 'from' somewhere that links identity to a rooted notion of place. Instead, Stella uses 'from' simply to refer to the temporary setting of Orkney in which she met Iram. This destabilises origins and avoids any coherence of self typically available in such a statement. This signifies less a move from disorientation to reorientation than an adaptation to becoming easeful in that state and realise its open ended possibilities.

In his brief discussion of *Negative Space* in 'Cosmopolitan Scots', Schoene comments on the 'bold identification' of Stella's naming which, in his view, 'provides a refreshingly upbeat ending to a narrative predominantly concerned with depression, trauma and self-alienation' (2008, p. 85). Schoene's happy relief at the naming of Stella following the grief-induced disorientated state reveals the tendency to view disorientation as a state from which release is the only positive option. Schoene's reading here enacts what Edelman describes as 'our continuous efforts to positivize what resists all normalization' as it turns 'the queerness of non-identity' in *Negative Space* into 'something pragmatic and comprehensible' (2009, n.p.). In his description of this process Edelman identifies the turning of intolerable negativity

into 'political action or collective practice' by 'those who think themselves queer'.

Schoene's positivising here, however, barely extends to anything as transformative as 'political action or collective practice' as he takes relief in what appears to be unity and rootedness in identity. In this analysis, then, Schoene demonstrates the overriding assumption that disorientation entails negativity and can only exist as a precursor to 'happy' reorientation. This chapter challenges this assumption in its exploration of the transformative possibilities available in traumatic upending disorientation.

Thinking about disorientation of the self is further available through Stella's interaction with mirrors throughout the novel; she notes, for example, 'my eyes seem too wide and empty. I struggle to recognize myself in my reflection' (p. 12). This difficulty in recognising herself recalls Lacan's writings on the mirror stage. Lacan's 'The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the *I* as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience' exemplifies his phallogocentric psychoanalytic approach; in this essay he argues that the mirror stage constitutes a process whereby the childhood subject experiences identification with his reflection in contrast to his early childhood 'motor unco-ordination' ([1966] 2002, p. 4). Lacan writes that this identification with the mirror image produces 'the total form of the body by which the subject anticipates in a mirage the maturation of his power' ([1966] 2002, p. 3) but that the child experiences this totality in contrast to 'the turbulent movements that the subject feels are animating him' ([1966] 2002, p. 3). Thus Lacan asserts that the mirror stage constitutes identification with the mirror image, which resolves the fragmentation experienced in the neo-natal un-

coordination, which contrasts with the fixity of the reflected body; the mirror stage constitutes 'the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality' ([1966] 2002, p. 5). This is only one part of Lacan's thinking on the significance of the mirror stage and it is not possible within the parameters of this thesis's focus on queer theory as political rather than psychoanalytical to unpack fully the significance of this for Lacan's later ideas on the Oedipus complex, castration, and the phallus.[2] However, this focus on the child's identification with the mirror image which resolves the experience of fragmentation in the infant body and produces a fantasy of totality that is 'the maturation of his power' ([1966] 2002, p. 3) provides a framework through which to further think on Stella's disintegration.

Stella's 'struggle to recognize [herself] in [her] reflection' (p. 12) disrupts the notion of totality offered by the mirror image that Lacan imagines for the (male) infant child. This image is developed further when she later recalls: 'in a second of confusion, I spotted a girl who looked kind of familiar out of the corner of my eye, then realized it was only my own reflection in the full length mirror on the side wall' (p. 36). She later ponders: 'who is this person that I've become, I wonder, distancing myself and looking at her, hunched over, head in hands, pain in the centre of her chest' (p. 123). Present in these images is a repeated failure to recognise, and identify with, the mirror image: the 'I' here soon becomes 'her' when seen in the mirror. And yet, there is still an implication of the fantasy of identification as Stella

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[2] For further information see, in particular, Lacan's seminar 'Object Relations and Freudian Structures'. Published in French in 'La relation d'objet et les structures freudiennes', *Bulletin de Psychologie*, April 1957, pp. 426-30. Roudinesco provides helpful summary of this seminar (1990, pp. 275-276).

sees 'her' 'hunched over, head in hands' but simultaneously accords this with her own feeling of 'pain in the centre of her chest'. This is significant as it places Stella not as a failure in the symbolic identification with the mirror-image but as a disruption of the process of patriarchal symbolic signification whereby Lacan proposes that the child enters subjectivity and language through identification with the wholeness of this image. This is furthered linguistically in the text as the reader is, at this stage, unable to name the protagonist and is therefore denied the opportunity to attribute a label – a name – that to some extent applies a rigidity to the character's subjectivity. The slippage between the terms 'her' and 'I' also presents a disorientation in which the subject does not appear comfortably in language. This distortion between the body and the mirror image produces an uncanny effect whereby the familiar and the unfamiliar are entwined; the reflection is not simply strange to Stella but it produces an unstable and fragmented image of selfhood as it appears as both strange and familiar. This reading is certainly significant for a feminist revision of the patriarchal language and representation inherent in the works of Lacan and Freud. This also presents an opportunity for sustained analysis of the text through the French feminist tradition's focus on patriarchal language and the impossibility of inscribing the multiplicity of 'woman' through this. This line of enquiry is particularly available in relation to Luce Irigaray's *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1974) and *This Sex which is not One* (1977), which the present chapter can only highlight as a necessary area of further study of this text. I draw attention, however briefly, to the significance of scenes such as these to a feminist and psychoanalytic tradition because critical readings of *Negative*

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Space have tended to focus too readily on Stella as an image of cosmopolitan potential. These readings tend to skim over that which is uneasy and fragmented in the text or, as Schoene does, positivize the apparent resolution of Stella's traumatic disorientation by reading her naming as 'bold identification' (2008, p. 85). In contrast to this approach, I propose that a focus on crisis in this text can stimulate a great deal of theoretical engagement with phallocentric understandings of identity and language beyond the scope of the present project. Moreover, the idea of trauma is significant for this chapter's interest in negativity in twenty-first century queer theory. This focus on trauma does not seek to refute a cosmopolitan reading of Stella. Rather, I hope to show that by focusing on the trauma at the heart of this text that there is room for dialogue between crisis and cosmopolitanism.

Significantly, when Stella has sex with Iram in the closing stages of the novel where her disorientation feels more easeful, an image of reflection is presented to the reader: 'she unclips her bra, and quickly I do the same, and she stands here my mirror image, with bare breasts and nipples darker than my own' (p. 277). The image of reflection here highlights the similarities of the women's sexed bodies, which emphasises the queerness of the same-sex sexual encounter yet simultaneously evokes their racial difference, instilling what McCulloch has called a 'synergy of cosmopolitan diversity' (2012a, p. 29) into the scene. Thus this 'mirror image' is read as a symbol of queer cosmopolitan potential by McCulloch. However, this encounter also appears as a textual 'mirror-image' in that it 'mirrors' Stella's previous disorientated encounters with her own reflection. In this textual reflection there is a connection between earlier scenes where Stella's mirror image offered

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evidence of her fragmentation - 'I'm disintegrating and I need to know what it looks like on the outside' (p. 124) – and the cosmopolitan synergy that McCulloch identifies in this scene. Significantly, in the sex scene, Stella comments that 'I have to just let go, and I do, and the feeling's so strong that my eyes water and I start to cry' (p. 280). There is an inference here that the trauma of fragmentation stems from a failure to 'let go' in the face of disorder, and that in her later response to her queered 'mirror-image' of Iram, Stella finds a different attachment to that state. Thus, Stella's fragmented state throughout the novel presents disorientation as an overturning process where norms of space, place and self are thrown into disarray. Yet it is only through this upended space that Stella finds a less rigid attachment to place and identity and it is this that generates the cosmopolitan potential that Schoene and McCulloch identify in the text. We might come to realise that Schoene's and McCulloch's cosmopolitan readings of the text imagine a queer evolving space in which rigid identity through national terms is made fluid. Yet surely these cosmopolitan readings could also recognise that, more broadly, the process imagined by cosmopolitanism demands an abandonment of rigid meaning-making and therefore does, in fact, imagine a process that is upending and therefore 'traumatic'.

Negative cosmopolitanism emerges, then, from a dialogue between queer theory's negativity and cosmopolitanism and presents clearly the idea that traumatic disorientation unleases new configurations of self, stability, and belonging. Sara Ahmed writes that 'disorientation is a way of describing the feelings that gather when we lose our sense of who it is that we are' (2006, p. 20) and then

advocates that by sticking with moments of 'disorientation . . . we might even find joy and excitement in the horror' (2006, p. 4). In the case of Stella, her grief-induced disorientation explodes normative ideas of belonging, of placeness and of heteronormative sexuality. While this is initially horrifying as Stella, to borrow Ahmed's phrase, loses her sense of who she is, Strachan's relentless commitment to that state of horrifying disorientation allows this upending of identity to develop into a queer cosmopolitanism not limited by normative determinations of place and sexuality.

McCulloch writes that 'cosmopolitanism thus exists as a transpositional space of dislocation, always in the process of becoming in its nomadic thinking but never arriving at its final destination' (2012a, p. 4). Taking her influence from Rosi Braidotti, McCulloch's vision of cosmopolitanism notes ideas of 'dislocation' and an endless process of 'becoming' as central to its queer shifting possibilities. Her reading of Stella's journey as 'growth', however, emphasises the process of 'becoming' over the experience of dislocation. After all, Stella's movement to Orkney and to London are both last-minute and unpredictable; she asserts little agency in either decision, being cajoled to join her friend Alex in both movements. Therefore, we can instead read Stella's journey as a wandering which encompasses a move from traumatic disorientation to a more easeful displacement. This recognises that the cosmopolitan image of movement from Glasgow to peripheral Orkney and then beyond borders to London is tied to an aimless wandering that arises from disorientating grief, rather than a progressive journey towards reorientation. In this

sense, staying with disorientation, rather than moving beyond it, can provide the radical restructure that yields queer cosmopolitan possibilities.

Reading Scotland in *Negative Space*

In line with the post-devolution narrative of a new dawn of opportunity that awaits realisation, McCulloch writes that 'Stella's multiple layers – female, lesbian, Scottish and working class – are more safely explored when she is removed from the suffocating heteronormativity of Glasgow and relocated to the remote spacious Highlands amidst a diverse company of women' (2012a, p. 22). In this, Orkney represents the open-ended possibilities of devolution and Glasgow represents restrictive masculine Scotland. Reading Stella's disorientation against Scotland in this way stabilises the image of Glasgow tied to the second Scottish Renaissance where the hard man, aggrieved in his national struggle against Thatcherism, stands for patriarchal, heterosexist Scottish identity. McCulloch continues that 'her journey towards cosmopolitan completion allows her to transcend the insular shackles of heteronormative Scotland and embrace a rainbow of broadened horizons' (2012a, p. 44).

This reading is certainly significant as it recognises and explores cosmopolitan possibilities in post-devolution Scottish writing. However, it is significant that Stella's 'rainbow of broadened horizons' is possible only through emancipation from 'the insular shackles of heteronormative Scotland'. We might ask, instead, what it would mean to tie this cosmopolitan 'rainbow of broadened

horizons' to Scotland rather than consider these cosmopolitical possibilities as only available outside of Scotland.

McCulloch takes the text's reference to the Scottish government's repeal of Section 28 in 2000 and the homophobic backlash that it prompted as an example of specifically Scottish homophobia prominent in Glasgow. She writes: 'on the mainland [Stella] is subject to the scrutiny of heterosexist disapproval, overhearing in a pub such prejudice as: "ah'm all for live and let live, but the thing you've got tae bear in mind is that it could be one of them teaching your wean, ah mean they homosexuals get everywhere, ken?"' (p. 28). McCulloch comments on this example, 'Strachan's humour achieves political ends, pointing out the hilarious absurdity of such a comment while simultaneously demonstrating just how dangerously entrenched hysterical heterosexist psychosis is in Scottish society' (p. 28). This reference to Section 28 certainly gestures to the kind of divisive heterosexist Scotland that the text seeks to move away from. However, more could be said of Stella's reaction to the men. Stella reflects on the fact that this occurs immediately after Simon's funeral and states 'under other circumstances I might have found the idea of homosexuals getting everywhere quite funny' (pp. 20-21). In this casual humour Stella's reaction is not one of painful dwelling in which she is negated, but is one of unaffected and distracted dismissal. This is not to argue that the reference to the homophobia that arose in this moment is not serious, but to recognise that there is also a sense in which the text refuses to linger on this; Stella dismisses the comment with humour and refuses to preserve it as a trope of Scottishness that negates her identity.

A similar reference to the restrictions of west coast Scotland also occurs at the beginning of the novel. On waking up in an unknown flat, Stella sees that 'opposite me is a huge grey block of modern box-like flats, halfway up across which is emblazoned PRODDYLAND in fading white paint, a letter below each window. Oh fuck off, I mutter' (p. 7). Stella's reaction to divisive Glaswegian sectarianism is similar to her response to its homophobia; it is flippant, unaffected dismissal. This reference, along with the reference to homophobia, certainly gestures to the kind of Scotland that the text seeks to move beyond. Importantly, however, these are the only two references to this kind in Glasgow. As such, it seems that allowing them to stand for the whole of the Glaswegian setting of the text could be limiting. Stella's casual dismissal of these isolated instances is just as significant as their appearance; Strachan holds such images in the text for long enough that such a restrictive Scottishness may be identified as undesirable, but her concern to have Stella quickly move past such events disallows these to stand for mainland Scotland in its entirety.

Other textual references offer an altogether different image of Glasgow. This is present in the exchange between Stella and McCall when he confides that he and Ritchie 'ended up getting off with each other' (p. 112). McCall's casual musing on the subject conveys anything but the identity crisis that a traditional understanding of Scottish heterosexual masculinity would invoke: 'Eh, uhuh, I mean I've never really thought about Richie in that kind of way. Come to think of it, I've never really thought about me in that kind of way. But I guess you've got to try everything once' (p. 113). Stella's equally blasé response reaffirms this: 'well then – you had a nice time, you're still pals, there's nothing to worry about' (p. 113). Here there is a sense

in which homosexuality and non-fixity of identity can be, at the very least, inconsequential. This suggests that there is more at stake in the textual exploration of Stella's disorientation in Glasgow; it appears an upended space that opens queer possibilities rather than a stifling heteronormative place that is directly responsible for Stella's displacement.

The figure of Simon, Stella's brother, like Glasgow, opens up thinking about the queer possibilities available when we read beyond the traditional framework of Scotland – and its men - as necessarily restrictive to queer or cosmopolitan readings. Simon is not readily aligned with patriarchal heterosexism. This is particularly prominent in Strachan's use of the gothic device of haunting to infer an incestuous tone to Simon and Stella's relationship. The most explicit exploration of this occurs in Stella's dream-state:

> At first it's her, saying the familiar line, but you're dead, like she usually does. They embrace. This time thought there's no abstract sexual atmosphere, this time it's full colour and close up, nought to sixty in 6.9 seconds. She doesn't even undress, her skirt is pushed up over her hips and her shirt ripped open and she's really into it as she feels his cock ramming into her. And suddenly it's not her, it's me, I feel the button of his trousers scraping my thigh, and his tongue squirming in my mouth and it's all too much, it's suffocating. (p. 125)

McCulloch reads this scene as a reflection of the patriarchy represented by Simon: 'Strachan adopts the gothic model here to discuss Stella, as a queer Scottish woman,

being gagged and trapped within patriarchal discourse' (p. 37). However, this allows

Simon and his haunting presence to stand only for patriarchal Scotland and presents

the unsettling scene as little more than an example of Stella suffocated by this

stifling context, from which she will soon happily be released.

One later scene, however, demonstrates the potential available when this

scene is released from a traditional reading of patriarchal Scotland stifling women

as it draws a reading of Simon and Stella's relationship in line with unwanted,

dangerous, and illicit desire. Stella reflects on the time that, being a life model and

Simon being an artist, she posed nude for him. She notes how 'I lie there thinking, is

one of us manipulating the situation? I'm not, not consciously, but maybe it's a bit

disingenuous as I'm the one who's naked . . . I don't know how this nuance of

something else got into the room, something not brother-and-sisterly at all' (p. 184).

This scene culminates in Stella finding a photograph of a tattooed woman in Simon's

art book and Simon copying the pattern of the tattoo onto Stella's flesh. Stella

describes what follows using images rather than words: 'it does something else,

something which confuses me, this moist creeping crawling sensation all over me. I

imagine another lotus blossom opening up between my legs, petals spreading, ripe

and hungry, like one of those plants that flower once in a blue moon, with the scent

of rotting flesh' (p. 188). The flower, a common image of female sexuality, is

associated with images of beauty, and of life. This image is subverted with the abject

description of the flower that smells of decay. This notion of 'hunger' alongside the

image of 'rotting flesh' forces an image of unwanted and abject desire. Therefore,

releasing these haunting scenes from a reading that explains them through Stella's

being 'gagged and trapped' by her brother who stands for 'patriarchal discourse' (p. 37) can allow them to stand, instead, for something that is at once unsettling, non-normative, and queer.

The scene of incestuous desire undoubtedly falls outside of the structures of the good life discussed in chapter three. Yet, this desire between siblings also disturbs the idea of family. In these terms Simon and Stella might be read in line with Amber's 'strangeness' that disrupts the family structure, yet their presence appears even more uncanny as they form the 'strangers within' the family unit. Moreover, the fact that Simon and Stella are male and female introduces further ideas of crisis within the family model as they signify a potentially reproductive pairing. However, their position as brother and sister does not present a happy and healthy reproduction that Edelman identifies as central to the continuance of the heteronormative healthy body politic; the incestuous nature of this desire casts this instead as a symbol of a dangerous and contaminated reproduction.

This scene recalls Berlant and Edelman's discussion of 'Sex without Optimism' in which they explore the ways in which sex (without optimism), as a moment of relation, confronts the subject with unbearable incoherence or 'nonsovereignty'. As discussed briefly in chapter three, Edelman outlines that optimism is central to sex in that sex 'attains the stability of knowledge relation only by way of an optimism that erases its negativity' (2013, p. 1). Therefore 'sex without optimism' constitutes forms of sex that do not anchor identity to any form of meaning-making, be it through sex as tied to traditional ideas of romance and monogamy, or to ideas of safe and normative reproduction that are at the heart of

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the family structure. The illicit desire between brother and sister clearly presents an extreme example of an instance of 'sex without optimism'. Berlant and Edelman are interested in such moments of relation for the ways in which they estrange the subject. In particular, they develop the idea of 'negativity' that 'disturbs the presumption of sovereignty by way of "an encounter", specifically, an encounter with the estrangement and intimacy of being in relation' (2013, p. viii). By 'negativity' Berlant and Edelman refer to 'the psychic and social incoherences and divisions, conscious and unconscious alike, that trouble any totality or fixity of identity' (2013, pp. vii-viii). This can refer to the illusion of the totality of 'the self' that stems from a psychoanalytic tradition, in which much of Edelman's thought is rooted, or to the illusion of identity that is informed socially via normativity's preoccupation with 'the good life', which is the backdrop to many of Berlant's ideas.

Like Stella's interaction with mirrors, there is a process whereby she is estranged by these references to sex and desire that fall outside of 'optimistic' good life structures and as such this nameless subject is further alienated from 'any totality or fixity of identity'. Simon is not just representative of patriarchal Glasgow stifling women, but his interaction with Stella both in her dreams and memories places brother and sister as particularly negative queer subjects at the heart of the text. Thus not only do Simon and Stella present disturbances of the family that may be read as queer, Berlant and Edelman's discussion of sex and its relationship to negativity provides a language through which to understand the disorientation that is present in this moment.

Stella's reflection on this scene continues: 'somewhere in my mind a little sensible voice is telling me to remember where I am, but I'm here in the flat, with Simon, so it's okay, I don't have to find my way home or anything' (p. 188). Conflicting images of the secure and contained notion of 'home' are placed alongside the incestual tone of this scene. If 'home' is the site of the safe and normative, this only serves to emphasise the 'out of place' nature of the desire here. The phrase 'I don't have to find my way home' resonates with the overall sense of Stella's disorientation. It does not simply read as the more obvious 'I don't have to go home' and instead emphasises the notion of '[finding] my way'. This creates a textual link between the queer resonances in this scene and the state of disorientation that encompasses the text; Stella's illicit desire is tied to a sense not 'finding my way home'.

These scenes injected with an incestuous tone present both Stella and Simon as strange characters aligned with the abject, unsafe, and unfamiliar. Simon does not easily stand for Scotland here; in fact, his haunting presence culminates in a traumatic displacement that disrupts typical notions of 'home' and familial ties. Both siblings are equally alienated from the family. Stella reflects: 'yeah, well, [Simon] was still at home when Gareth moved in with Mum, with his brood in tow. Always said it drove him away, that there wasn't room for him in the new "happy families"' (p. 21). Simon is directly pushed out of the new family unit and thus, like Stella, he assumes the position of outsider to this societal norm of 'home' and 'family'. Their shared position as outsiders to the family is the source of Simon and Stella's mutually dependent deeply loving relationship. In her grief Stella ponders: 'family?

The one relation, the one person I could talk to, who would not only listen but understand, was dead and I'd never speak to him again' (p. 35). Reading Simon closely thus unveils an intimate queer relationship of mutual dependence between the siblings, in which they both stand as outcasts from 'family' who harbour secrets of strange illicit desire that simultaneously disturb ideas of family and home.

McCulloch forms her thinking on utopian cosmopolitanism through Braidotti's statement that 'nomadism consists not so much in being homeless, as in being capable of recreating your home everywhere' (cited in McCulloch, 2012a, p. 11). However, through grief, we encounter Stella as incapable of recreating her home anywhere; home is not created 'everywhere' but is traumatically absent. Freud reminds us that 'unheimlich', which he takes as the German translation for 'uncanny', 'is clearly the opposite of *heimlich, heimisch*' (2003 [1919], p. 124) which Freud later clarifies means "familiar", "native", "belonging to the home" and therefore 'uncanny' corresponds to 'the unhomely' (2003 [1919], p. 134). The uncanny clearly has resonance with the gothic as well as with queer theory's fascination with the unfamiliar outside of normative conceptions of 'home' and identity. There is therefore a lengthier discussion of the uncanny and queerness in chapter five's exploration of the 'Queer Scottish Gothic'. At present, however, Freud's 'uncanny' helpfully illustrates Stella and Simon's unsettling sexual desire and positioning outside familial structures as themes of the uncanny; they are strange, haunting, 'unfamiliar' and 'not belonging to home'.

This focus on the uncanny, of which Freud writes 'there is no doubt that this belongs to the realm of the frightening' (2003, [1919], p. 123), furthers thinking on

an unfamiliar disorientation, or 'unhomeliness', as a necessary step in the move towards a negative type of cosmopolitanism. McCulloch's idea of a cosmopolitanism that involves an ability to recreate homeliness anywhere, rather than the experience of homelessness, calls to mind Freud's uncanny and, significantly, seems to reject the idea of unhomeliness as an aspect of nomadic being. However, cosmopolitanism is undeniably oppositional to 'native' and aims to destabilise the territorial nature of 'home'. In this sense cosmopolitanism shares some common ground with the horrifying 'uncanny' which, as Freud's definition illustrates, is also opposite to that which is 'native' and 'belonging to the home' (2003 [1919], p. 134). Following Freud's definition in its entirety then would also suggest that a cosmopolitanism which opposes notions of 'native' and 'home' also demands something 'unfamiliar'. In these terms then, disorientation – the space of the unfamiliar – is the overlooked facet of cosmopolitanism. Reading Simon not as representative of Scottish patriarchy but as involved in the taboo of incestuous desire and as equally decentred from the family as Stella, then, allows both siblings to come into view as forces of queer unhomeliness. If there is a cosmopolitanism available here it is not an emancipatory process whereby home becomes unfixed and multiple; it is tied to a traumatic process of dislocation in which normative concepts of home and family are hauntingly and radically subverted.

With Scotland's disoriented post-devolution state in mind, it is pertinent to question how far Simon and Stella in their haunting queer unhomeliness can stand for upended and abjected Scotland and what it might mean to finally allow such dislocated queerness to stand for, not in opposition to, Scotland. This approach

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provokes the problematic issue of drawing national allegories from literature from Scotland. This tendency was infamously played out in the second Scottish Renaissance where the hard-man 'brutalised in the struggle against social injustice and industrial decline' (Wallace and Stevenson, 1993, p. 3) came to stand for Scotland so that, as Ferrebe writes, 'only the Drunk (or Stoned) Man could look at the Thistle with any sense of ownership' (2007, p. 277). It was this tendency in Scottish criticism that led Christopher Whyte famously to ask whether the setting up of a Scottish parliament could 'allow Scottish literature to be literature first and foremost, rather than the expression of a nationalist movement' (1995, p. 284). Post-devolution, there is certainly less of a tendency to read characters from Scottish literature as allegories for the nation. However, in this desire to move beyond national allegorising, we risk overlooking the fact that we still struggle to allow women and queer characters to stand for the nation. This is evidenced in McCulloch's reading, where Stella can only be read *against* traditional Scottishness; she is negated and erased by its heterosexist patriarchy.

Like Ali Smith's multifaceted and ambiguous Amber, Stella and Simon run contrary to traditional Scotland in their disorientating queer unhomeliness and therefore they do not appear possible allegories for Scotland in the way that the hard man of the devolutionary period of 1979-1999 came to represent the nation. Of course, this thesis argues that we must push beyond these overly simplistic interpretations of writing from Scotland and its characters. However, it is a productive process, amongst the various other readings of Stella that are available, to ask what significance there could be in allowing a queer, lost, nameless woman

and her brother to stand for Scotland. Indeed, nameless Stella's disoriented state

provides an apt symbol for post-devolution Scotland entering a disorientating state

where old formations of nation no longer hold and the future remains evasively

unknowable. Therefore, allowing such characters to stand momentarily for Scotland

can allow us to consider imaginatively Scotland's traumatic disoriented post-

devolution state and the queer cosmopolitical possibilities available in that

upending.

Writing on the possibilities for a change in Scottish identity post-devolution,

Strachan considers that 'we might almost be ready not only to figure out who we

think we are, but to get above ourselves' (2007, p. 56). In *Negative Space*, the

narrative device of grief enacts an exploration of the state of disorientation, which

encompasses an explosion of stabilities as they underpin identity, one facet of which

is '[getting] above' Scottishness. This approach helps work through the often

underattended aspect of reconfiguring structures of home, identity, and belonging;

that 'getting above ourselves' necessarily involves disorientating and destabilizing

processes. In this way, the text enacts Edelman's statement: 'fuck the whole network

of symbolic relations and the future that serves as its prop' (2004, p. 29). If queer

cosmopolitanism involves a reconfiguration of our normative 'symbolic relations',

Negative Space's fixation on grief-induced disorientation helps acknowledge the

necessary traumatic disruption involved in that process.

Negative Space thus allows a reading of post-devolution Scotland in which

'negative cosmopolitanism' can be explored. This finds transformative queer

possibilities that need not be envisaged in the future nor compromised in the

present. Rather, this approach to cosmopolitanism, developed from Edelman's

negativity, presents a way of envisaging radical queer cosmopolitan possibilities in

the realities of the present. *Negative Space,* read through negative cosmopolitanism,

unveils that post-devolution Scotland's disorientation holds the potential to realise a

radically reconfigured nation which, like Stella, can find queer cosmopolitanism

unleashed through the displacement of its normative stabilities.

Chapter Five

Queer Scottish Gothic

Chapter four raised the idea that that which is typically deemed 'negative' or

unsettling is a site of intersections between Scotland's disoriented post-devolution

setting, the aspirations of cosmopolitanism, and queer theory. The gothic genre

provides a great deal of scope for analysis for that which is unsettling, and the

transgressive potential of this. The present chapter therefore turns to post-

devolution Scottish gothic writing in order to extend chapter four's interest in the

intersections between cosmopolitanism, queer theory, and post-devolution Scotland

and specifically analyse the potential interactions between queerness and

Scottishness within the gothic genre. This analysis therefore also narrows my

definition of queer as anti-normative in order to specifically consider transgressive

sexualities and identities as one facet of this. This focus is significant given Whyte's

assertion, discussed in chapter one, that pre-devolution Scotland was 'mutually

exclusive' to gay or queer identities (1995, p. xv). Thus, in exploring a relationship

between Scottishness and queerness, this chapter proposes a radically renewed

understanding of the crossover between these terms and locates this as particularly

prominent within post-devolution Scottish gothic writing. This chapter's analysis of

queer Scottish gothic begins from a simple observation: there is a large scholarship

on queer gothic and on Scottish gothic respectively. However, there is very little

analysis on the way Scottish and queer gothic may interact and thus, with the

exception of one recent article by Fiona McCulloch, such a category as the queer

Scottish gothic has not yet been considered. This chapter explores revisions in treatment of gothic monstrous figures as 'all that is dangerous and horrible in the human imagination' (Gilmore, 2003, p. 1) in order to assess the potential for reconfigured ideas of monstrosity in Louise Welsh's *The Cutting Room* (2002), Luke Sutherland's *Venus as a Boy* (2004), Zoë Strachan's *Ever Fallen in Love* (2011), and Welsh's *The Girl on the Stairs* (2012) to stand as elusive sites through which the peripheral identities of Scottish and of queer may be simultaneously explored.

Torn between a dual British and Scottish identity, positioned as a marginal borderland to a civilized England, and haunted paradoxically by simultaneous ideas of its erased national identity and imperial sins, the gothic is particularly significant for Scotland because it provides a site for an exploration of haunting and for Scotland's fracturing position as 'other' (Punter, 1999, p. 101; Wright, 2007, p. 73; Germanà, 2011, p. 1-5; Morace, 2011, p. 26). Meanwhile, critics of the queer gothic draw attention to the genre's focus on transgression, perversion, and the haunting disquiet of the conservative norm in their theorising the interlinking of gothic and queer (Haggerty, 2004-2005, p. 1; O'Rourke and Collings, 2004-2005, p. 15; Hughes and Smith, 2009, p. 1). Clearly, then, Scottish and queer studies have both turned to the gothic for exploration of that which is other, marginal, and potentially disturbing to the (hetero)normative centre. In exploring the origins of the word 'uncanny' Nicholas Royle deduces that 'the "uncanny" comes from Scotland, from that "auld country" that has so often been represented as "beyond the borders", liminal, an English foreign body. The "uncanny" comes out of a language which is neither purely English . . . nor foreign' (2003, p. 12). The 'Scottishness' of the uncanny here refers to

the space 'beyond' which disturbs boundaries of 'foreignness'. Elsewhere in *The Uncanny,* Royle writes that 'the uncanny *is* queer. And the queer is uncanny' (2003, p. 43). In making this association, Royle refers to Sedgwick's famous definition of queer as 'the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or *can't be* made) to signify monolithically' ([emphasis in original] Sedgwick, 1994 cited in Royle, 2003, p. 42). Queer is the taboo breaker that cannot find a 'place' in understanding or language; like Scotland, queer is 'beyond the borders' and 'liminal' while, like queer, Scotland represents 'lapses and excesses of meaning' in its position as 'other' that disturbs notions of 'foreignness'.

Despite their commonalities, little attention has been paid to the possibilities of a queer Scottish gothic. This may be, in part, due to Scotland's traditional masculine heterosexism, which led to Christopher Whyte's famous statement that 'to be gay and to be Scottish, it would seem, are still mutually exclusive conditions' (1995, p. xv). This view, as discussed in chapters one and two, remained a central point of contention in Scottish literary criticism at the turn of the century (see Whyte, 1995; Gifford and MacMillan, 1997; Stirling, 2008; Jones, 2009; Germanà, 2010). However, conversely, queer criticism of canonical Scottish gothic texts reveals little attention to their Scottish context. Eve Sedgwick introduces *Between Men* (1985), which includes her queer reading of James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824),[3] with the statement: 'the subject of this

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[3] Hereafter *Confessions.*

book is a relatively short, recent, and accessible passage of English culture, chiefly as embodied in the mid-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century novel' (1985, p. 1). More recently William Veeder has claimed that 'the site of *Jekyll and Hyde* is . . . not simply London or Edinburgh but the larger milieu of late-Victorian patriarchy' (2005, p. 104). Whyte writes that 'Scottishness is visible, anomalous, problematic in a way Englishness has not yet, and may never become' (1995, p. xvi). This 'invisible' Englishness is the one at work in these readings; it does not indicate intention to analyse a specific 'Englishness' but refers to a generalised view of the literature produced from the British Isles within the specified period.

Elaine Showalter's queer reading of *The Strange Case of Dr Jekll and Mr Hyde* is heavily contextualised by an established discourse on the history of sexuality and particularly on the famous work of Jeffrey Weeks and Richard Dellamara on the 'Victorian homosexual', which details the emergence of a homosexual subculture and homosexuality entering legal discourse by the 1880s. From this contextual work, Showalter observes that 'homosexuality represented a double life' (Showalter, 1992, p. 106) and thus by inverting this relation she reads doublings in *Jekyll and Hyde* as evidence for repressed homosexuality. Showalter does not acknowledge the significance of the double in the Scottish context other than a brief mention of Emma Tennant's work: 'Tennant has suggested that the double story is particularly meaningful both for women and for Scottish writers who invented it and who grew up with a bilingual and double culture' (Showalter, 1992, p. 124). Showalter's reading of the double as significant in the nineteenth century, alongside her brief acknowledgement of the double as significant in the Scottish context, draws

attention to the fact that she approaches 'nineteenth century' and 'Scotland' as separate entities. Thus the queer possibilities of the nineteenth-century split self cannot apply here to the Scottish context of *Jekyll and Hyde* as its significance is limited to Scotland's 'bilingual and double culture'.

This is not to argue that Sedgwick, Veeder, and Showalter exclude the central or most significant aspect of these texts; of course, texts can hold pertinence beyond their national context. These writers' blindness to the specificity of place may be understandable given that their analysis already has its marginal subject in the form of homosexuality. In other words, 'homosexual', like 'Scottish', forms the visible entity that must be mapped on to the blank canvas that is the Victorian period, which is, by default, (invisibly) English. In these terms, then, 'Scottish' and 'queer' have been kept apart by way of their both being minority positions that are individually concerned with the specifics of their own peripheral status; Scotland failed to interrogate the normative invisibility of patriarchal heteronormality while the queer analysis has failed to interrogate the default placeless 'English' culture in which it theorised Victorian gender and sexual politics. This suggests that breaking the traditional understanding of Scotland as traditionally heteronormative and queer as 'placeless' is all that is required to open up the connections of queer and Scottish by way of their shared marginality. Thus these queer readings raise questions regarding what it would mean to 'place' the queer gothic in Scotland and to bring Scottishness in line with its previously excluded queerness.

While Sedgwick's open conception of queer as that which 'can't be made to signify monolithically' might align with gothic explorations of the transgressive

space 'beyond', Paulina Palmer, in her analysis of lesbian gothic, recognises that the genre 'also reveals . . . misogynistic/homophobic attitudes' (1999, p. 13) as it casts 'others' as threatening abject monstrosities. Edward Ingerbrestsen has named the construction of the monstrous figure as 'a ritual boundary guarding through which the civil monster is named, repudiated, and, finally, staked' (1998, p. 91) all in the name of preserving the healthy body politic which 'demands an occasional purging' (1998, p. 99). From this understanding the monster is created so as to dispel it. Ingerbrestsen elaborates that dehumanisation, which sets the monster up as 'other' to the values of normative society, is essential as it allows for the eventual achievement of 'their final *invisibility'* ([emphasis in original] 1998, p. 96). Palmer exemplifes the way in which homosexuality is typically othered and dispelled by this process; she refers to Fuss's location of 'a preoccupation with the figure of the homosexual as spectre and phantom, as spirit and revenant, as abject and undead' (Fuss, 1991 cited in Palmer, 1999, p. 3). Thus, Palmer concludes, 'writers of lesbian Gothic, in paradoxically reworking the homophobic and misogynistic images associated with the genre, similarly engage in an attempt to resignify the boundaries of the abject' (1999, p. 16). The gothic, then, may provide fertile ground for exploration of that which is queer but this must also involve a renegotiation of the coding of transgressive sexualities and bodies as abject, repulsive, and monstrous. This chapter's suggestion, then, is that in recasting the terms of the abject away from fear and terror, Welsh, Sutherland, and Strachan's texts present monstrous and uncanny figures as well as abject spaces as elusive, excessive, and uncontainable

sites through which the commonalities of queer and Scottish as 'off-centre' may interact.

The Cutting Room

Louise Welsh's *The Cutting Room* (2002) is narrated by Rilke, a gay auctioneer who discovers a selection of violent and disturbing photographs while clearing out the house of the deceased Mr McKindless. Rilke becomes obsessed with finding out if the images are real and moves through the dark underworld of Glasgow in his quest. Welsh draws a boundary between a civilized world of 'normal people' (p. 201) and Rilke, who is playfully coded as monstrous throughout the text. He narrates: 'they call me Rilke to my face, behind my back the Cadaver, Corpse, Walking Dead' (p. 2). In comic reference to gothic homophobia, he suggests that 'all queers are unstable – who knows when I might turn?' (p. 121). These knowing references to the casting of queer as monstrous are intertwined with Rilke's abject descriptions of his queer fantasies: 'I was in a tunnel way beneath the city . . . the smell of ordure in my lungs . . . the scuttle of rats around me . . . fucking a stranger against the rough brick of a wall' (p. 153). Welsh's divide between the civilized surface and the immoral, abjected underbelly calls to mind the typical dispelling of the 'other' beyond the healthy body politic.

However, Rilke's first person narrative permits the reader access to his queer underworld and as such the civilised and normative are recast as marginal and spectral. His reference to 'normal people', for instance, evokes a strange and detached world impossible for Rilke to comprehend: 'I tried to imagine myself

working in an office, travelling home to a warm heath, children, a salary at the end

of the month, pension for old age. It was too difficult; the image refused to appear'

(p. 201). This notion of the 'image' that 'refuses to appear' grants an unreal and

spectral quality to the bourgeois heteronormative world of home, family, and

stability. In contrast, the marginal, subversive experience of anal sex is detailed and

clinical:

> In anal sex it is of great importance that your partner is relaxed. Too much
>
> resistance can lead to tearing of the anal sphincter, resulting in infection, or a
>
> loss of muscle tensions, leading to leakage of the back passage – unpleasant.
>
> Other possible side effects include a split condom – which may result in the
>
> contraction of HIV or several other harmful infections – piles, and a punch in
>
> the face for inflicting too much pain. All this aside, I like my sexual partners
>
> to have as good a time as I can give them. I find it stimulating. (p. 152)

This clinical and informative description departs from panicked gothic evocations of

queer sexuality; it is overt, casual and factual as Rilke focuses instead on pleasure: 'I

find it stimulating' (p. 152). Images of abjection and contagion appear through

reference to 'infection', 'leakage of the back passage', and 'contraction of HIV' but are

subverted by Rilke's off-hand, unthreatened response to these as he shifts from

discussing HIV to humorously listing 'several other harmful infections' as 'piles, and

a punch in the face'. *The Cutting Room* thus recasts the position of the healthy body

politic and its spectral threat as Rilke's narrative shifts the queer abjected

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underbelly to the centre of the text, permitting the reader unthreatening access to this world.

Catherine Spooner has suggested a turn in the contemporary gothic, which constitutes a 'Gothic Carnivalesque', where 'one of the most prominent features . . . is sympathy for the monster' (2006, p. 69). While *The Cutting Room* may not constitute sympathy for the monster, the narrative dissociation of the abject and monstrous from fear and terror undoubtedly injects a carnivalesque celebration of otherness into the textual revelling in Rilke's queer underworld that constitutes excess, spectacle, and chaos.

Welsh's shifting gothic perspective of queer as spectral threat is furthered as the threatening figure of the gothic becomes the 'heterosexual' religious man, Steenie, who attempts to kill Rilke for his homosexuality. Steenie lures Rilke to an attic, promising information on McKindless, attempts to push him from the top of the ladder and, upon failing, 'his voice become heavy and pedantic as it took on the cadence of a sermon . . . You should repent, Rilke' (p. 180). Welsh draws explicit attention to this typical conservative gothic coding of homosexuality when Rilke reads a sermon he finds on the floor of the attic. Amongst many other similar images, it includes the declaration that 'Homosexuals fellate almost 100% of their sexual contacts & drink their semen. Semen contains every germ carried in the blood stream, it is the same as drinking raw human blood VAMPIRES!' (p. 179). This draws attention to the ridiculous and excessive tone of typical gothic homophobic panic which codes dissonant sexuality as monstrous, vampiric, contaminated and threatening. Although Steenie's attempt to murder Rilke enacts the typical staking of

the monster, this scene does not draw the reader into a classic conservative gothic spectacle whereby the monster is purged and order is restored. Welsh's reader shares Rilke's perspective via his first person narrative and as such, Rilke is not threatening or monstrous to the reader; in fact, it is Steenie who appears as the 'madman' in the attic. This clearly alludes to Charlotte Brontë's infamous figure, Bertha Mason, the 'madwoman in the attic', famously othered via her gender, race, and 'insanity' (for a full discussion of this figure see Gilbert and Gubar, [1979] 2000). Welsh inverts this process of othering; she inserts the white, Presbyterian, homophobic man into this position and makes her reader complicit in her homosexual protagonist's perspective.

This playful interaction with the typical image of the queer gothic is also significant for the Scottish gothic as Welsh makes reference to Hogg's *Confessions*. Welsh sets up obvious parallels between Steenie, the religious fanatic, and Hogg's Justified Sinner. Steenie, like Robert, is presented as a 'remorse, silent shadow' (p. 139) behind his more socially engaged brother, John, while Robert appears to his socially superior brother, George, in *Confessions* 'as regularly as the shadow is cast from the substance' (p. 27). Moreover, in an explicit textual reference, the pub in which Steenie and John are first introduced to the reader in Rilke's narrative is called 'Gilmartins' (p. 132), the name of the uncanny devil-like figure who haunts Robert in *Confessions*. The text's parallels with *Confessions* further the Scottish and queer analysis of this traditional Scottish gothic text.

Both Punter and Sedgwick analyse the passage in *Confessions* where Robert interrupts George's tennis match and then runs around with blood all over his face.

He is described in the Editor's Narrative: 'an object to all of the uttermost disgust. The blood flowing from his mouth and nose he took no pains to stem, neither did he so much as wipe it away' (p. 18). *The Cutting Room*'s Steenie is described in similarly repulsive and weakened terms: 'he lay on his side, blood streaming from his nose . . . his body convulsed with sobs' (p. 176). This description of the weakened, abject body streaming blood from the nose directly mirrors the famous description of Robert in *Confessions*. For Punter, reading *Confessions* as part of the Scottish gothic tradition, the scene of Robert's bloodied nose is symptomatic of it being a 'book about humiliation', which is relevant for Scotland 'in terms of the ways in which past humiliation at the hands of a dominating force . . . can be handled and what residues it might leave within the individual and/or cultural psyche' (2012, p. 137). Meanwhile, Sedgwick reads the scene as demonstrative of Robert's queer position as the abject other: 'clearly, the tools for advancement he perceives himself as possessing are those belonging to the castrated, to the visibly and even disgustingly powerless'. Sedgwick further locates this as a product of the tensions present in queer desire: 'the uncanny "pursuit" of George by Robert that is the subject of the Editor's Narrative offers a portrait of male homosocial desire as murderous resentment' (Sedgwick, 1985, p. 102). In these readings, then, Robert's abject position is available both as a 'Scottish' and 'queer' image and thus Steenie could also stand for 'Scottish' and 'queer' simultaneously in this scene.

However, Welsh leaves no doubt as to the explicit queer reading available in the text. As if in direct engagement with Sedgwick's analysis, Steenie's attempted murder of Rilke is presented as a case of repressed homosexuality and homophobic

panic: 'he wound his arms round my neck in an unexpected embrace, putting his face to mine in a blood and snot kiss that appalled me' (p. 185). Welsh does not leave critics to rely on inference as she follows Sedgwick's thinking through to present an indisputable case of repressed homosexuality in the gothic. In his parallels with Robert, then, Steenie would initially appear as part of a clear Scottish gothic tradition. However, the image of his abjection is overtly aligned with repressed homosexuality, and as such inscribes an overt queerness into this Scottish gothic scene.

Further queer resonances are layered into this chapter by way of its epigraph from *Jekyll and Hyde*:

hence it came about that I concealed my pleasures; and that when I reached years of reflection, and began to look round me, and take stock of my progress and position in the world, I stood already committed to a profound duplicity of life. (p. 167)

This quotation recalls Showalter's queer reading of *Jekyll and Hyde* as a tale of repression in which 'homosexuality represented a double life' (Showalter, 1992, p. 106). This epigraph's foreshadowing of Steenie's repressed homosexuality leaves no doubt as to the queer undertone of this quote. Thus the intertextual references to *Jekyll and Hyde* and to *Confessions* places the overt queerness of *The Cutting Room* within a Scottish gothic tradition, which simultaneously emphasises the availability of queer analysis at the very heart of the Scottish gothic canon.

Moreover, Rilke's queer world is irrevocably 'placed' in the text as Welsh

maps her divided spaces of civilisation and abjection onto competing versions of

Glasgow. Rilke refers to the way in which the 'industrial age had given way to a

white-collar revolution and the sons and daughters of shipyard toilers now tapped

keyboards and answered telephones in wipe-clean sweatshops' (p. 65). The world of

'normality' is cast into the faceless conglomerate of the globalised world here as the

'white-collar revolution' is reduced to 'wipe-clean sweatshops'. Meanwhile, the

nostalgic reference to 'the sons and daughters of shipyard toilers' suggests an

inward turn to Glasgow's past as an alternative to what McCulloch has referred to as

'capitalist globalization and its alienating entropic affects on our ever shrinking

planet' (2012a, p. 2). Rilke continues: 'dark suits trampled along Bath Street, past

the storm-blasted spire of Renfield St Stephen's, home to prepare for another day

like the last and another after that' (p. 65). The uniform monotony of apparent

'normality' is juxtaposed here, not with an explicit example of Rilke's queerness, but

with the sublime gothicism of 'the storm-blasted spire of Renfield St Stephen's'.

Thus, Welsh looks to the gothicism of Glasgow's Victorian setting and the chaos of

its industrial age as a place of texture, variation, and excess that provide fertile sites

of exploration for a queer alternative to the faceless, sterile monotony inherent in

the apparent 'normality' of the globalised city.

The gothicism inherent in the image of 'the storm-blasted spire of Renfield St

Stephen's' is inscribed into queer scenes throughout the novel. Glasgow's notorious

cruising ground, Kelvin Way, is cast as a particularly abject queer space:

'everywhere I could sense decay. The pigeons were roosting on a skeletal willow

poised above the water . . . winged rats' (p. 28). Rather than signify an abhorrence

that must be dispelled, Rilke's narration positions this image at the centre of the text

and uses the abject here to cast the queer cruising grounds as excessive and

subversive. In other scenes where Rilke enters a stranger's house for sex, his

description of the Glasgow tenement clearly harks to Victorian gothicism:

> paper peeled from the walls in jagged tongues, exposing the dark treacle of
>
> Victorian varnish on the plaster beneath . . . the light came from two tall
>
> picture windows which let in the glow of the street lamps . . . he turned
>
> towards me . . . 'you like fucking young boys?'. (p. 149-150)

The description of the peeling paper as 'jagged tongues' reflects the gothic imagery

used to attribute a sense of decay to Kelvin Way while the 'dark treacle of Victorian

varnish' and 'tall picture windows' intertwines the gothicism of Glasgow's

architecture with queer dissonance in this scene. This inward turn to the gothic

architecture and industrialism of Glasgow's Victorian age presents a textured place

of excess that forms the underbelly to sterile, uniform globalisation. In this way,

Glasgow's past provides an aesthetics that may be aligned with Sedgwick's reference

to queer gender and sexuality; it presents excess and subversion that is not 'made

(or *can't be* made) to signify monolithically' (1993, p. 8).

Venus as a Boy

Luke Sutherland's *Venus as a Boy* (2004) also ties queer monstrosity to the Scottish

landscape. Additionally, it presents a gothic framed narrative through the narrator

detailing how he came to possess and then transcribe minidisks onto which the

text's supernatural protagonist, Désirée, had narrated his life story as he

approached his death. Luke Sutherland presents *Venus as a Boy* (2004) as the

published product of the narrator's transcription and blurs the boundaries between

fiction and reality via the narrator's signing his name 'L.S.'. Désirée's life therefore

spans the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century and, through this,

Sutherland offers a modern-day gothic narrative of the elusive monstrous being,

which brings the categories of queer and Scottish together.

Désirée narrates his discovery of his 'gift' for sex and his subsequent

debauched life, which begins on Orkney and ends in Soho. Désirée's supernatural

'gift' for sex that '[makes] folk melt. Guys and girls spilling between my fingers like

ice-cream' (p. 50) casts him explicitly as the irresistible queer monster who

threatens heteronormality. He references 'the conflict in [men's] eyes . . . taking for

granted they were a hundred per cent heterosexual in any case, and yet wanting to

hump the arse off me' (p. 67). Vampiric images are explicit in Désirée's descriptions

of how he gets 'kind of drunk on spunk and cunt juice. All these bodily fluids are like

delicious liqueurs to me . . . some nights I finish, I feel like I've been at a feast' (p. 50).

Where *The Cutting Room* playfully references the conservative coding of queer

monsters, *Venus as a Boy* presents a supernatural, vampiric protagonist that is

unequivocally monstrous.

The transcription of Désirée's audio-recorded life story poses a contemporary twist on the gothic found manuscript. Threatening monstrous figures do not typically gain authorial control in gothic narratives. Bram Stoker's Dracula, for instance, is described by those around him; Journals of Mina Harker, Dr Seward's diary, and letters between characters cast the monster as elusive 'other' and align the reader with the normative perspective that it threatens. Similarly Hyde has no voice in Stevenson's text; he is constructed entirely through other characters' terrified descriptions and multiple perspectives of him. The gothic monster's narrative position thus tends to be spectral in that they are produced from the anxieties of the characters they threaten. The narrative device of Désirée speaking his story onto minidisk, and the text being written as if it were an exact transcription of someone's conversational narration, creates the experience of hearing the voice of this queer monster, which raises questions concerning the function that the monster serves when not constructed through the terrified response to it.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is perhaps the most famous example of the gothic monster being granted a voice. In chapters where Frankenstein's monster takes over the narrative he is conveyed as sensitive, humane, and at the mercy of Victor Frankenstein, his 'creator' and, as such, this narrative device inverts the monster/victim relation. Sutherland's text, however, poses no clear cut lines between monster and victim. The text constitutes multifaceted contradictions that refuse comfortable delineation at all turns. This might be termed 'queer disorientation' in the text and it is explored as much through the landscape of

Orkney as it is through Désirée, the elusive monster. In many ways, for instance,

Sutherland looks to Orkney as the peripheral space which provides an apt setting

for his queer monster. Désirée recalls:

> in winter I'd sit in the attic. Watch storms start to form over the Atlantic. Up
>
> there, the sky would break open, give you a quick flash of bloody sunlight
>
> then spew its guts. The thrill was in the roof shaking and you still feeling safe,
>
> at the same time knowing, if anything really did go wrong, what with Orkney
>
> being so remote, you'd be fucked. (p. 15)

This description of landscape clearly calls to mind Edmund Burke's sublime in

which 'the passion caused by the great and sublime in nature' excites 'ideas of pain

and danger' leading to 'Terror', 'the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of

feeling' ([1757] 2008, p. 39). Here the sublime landscape provides a fitting space for

this supernatural, elusive, queer monstrosity to exist. This is evidenced further as he

reflects: 'I see how [Orkney is] almost everything I am' (p. 9) and, later, 'a map of

Orkney's a map of my emotions, pretty much. A map of me' (p. 52). In their

intertwining, then, the text inscribes Orkney into the queer supernatural entity and

simultaneously evokes the queerness inherent in Orkney's position as 'beyond',

peripheral, and 'other'.

However, elsewhere the island is presented as an insular community, where

local thugs are 'the cream of South Ronaldsay' (p. 39) and all forms of otherness are

persecuted; Désirée describes 'boys at school who wanted to kill me and the

Jehovah's Witnesses and the English' (p. 17). In these presentations of Orkney, Désirée and his friend Finola, daughter of a 'Czechoslovakian countess', are cast as others. Upon hearing Finola's mother's story of how she escaped an unwanted marriage by flying away in her wedding dress which 'made a kite out of her', Désirée describes 'Christmas day, Finola in Eva's wedding dress and me in a mock eighteenth-century ballgown Eva got in some West End musical, skydiving off Hoxa Head' (p. 20). The image here of the 'others' wearing elaborate dresses and skydiving off Hoxa Head inscribes this scene with a particularly gendered queer escapism. Orkney, then, is juxtaposed as, on the one hand, an insular community that violently excludes otherness and, on the other, the peripheral setting into which fantastic and escapist imagery is inscribed. This contradictory presentation of Orkney brings nuance to traditional evocations of the magic inherent in this peripheral location, famously depicted in George MacKay Brown's poetry. In this more nuanced representation, Orkney's landscape no longer functions as simplistic fulfilment of an escapist fantasy for those 'who'd done a runner from the rat race and come to Orkney in the hope of finding an island Utopia' (p. 11) and instead appears as a violent and contradictory space that intertwines with this queer monster.

Just as Orkney functions as a confronting and conflicting space in the text, queer images are similarly evasive of simple delineation. Upon failing to help Finola when she is horrifically gang raped by boys on the island, Désirée breaks into her house after her and her mother have left Orkney because of the crime and becomes fixated on wearing her clothes and makeup. He recalls:

I got a trick going alone in my bedroom, with lipstick and eyeshadow . . . I'd

sit a bit away from the mirror and cross my eyes, defocus and focus until I

saw Finola, We had the same kind of build, same colour hair, and what with

her undies on and this trick with my eyes, I turned into her . . . I touched

myself . . . hmm . . . it was like she was playing with me. Possession, I guess.

(p. 27)

Désirée's dressing up as Finola produces an image of gothic doubling that

encompasses traumatic and fracturing disturbance. Moreover, it is Désirée's drag

that produces this doubling and, as such, this presents a particularly queer image of

the gothic doppelgänger. As such, this gothic queerness functions as a multifaceted,

contradictory, and confronting exploration of crisis, failure, and the experience of

being violently and helplessly othered.

In her analysis of the unnameable monster, Maria Beville refers to 'a general

problem in teratology, which is the avoidance of the ultimate excess and

unrepresentability of the monster due to obsessive concentration on processes of

labelling, cataloguing, and rationalisation' (2014, pp. xi-xii). Sutherland's

exploration of monstrosity presents an image akin to Beville's focus on the

unnameable monster. By encountering the voice of this monster we gain some

recognition that if Dracula, or Hyde, or Gil-Martin were given a voice then similarly

their stories would not be linear, identities based on categorisation would not

suffice, and all the random contradictions that constitutes existence outside of

traditional structures of meaning-making would become apparent. Désirée's states, defiantly, 'as for my sexual orientation, I hadn't any . . . some days I'd be all yin, others all yang, sometimes both. So what?' (p. 90). Thus, in moving this monster from the spectres of the text to its centre, Sutherland departs from the monster/victim relation and monster/healthy body politic relation as the monstrous figure emerges as the body through which multifaceted ideas of otherness are explored. Meanwhile, Orkney emerges as a landscape of distortion that intertwines Désirée's monstrous queerness in the text; both function as the confronting spaces of 'ultimate excess' that refuse 'labelling, cataloguing, and rationalisation' (Beville, 2014, pp. xi-xii).

Ever Fallen in Love

Landscape also plays an important role in Zoë Strachan's *Ever Fallen in Love* (2011), which is set across two narratives; one details Richard's present-day life living in the remote Highlands of Scotland and the other constitutes Richard's memories of his university days and his queer friendship with promiscuous Luke who is coded as excessive, abject, and vampiric, yet ultimately desirable, throughout the text. Richard recalls: 'you could see inside his mouth more than seemed usual; his tongue, his teeth. His lips were dry' (p. 20) and 'a shadow passed above me . . . Suddenly I felt fingers in my mouth . . . Luke of course. His papery hand, prone to eczema, and a surge of unwilling arousal at his rough fingers against my tongue' (p. 99). Richard's memories haunt his present and slowly reveal the crux of his trauma; his complicity

in the sexual exploitation/rape of fellow student Lucy, which precedes her accidental drowning/suicide.

McCulloch reads Richard's desire for Luke alongside Strachan's intertextual references to various tropes of Celtic gothic to argue for the text as Scottish queer gothic. Notably, McCulloch introduces Fred Botting's notion that 'Romance, as it frames gothic, seems to clean up its darker counterpart . . . the gothic genre's usual trajectory is reversed: a flight from figures of horror and revulsion is turned into a romantic flight towards them' (2008, p. 1). As McCulloch notes, Botting's concept provides fruitful terms with which to consider 'the pattern followed by Richard who pines for the monstrous manipulator Luke' (McCulloch, 2012b, n.p.) and thus Strachan's text may be considered in line with the recasting of monsters away from fear and terror in Welsh and Sutherland's texts.

While Luke's position as the monstrous object of desire allows a consideration of the recasting of monsters in the gothic as framed by Romance, intertextual links with Hogg's *Confessions* additionally open terms through which Luke and Richard may be read as a gothic double. The split narrative between the third person and Richard's account of past events, in which he casts Luke as the otherworldly manipulator, aligns Luke with Hogg's Gil-Martin. Richard's reflection that 'it must have been fate that brought us together, chance was never so precise' (p. 7) intertwines the two men, while Stephanie's comment on Richard's Highland retreat — 'wee poof like you, stuck up here in the back of beyond?' (p. 35) — produces an image of the queer monstrous figure residing spectrally 'beyond'. As

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such, these textual ambiguities invite a reading of Luke/Richard as the traditional gothic schizoid figuring.

McCulloch acknowledges that Strachan provides 'her own contemporary view of Scotland's alterity' (McCulloch, 2012b, n.p.) in passages where Richard and Luke are alienated by 'floppy fringed public school boys' (p. 15) at St. Andrews who 'called me Jock and went through a whole routine of see you Jimmy jokes' (p. 19). Additionally, the novel's intertextual relationship with Hogg's *Confessions* allows queer gothicism to resonate across the traditions of the Scottish gothic*.* In her queer reading of *Confessions,* Sedgwick proposes triangulation as the structure of desire in bonds between men through the appropriation of women and offsets Robert's failure in triangulation with George's successful homosociality: 'unlike Robert, however, George relates to his male acquaintance as a man, because he has the knack of triangulating his homosocial desire through women' (1985, p. 102). Luke and Richard's friendship undoubtedly calls to mind Sedgwick's reading of *Confessions*; indeed, the pinnacle sex scene involving Lucy presents an unmistakeable scene of triangulation:

> while I stayed still but still hard in position, he eased himself in from the front. He began, slowly to move, and I thought I would explode then expire for the pleasure of feeling him so close to me . . . he smiled, as if he would have kissed me. As if he would have pressed his dry lips to mine, touched the tip of his tongue to mine. If she hadn't been between us. He reached over and stroked my hair back from my face, and his touch, his touch, the feel of him

against me, his fingers brushing my throat, my lips, made me shudder and slow, and as I relaxed I saw his beautiful face contort, as if it was the sight, the sound, the feel of my ecstasy that has brought on his own. (p. 194)

Lucy fulfils the role of the woman in triangulation as her presence creates a literal distance between the men that prevents the encounter becoming explicitly homosexual. As if to leave no question as to the presence of queer desire, however, the scene takes triangulation one step further as Lucy, for all the significance of her presence, is made absent in the moment of contact, 'his touch, his touch', that prompts both men's orgasm. This scene, then, enacts a confirmation of Sedgwick's exploration of the possibility of desire in homosocial relationships in *Confessions* and presents a queer Scottish gothicism that invites renewed queer analysis of this cornerstone text of the Scottish gothic.

Further intertextual references map a specifically queer Scottish landscape across the text. Readers of *Brideshead Revisited* will note similarities between the university friendship between Richard and Luke replete with queer subtext and Sebastian and Charles' relationship in Waugh's novel. Richard reflects on a passage from Waugh's novel in which Charles recalls 'that faint, unrecognized apprehension that here, at last, I should find that low door in the wall, which others, I knew, had found before me, which opened on an enclosed and enchanted garden' (p. 131). Richard ponders 'how those words had resonated in his mind, once upon a time, when he'd searched for just such a low door in the wall of his university town, ready to stoop and enter, willing himself to be enchanted' (p. 131). This passage maps the

imagery of 'that low door in the wall' onto his desire for Luke and casts St. Andrews as the surreal space of queer exploration. Moreover, Richard begins the narrative with explicit queer reference to St. Andrews: 'It was quite an old fashioned place. Luke was quite old-fashioned too. Cast himself as a latter day Dorian or Valmont, sinned the old sins' (p. 1). The references to the gothic 'old sins' clearly inscribe Luke with homosexuality. As McCulloch recognises, 'there is something "elsewhere" about Luke's old worldly otherworldliness of depravity, drawn from other literary texts' (McCulloch, 2012b, n.p.). The alignment of that 'old fashioned university town by the sea' with Luke's being 'old fashioned' clearly constructs St. Andrews as the literal 'elsewhere' for this queer 'otherworldliness'.

Landscape is layered throughout the novel; particularly notable are the memories of St Andrews that detail Luke and Richard seeking solace in the gothic hiding place of a derelict mansion: 'anyway, he said. Want to go to the castle? Get away from the Yahs for an hour or two?' (p. 179). Their justification of squatting due to the fact that there is 'no law of trespass in Scotland' (p. 51) inscribes the castle as a specifically Scottish uncanny space in which the boys find belonging in unbelonging. Indeed, their experience of being Scottish strangers within 'Yah' St. Andrews makes Luke/Richard foreign within Scotland. As such, their position as doppelgänger reflects the fragmentation inherent in their uncanny position as unfamiliar within the 'familiar' setting of Scotland.

Queerness is simultaneously written into the gothic double of Luke/Richard and into the uncanny space of the castle. On their first visit Richard reflects: 'I had a sense, almost, of time blurring' (p. 51). As such, the castle emerges as both a space of

escapism for this gothic double, ostracised for their Scottishness, and simultaneously a space of distortion replete with queer potential. The homosocial/homosexual intertwines, for instance, in their fight:

> I forgot, I think, who it was I was struggling against and why, got lost in the physical sensation of the fight . . . I realised that he was looking at me and that our bodies were touching. This was the moment, my chance, to reach out and push the hair back from his face, to lean in and kiss him. (p. 249)

The distortion of the space is inherent in the disoriented physicality of the scene in which Richard 'got lost in the physical sensation of the fight', which leads to the queer moment in which he contemplates kissing Luke. Thus, the castle, alongside St. Andrews, functions as a specifically queer Scottish gothic space through which the schizoid figuring of Luke/Richard's queerness and Scottishness simultaneously intertwine in an exploration of fragmenting and distorting otherness. The intertextual resonance of this queer Scottish double with Hogg's Sinner/Gil-Martin further entwines this queerness with the traditions of the Scottish gothic.

The Girl on the Stairs

Louise Welsh's *The Girl on the Stairs* (2012) also draws on ideas of strangeness as it details Jane's arrival in Berlin pregnant and planning to start family with her partner, Petra. This raises anxieties surrounding belonging and selfhood as Jane finds herself displaced in a new city with pregnancy raising questions about

motherhood and her identity. Jane's Scottishness is referenced throughout the novel through contemporary colloquial phrases such as 'peely wally' (p. 21) and 'bawbag' (p. 26) and thus the exploration of Scottishness is less fixed on Scotland as a topography than it is in Welsh's earlier exploration of Victorian Glasgow, or in Sutherland and Strachan's respective settings of Orkney and St. Andrews. Jane's Scottishness, however, permeates this gothic novel as it positions Jane as foreigner within her new environment of Berlin. Welsh alerts her reader to this upon Jane's arrival in the city: 'Berlin suburbs scrolled past, clean-edged apartment blocks and neatly tended gardens, each one empty of people, as if a giant clean-up had been followed by the Rapture. Jane wondered if it was peculiarly Scottish to be wary of respectability' (p. 2). Jane is immediately made strange in the novel's setting of Berlin by way of her Scottishness. The evocation of Berlin's 'clean-edged apartment blocks' establishes Jane's foreignness in opposition to this sterility. This constructs a sense of Scottishness similar to the one implemented in *The Cutting Room*, where the excessive and sublime architecture of Victorian Glasgow is juxtaposed to the 'wipe clean sweat shops' of the contemporary side of the globalised city. This implication that Jane's Scottishness forms something of a transgressive contrast to Berlin's 'giant clean-up' is emphasised through her speculation over whether 'it was peculiarly Scottish to be wary of respectability' (p. 2). This immediately frames Scottishness in opposition to 'respectability' and, as such, implies a transgressive quality in this national identity made foreign in this new city.

Therefore, like Luke/Richard, who are positioned as strangers within upper-class and English-dominated St. Andrews, Jane's Scottishness casts her as an

uncanny stranger within the text. Freud develops E. Jentsch's ideas on the uncanny as that which constitutes 'intellectual uncertainty' ' (2003 [1919], p. 124) and through a psychoanalytic reading of Hoffman's 'The Sandman' he deduces that the source of the uncanny in this story is actually the return of the repressed castration anxiety in early childhood (2003 [1919], p. 136-7). Working from this example, Freud furthers his psychoanalytic enquiry in order to outline that 'the "uncanny" is that class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar' ' (2003 [1919], p. 123-4). As such, the uncanny constitutes that which is strangely familiar and thus ideas of the doppelgänger and the 'stranger within' are common tropes of the uncanny. As previously discussed, Luke/Richard clearly call to mind these tropes of the uncanny by way of their Scottishness that makes them 'foreign' or strange within St. Andrews, Scotland. However, Jane's environment of Berlin is unfamiliar; she is not strangely foreign within Scotland, within the 'familiar'. She is certainly made strange through her Scottishness, yet it is her position at the heart of the family home that gives this strangeness a particularly uncanny quality.

Ideas of home, family, and normativity permeate Jane's experience as a pregnant woman starting a family life with her lesbian civil partner, Petra. Initially, this setting of the family home organised around a lesbian relationship raises questions regarding the positioning of homosexuality as 'queer' within the text. On the one hand, Welsh's focus on Jane and Petra's relationship continues the trend in the contemporary Scottish gothic which shifts queer from a spectral position to being the focal point of the narrative. However, unlike previous gothic queer

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protagonists such as Désirée, Rilke, and Richard who are dissident in varying ways, Welsh's Jane and Petra are eminently bourgeois and even heteronormative. A dinner party conversation between Jane and Petra's colleague, who is also gay, obviously call into question the couple's apparent dissidence in their homosexuality: 'he nodded at her stomach and asked, "How did this happen?" . . . "So we're not so different from the heterosexuals after all?"' (p. 116). Jane and Petra's homosexuality is irrelevant in these depictions of a privileged and bourgeois heteronormative model and as such the very possibility of their 'queerness' is called into question.

Queer theory has termed these homosexual investments in reproduction and family 'homonormativity'; Murphy, Ruizm and Serlin describe this as:

> [the] current focus within gay and lesbian movements and culture on the family and reproduction as vehicles for claiming citizenship and rights [that works] to suture reproduction to a privatizing neoliberal agenda, rather than to disrupt nationalist and heteronormative ideologies. (2008, p. 3)

Welsh clearly tackles this tendency towards the assimilation of queer by the contemporary LGBT rights movements and, through her normative and bourgeois depiction of homosexuality in the gothic, dramatically revises the queer gothic assumption that homosexuality is always already a challenging and subversive entity. This is perhaps a particular feature of the contemporary gothic, as it writes against a backdrop of the assimilation of homosexuality into the heteronormative and reproductive structures of marriage and the family.

This homonormative setting raises questions about how queerness manifests in the queer gothic when not overtly tied to homosexuality. Welsh explores queer transgression, however, through Jane's position as foreigner within this bourgeois family setting. Jane is awkwardly positioned within this environment; she ponders what her teenage neighbour Anna would think of a dinner party held with Petra's work colleagues: 'she would find the scene bourgeois. It *was* bourgeois' (p. 113). This positions Jane uncomfortably within the situation as she aligns herself with the scepticism of the teenager. Jane's awkward position in the bourgeois setting is representative of her wider anxieties surrounding this structure and her impending motherhood. This extends further as the uncanny figure of Jane's unborn child directly disturbs homonormative notions of the reproductive family.

The image of the unborn child as a stranger within Jane's body is evoked early on during Jane's arrival to Berlin: 'she'd felt the embryo sucking all the goodness out of her' (p. 2). The vampiric imagery of the embryo clearly educes monstrosity and this is continued throughout the text through Jane's references to the child as 'little troll, little goblin' (p. 165) and 'little beast' (p. 213). Meanwhile the foetus's position within Jane's body clearly presents an uncanny trope of the stranger within who disturbs the familiar; Jane later imagines 'vomiting a tiny devil' (pp. 215-216). Vomiting enacts the notion of purgation and disgust and as such emphasises the idea that the child is a strange disturbance within Jane's body. The image of the child as a monstrous and strange disturbance that requires purgation clearly recalls Edelman's discussion of the symbolic resonance of the child for reproductive futurism. Jane's child is particularly linked to thinking about Edelman's

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ideas as it is unborn and therefore closely associated with notions of reproduction, with a continuance of the healthy body politic, and of the futurity instilled within those ideas. Jane's imagining of this unborn symbol of the future, then, as the monstrous and uncanny stranger within destabilises the image of the sanctity of the child, of the bourgeois homonormative setting into which the child is to be born, and of the futurity of this normative healthy body politic underpinned by the symbolic significance of this child.

Notably, the original description of Jane's unborn child as 'the embryo sucking all the goodness out of her' (p. 2) is closely followed by Jane's own position as foreigner within Berlin when she wonders whether 'it was peculiarly Scottish to be wary of respectability' (p. 2). This establishes a certain affinity between Jane, the stranger within the country, and the child as the stranger within the body. This reminds us that the organisation of structures around ideas of hetero/homonormativity that produce a reproductive society is necessarily bordered. We might revise Berlant and Freeman's words here to recognise that 'mainstream national identity' does not simply '[tout] a subliminal sexuality more official than a state flower or national bird' (1993, p. 195) but is also fundamentally upheld by normative reproductive identities.

The bordered healthy body politic upheld by reproductive futurism prompts thinking about which bodies are and are not acceptable additions to the national healthy body politic. Following Edelman's ideas, we might generally accept that the UK remains a nation that celebrates the symbolic figure of child, and the unborn child. And yet the immigrant or refugee is threatening largely due to the widely

circulated yet inaccurate idea that 'Britain is full', described by Philippe Legrain as

'a far-right trope [that] is rapidly becoming conventional wisdom on both left and

right' (2010, n.p.). The factors that underpin this difference are clear; the child

represents a future that also involves a continuance of that bordered population,

which is usually located along various yet combined lines of national identity, race,

and/or ethnicity. The immigrant arrival to the nation, however, is made strange

precisely along these same lines. This provides a particular addition to the idea of

reproductive futurism; it upholds a bordered society and this exposes the racist and

xenophobic tendencies that often emerge from the national organisation of peoples.

We have seen this through the heightened anxieties around borders that now

dominate twenty-first century Europe's refugee crisis. Of course Jane is white, is

privileged, and moves from one Western European nation to another, and thus she

does not represent the level of 'othering' currently present in the neo-imperialist

rhetoric that surrounds the Syrian refugee crisis. However, Jane and her child's

respective positions as foreigners in the body/nation also call to mind and disturb

the bordered organisation of that healthy body politic.

  The association between Jane and her unborn child is overtly developed

throughout the novel as Jane often seeks comfort in the idea of his monstrosity —

'come along, little monster' (p. 217) — and even uses a language of fantasy to

imagine the child as 'her charm against badness' (p. 184). The child is framed as

Jane's accomplice throughout her time in Berlin, not through the traditional

heteronormative vision of the sanctity of the unborn child but rather through a

shared affinity in their strangeness. This inversion of the mother/baby relationship

produces the image of a gothic double pairing in Jane and her child, which emphasises further their uncanny presence as that which disturbs the stability of place, home, and family. This entwines queerness and Scottishness as Jane forms a double with her monstrous child and disturbs notions of the hetero/homonormativity while her Scottishness aligns her foreignness with an opposition to respectability.

This disturbance of the bordered reproductive family structure develops as Jane becomes a focal point through which we encounter various disruptions to the idea of motherhood. Jane's sister-in-law confides in her:

> 'with Carsten I was so tired I thought I might kill Tielo and Peter just to rest . . . I would cut their throats, Tielo's first, and then Peter's . . . Carsten? I would have smothered him. Babies are easy to smother.' Ute laughed, her teeth white and even. 'Everyone feels that way, it's normal.' Her voice dropped to a whisper. 'The important thing is not to do it.' (pp. 25-26)

This image clearly extends the disturbance of reproductive futurism from the image of the monstrous unborn child to the murder of the entire family. Jane's focalised narrative makes the reader complicit in her anxieties over motherhood and her position, along within her unborn child, as stranger within this hetero/homonormative world. As such, these words read as a projection of Jane's own anxieties and thus further her uncanny position in the text as disturber of the safe and normative organisation of society around family, children, and the future.

Much of the novel focuses on Jane's quest to find out what happened to Greta Mann, a neighbour and prostitute who supposedly abandoned her child, Anna, who still lives next door to Jane. In her attempts to find out what happened to Greta, Jane interviews one of the women that knew Greta from prostitution, who theorises on Greta's disappearance: 'stuck at home with a baby . . . before you know it, you're meeting girls on the corner to pass the time' (pp. 176-177). This image of entrapment subverts the glorious and sacred associations of motherhood as the role that produces the child, who must be protected. Later, reflecting on the theory that Greta abandoned her child and returned to prostitution, Jane:

> recalled stories of selkies, seal women captured by fishermen who fell in love with them and made them their wives. The women would seem content for a while, keeping the house and having babies, but in the end the lure of the sea was always too strong, and they retrieved their sealskins, regained their old form and dived back into its depths. (p. 202)

The selkie, a figure from Scottish folklore, gives this image a particularly Scottish gothic reference which extends the themes of failures in motherhood. The entwinement of the myth of the selkie with Jane's apparent knowledge of Greta's abandonment of her child grants Jane a particularly Scottish vocabularly through which to explore this idea. In doing so she extends Greta's abandonment of her child to wider Scottish mythology to disturb motherhood as it is tied to reproductive futurism.

Jane's appeal to Scottish folklore recalls Royle's description of the uncanny as that which 'comes from Scotland, from that "auld country" that has so often been represented as "beyond the borders"' (2003, p. 12). And yet it is not simply its position as an 'an English foreign body' that attributes the Scottish myth uncanniness here; the story is foreign to the conventions of motherhood within heteronormative society. Thus there is some shared affiliation between the Scottishness of the uncanny and the queerness of the uncanny in this example. Royle reminds us that the queerness of the uncanny involves Sedgwick's definition of queer (1993, p. 8). The selkies' disturbance of conventional motherhood certainly does not 'signify monolithically' and thus their foreignness encompasses both a sense of queerness and Scottishness. This also clearly extends to Jane, whose foreignness includes both her Scottishness and her queerness. Dissociated from homosexuality, this also presents an image of queer that challenges the notion of homosexuality as subversive within a context of homonormality. Through this exploration, Welsh presents the queer and Scottish uncanny held within Royle's definition of the term and therefore allows recognition of the intersections between the liminal positions of Scottishness and queerness.

Conclusion

In her study of the unnameable monster, Beville claims that 'consistent attempts to manage the monster have overshadowed considerations of the phenomenology and

aesthetics of the monster and monstrous' (2014, p. 179). Meanwhile, as Palmer

notes, the lesbian gothic involves '[resignifying] the boundaries of the abject' (1999,

p. 16). By dissociating the queer monster from its homophobic coding as

threatening to the healthy body politic, writers of the queer Scottish gothic release

monstrous abjection from 'consistent attempts to manage the monster' and allow

the monstrous to become a site for the exploration of multifaceted otherness that

simultaneously encompasses the positions of Scottish and queer. As such, from

Welsh's excessively subversive Victorian Glasgow, through Sutherland's abrasively

queer Orkney, to Strachan's disorienting queer gothic spaces, Scotland emerges as a

multifaceted topography across the contemporary gothic, which provides a fitting

space for these reconfigured queer monsters. Welsh's 2012 exploration of the genre

further develops this association of Scottish and queer as both constitute Jane's

position as uncanny presence in the text. These writers' repeated interest in an

intertextual relationship with other gothic texts, most prominently those at the

heart of the Scottish gothic canon, further invites renewed thinking about such texts,

holding both their Scottishness and queerness alongside one another. Thus these

writers find shared affinity between queerness and Scottishness through the

contemporary gothic genre. This constitutes a development from pre-devolution

criticism, which was marked by the consensus that queer and Scottish were

'mutually exclusive'. More broadly, this also alerts us to the blindness towards place

in queer readings of Victorian homosexuality and suggests that there is further

scope to explore ideas of location in queer studies of the period. This is clearly

pertinent for the present thesis as this approach introduces the idea that there are

important intersections between queer theory and the (traditionally homophobic) marginal nation.

<u>Chapter Six</u>

<u>Negotiating Postcolonial Scotland and the Independence Referendum</u>

Chapter five argues that there are links between Scotland and queerness through their shared positions as subversive and peripheral. And yet, this thesis simultaneously recognises that ideas of Scottishness are constructed or, to recall Benedict Anderson's famous term, 'imagined' ([1983] (2006), p. 6). As chapter two discussed, this imagining of Scotland was, in the pre-devolution period, largely centred on the idea of Scotland as colonised. Chapter two established the falsity of this claim. However, it is important to consider whether the post-devolution repositioning of Scottish marginality as queer can become a productive part of a disorientated and less rigid national identity, without this reviving exaggerated ideas of Scotland's colonised or victimised status and, moreover, without concealing Scotland's own history as coloniser at the heart of the British Empire. The present chapter therefore examines Scotland in relation to postcolonialism through analysis of Jackie Kay's *Red Dust Road* (2010) and Alan Bissett's *Jock: Scotland on Trial* (2014b). It also positions this investigation within the period leading up to the 2014 referendum on Scottish independence, where ideas around Scotland's identity, and its position within the UK, were amplified.

A postcolonial reading of Scottish literature and culture tends to foreground Scotland's subaltern position within the English/British state. Simultaneously, however, a postcolonial reading must include Scotland's role as coloniser within the British Empire. The position of minority communities within Scotland, including, but

not limited to, the Highland and island communities also entwines Scotland with postcolonialism. The complex and contradictory results of reading Scotland in postcolonial terms provide the most significant points of interest for this chapter. This chapter explores how these contradictory relationships to postcolonialism are presented in Scottish literature running up to the Scottish independence referendum of 2014. However, there is a tendency to associate discussions of Scottish independence only with the year 2014 when debates reached fever pitch in the run up to the referendum held on the 18th September 2014. In fact, as previously discussed, the issue of independence has been alive within Scotland since the development of Scottish nationalism in the twentieth century. Specifically for the post-devolution period, in 2010 Scotland's first SNP government had held office for three years and thus the idea of independence had moved from the aspirations of a marginal party to being the defining policy of the party in power. These ideas were gaining momentum at this time; indeed in 2010 Scotland was on the cusp of re-electing the SNP government with a majority in 2011. This chapter therefore proceeds initially with an analysis of Jackie Kay's *Red Dust Road* (2010), which tackles Scotland's marginal identity within the UK alongside its colonial history, in order to analyse tensions between Scotland's various postcolonial positions in a text published during this moment where discussions surrounding Scotland and its relationship to the UK were mounting. Alan Bissett's *Jock: Scotland on Trial* (2014b) then provokes analysis that extends these lines of enquiry to the climactic year of 2014 when Scotland held its independence referendum. This chapter's concluding section then turns to address briefly the broader social and political contexts of the

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independence referendum in order to reconsider Scotland's marginal position in line with queer theory.

This exploration of Scotland's dual subaltern and colonial position relies upon the distinction between colonialism and imperialism. Loomba advises that we think of 'imperialism or neo-imperialism as the phenomenon that originates in the metropolis, the process which leads to domination and control' (2015, p. 28). She continues that 'the imperial country is the "metropole" from which power flows, and the colony or neo-colony is the place which it penetrates and controls' (2015, p. 28). Therefore, the action of implementing colonial control stems from imperialism. In other words, colonialism is reliant upon imperialism but, that said, imperialism does not always lead to colonial control; it can also exist as an ideology of superiority in isolation. Colonisation refers to direct occupation of countries, to the cultural erasure that can take place during periods of colonisation, and to the restructuring of a nation's economic system so that they benefit the coloniser. As such, the trans-Atlantic slave trade, missionary activities, and the occupation of countries such as India by the East India Trading Company, all count as colonial activities (Loomba, 2015, p. 26). It is also important, as Loomba outlines, to understand that imperialism stems from the metropolis, the economically advanced hub of a particular location. We encountered this dynamic in introduction to this thesis, which explained that the intellectual centre of the Edinburgh Enlightenment provided the imperialist ideologies that, in part, justified the Highland Clearances. This example alerts us to the fact that imperialist ideologies do not always rely on the existence of a border between the centre and the 'other'. It is therefore pertinent

to recognise the complex ways in which imperial ideologies have operated both within Scotland and across Britain in order to fully examine Scotland's relationship to both imperialism and colonialism.

The Act of Union and the subsequent Edinburgh Enlightenment do not fall comfortably into a narrative of English colonisation of Scotland. And yet, as the Union developed in the nineteenth century, there are multifaceted imperialist ideologies at play within Britain; these consist of Lowland Scottish attitudes towards the Highlands and of English attitudes towards Scotland. As the Empire expanded across the nineteenth century, Scotland's economy was no longer growing at a faster rate that England's, as had been the case during the Edinburgh Enlightenment of the late eighteenth century. At this stage, the fact that English economic interests were prioritised over those of Scotland in the Union was particularly notable. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, this is held as a potential reason for the disproportionate Scottish involvement with Empire. Colley writes that, at this time, Scots were 'usually poorer than their English counterparts with fewer prospects on the British mainland' and therefore were more inclined to seek their riches through the colonial activities of the British Empire (Colley, 2005, p. 129). This economic imbalance between Scotland and England was also accompanied by imperialist attitudes of those in power towards Scotland: 'Scotland was coming to be seen by those in power as useful, loyal and *British*' (Colley, 2005, p. 119). Clearly then, the British elite saw Scotland as beneficial to the furthering of Empire. Thus although there was no process of the colonisation of Scotland, there was an imperialist attitude towards it; it is not seen as an equal partner, but as

'useful' and 'loyal' to the ideological British state, the centre of imperial power.

There was a British/English imperialism, then, that ran alongside Scotland's colonial

activities. Indeed, this has been used as evidence of Scotland's disproportionate

involvement in Empire. However, this explanation runs the risk of becoming a

justification for Scottish colonial activities, particularly as it has been translated into

Scotland's identity during the late twentieth century and twenty-first century not as

a period of imperial attitudes, but as evidence of English colonisation of Scotland.

Edward Said famously defined the Western 'invention' of 'the Orient' and

asserts that 'European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient

politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively'

([1978] 2006, p. 3). In this construction, 'the Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen),

childlike, "different"; thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, "normal"'

([1978] 2006, p. 40). Importantly, Said's description recognises the colonial process

of military and political control over the orient, but it is the imaginative construction

of the orient that Said highlights as the particularly pronounced phenomenon that

leads to the justification of such control. Notably for Scotland, Said recognises also

that the areas at the edge of Europe's borders are particularly provoking for the

imperial centre. He writes that increasingly influential travel writing in the

eighteenth-century reported 'innumerable speculations on giants, Patagonians,

savages, natives, and monsters supposedly residing to the far east, west, south, and

north of Europe' ([1978] 2006, p. 117). These peripheries challenged the image of a

bounded Europe and were similarly expelled beyond the 'civilised' Europe

positioned 'firmly in the privileged centre' ([1978] 2006, p. 117). Scotland holds a

multifaceted position at both the 'edge' and 'centre' of 'civilised' Britain, at the heart of Western Europe. In many ways, Scotland was at the centre of ideas of Britishness, particularly during the Edinburgh Enlightenment and Empire. Indeed, Said chooses one of Scotland's most famed authors in order to illustrate orientalism: 'like Walter Scott's Saracens, the European representation of the Muslim, Ottoman, or Arab was always a way of controlling the redoubtable Orient' ([1978] 2006, p. 60). However, the Enlightenment that produced such ideologies is not traditionally assimilated into Scotland's national imagination. As previously discussed, throughout the nineteenth century, Scotland increasingly identified itself with Highland culture. Martin writes that in the nineteenth century 'Scotland (identified with the Highlands) remained a primitive other that helped define English civilization' (2009, p. 4). These terms directly map onto Said's notion of orientalism; Scotland is the periphery that threatens the boundaries of Britain and is therefore imagined in an oppositional relationship with England through which Scotland's 'otherness' and England's 'civilisation' is produced. Scotland exists in a dual relationship then as sufferer of English imperialism and as perpetrator of colonialism. In Said's terms, it is simultaneously at the centre and at the periphery.

And yet, there is a further layer of imperialism between Scotland, the Highlands, and England. As the introduction to this thesis demonstrated, the Lowland elite of Scotland increasingly identified with a Highland identity because it allowed Scotland to maintain a national culture distinct from England and still enjoy the benefits of Empire (Martin, 2009, p. 8). This was the Highland culture previously othered in the Scottish imagination and suppressed after Culloden and during the

Clearances by an imperial ideology held by both the Scottish Lowlanders and the English upper classes. The increased appropriation of a Highland identity by Scotland reveals a process by which the dangerous and alien Highlander associated with the Jacobite rebellion is sanitised and contained. In many ways the Highlands do for Scotland what Scotland does for Britain at the time of Empire; their culture, once reduced to Romantic images, becomes useful for Scotland. Arguably, then, there is an imperialist attitude in the Edinburgh elite of the Lowlands towards the Highlands just as much as there is one from the British elite to Scotland.

These layers of imperialism within the British state alongside the memories of colonial actives that become enmeshed with them require a theoretical approach that can make room for these multifaceted trajectories that all contribute towards the construction – and often disturbance – of imagined national identities. Homi Bhabha has defined his notion of the postcolonial third space as 'a challenge to the limits of the self in the act of reaching out to what is liminal in the historic experience' (2009, p. xiii). The third space therefore involves that which is disorienting to selfhood, particularly when it is constructed along cultural or national lines. The term is often applied to the experiences of people that do not fit into normalised images of homogeneous national identity. Robert C. Young provides a helpful elaboration of Bhabha's term:

it is the non-place of the no-fixed-abode, the NFA people, migrants, those torn from their homes, cultures, literatures, a multitude always on the move

across shifting sites riven with the lapsed times in between one pitching and
another. (2009, p. 82)

The third space, then, is the intangible location outside organised space and linear
time. It comes about most often, as Young recognises, in the experience of those
outside of rooted ideas of 'home', 'nation', and belonging. It is, therefore, as Young
writes, 'no more place than space' (2009, p. 82). In fact, it might be more productive
to think of the third space as a series of temporal and spatial lapses; moments that
are at once disorientating but also demonstrate that the idea of being 'homed' in a
bordered space is, in the first place, an imaginary concept. Bhabha writes, to this
effect, that 'such an intervention quite properly challenges our sense of the
historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force' and 'displaces the
narrative of the Western nation which Benedict Anderson so perceptively describes
as being written in homogeneous, serial time' ([1994] 2004, p. 54). In other words,
this third space exposes the traditional Western national emphasis on the stability
of a rooted, homogeneous national identity and culture as it 'makes the structure of
meaning and reference an ambivalent process' ([1994] 2004, p. 54).

In chapter four I argued that Sara Ahmed's notion of a 'migrant orientation',
which is 'the lived experience of facing at least two directions: toward a home that
has been lost, and to a place that is not yet home' (2006, p. 10), could apply to
Scotland's disorientating devolutionary moment in which it found itself 'displaced'
when its traditional identity formations were negated in devolution. I suggested that
Scotland became, in this moment, an example of a 'migrant orientation' that did not

involve movement from one place to another. Bhabha's third space introduces a new concept for thinking about the idea of such a disorientating moment.

Initially, it seems an uncomfortable process to apply a term usually reserved for those of the 'no-fixed-abode, the NFA people, migrants, those torn from their homes' (Young, 2009, p. 82) to Scotland. Scotland constitutes one of the privileged spaces of the world where its crisis in identity does not entail a material experience of displacement for its people. However, to recall Bhabha's words, the third space can '[challenge] our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force' and make 'the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process' ([1994] 2004, p. 54). To apply the idea of the third space to Scotland, then, is to explore the way in which this heterogeneous postcolonial position problematizes the very idea of a stable 'Scottish' identity. This analysis cannot be carried out in a vacuum, however, and it first requires an overview of existing critical work on Scotland and postcolonialism.

Scottish Literature and Postcolonialism

Michael Fry's *The Scottish Empire* (2001) and Tom Devine's *Scotland's Empire: 1600-1815* (2003) remain, to date, the most comprehensive studies of Scotland's colonial history. However, as the authors' exchange of words on the topic demonstrates, there is little consensus from the historians on how best to approach Scotland and Empire; Devine stated that 'I don't regard Fry as a serious commentator on the imperial experience of the Scots' (cited in *The Scotsman,* 2003, n.p.), while, referencing Devine's overreliance on statistical evidence, Fry responded: 'Devine

should stop counting and start thinking' (cited in *The Scotsman,* 2003, n.p.). Devine

followed his 2003 study with his more recent *To the Ends of the Earth: Scotland's*

Global Diaspora (2011), which focuses on Scottish emigration as a consequence of

Empire. The authors' disagreement underlies the interpretive and selective nature

of history and historiography and that the topic of how best to approach Scotland's

role within Empire is still in development. This chapter presents one interjection

into this developing problem for Scottish history and Scottish cultural studies.

Discussion is also still developing on other areas of Scottish colonial history,

specifically the transatlantic slave trade. As the National Library of Scotland's online

resource for the topic states: 'the role played by Scots in the slave trade and in its

abolition has only recently been recognised' (n.p.). Tom Devine has most recently

offered a historical account of this history in *Recovering Scotland's Slavery Past: The*

Caribbean Connection (2015). Before Devine's publication, the most prominent

historical work on the topic of Scotland and slavery was, troublingly, Iain Whyte's

Scotland and the Abolition of Black Slavery, 1756-1838 (2006), which focuses more

on Scottish involvement in the abolition of slavery than it does on Scottish

involvement with slavery. This is, however, a topic that has been gaining more

public attention; the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade in 2007, in

particular, prompted increased media attention on the issue. Jackie Kay wrote an

important piece for *The Guardian* at this time in which she challenged the Scottish

tendency to focus on its own history as victim of colonisation rather than on its

complicity in colonial crimes: 'it's time that Scotland included the history of the

plantations alongside the history of the Highland clearances' (2007, n.p.). As Kay

suggests, Scotland's subaltern position must be reconsidered as it potentially obscures the nation's colonial history.

If the debate between historians over Scotland's colonial history is in development, the relationship of Scottish literature to postcolonialism remains a field in even earlier stages of gestation. Douglas Mack's *Scottish Fiction and the British Empire* (2006) provides the first full-length study on the topic. Mack argues that, while Scotland was a partner in the British Empire, parts of Scotland actually experienced something closer to colonisation of their own culture. He focuses on writers such as James Hogg, Lewis Grassic Gibbon, James Kelman, and Irvine Welsh to argue for a 'subaltern' Scotland that forms a counternarrative to Scotland's colonial history. It is worth noting that two of the three publications to emerge on the topic in 2011 also focus on the specific strand of Scotland-as-colonised within Britain. Stefanie Lehner's *Subaltern Ethics in Contemporary Scottish and Irish Literature* overtly identifies the marginality of Scotland in postcolonial terms while Silke Stroh's *Uneasy Subjects: Postcolonialism and Scottish Gaelic Poetry* examines the postcolonial position of the Scottish Gaelic language. The third of the 2011 publications on the topic, Michael Gardiner *et al.'s Scottish Literature and Postcolonial Literature*, does address the Scottish position within Empire (2011, p. 3). However, time and again the Scottish involvement with Empire is presented as something of an side-point to their far more forceful argument concerning Scotland as marginal to English imperialism (2011, p. 3). While there are undoubtedly key points for exploration on the topic of Scotland's marginal experience, it is problematic that the developing discourse on Scottish literature and

postcolonialism focuses predominantly on this rather than on the extensive evidence of Scottish colonial crimes. Jackie Kay writes that 'Scotland's self image is one of a hard-done-to wee nation . . . Scotland is a canny nation when it comes to remembering and forgetting. The plantation owner is never wearing a kilt' (2007, n.p.). Kay articulates here that not only is Scotland prone to cultural amnesia over its own colonial legacy, but that its self-image as 'a hard-done-to wee nation' actually plays a key role in obscuring its uncomfortable colonial history. Academic literature on Scotland and postcolonialism between 2006 and 2011 evidences this shift of focus towards a 'Scotland-as-colonised' narrative rather than a less comfortable examination of 'Scotland-as-coloniser'. While we can only speculate that this mirrors the process described by Kay, we can certainly conclude that increased attention to the relationship between literature and Scottish colonial history is required.

Carla Sassi and Theo van Heijnsbergen provide the only current critical acknowledgment of this urgent need to reconsider Scotland's relationship to colonialism. They describe:

> a long and deep silence from within Scotland regarding the role of (and Scots'
> agency within) the British Empire, the latter only too often (especially
> outside Britain) inappropriately identified as a specifically 'English'
> enterprise.
> (2013, pp. 4-5)

Following this, they provide a thorough overview of Scotland's involvement with Empire, which ranges from Scotland's overt involvement in, and profit from, the transatlantic slave trade through to Scottish complicity in Britain's 'age of Empire', which ranged from Scots 'settling in the colonies', 'Scots taking part in the elite of the British imperial apparatus' and Scotland benefiting economically from the success of the British Empire (2013, p. 4). This overview provides necessary detail of the full extent of Scottish involvement in Empire. And yet the issue of how to confront colonial guilt and how it can be included in constructions of national identity, particularly when that national identity relies on ideas of its own colonised status, remains unresolved across postcolonial literature.

Paul Gilroy (2013) explores the question of postcolonial guilt and what to do with it in his examination of the role of postcolonialism in cosmopolitanism in relation to twenty-first century Britain. Gilroy is clear that 'today's citizens of Europe should be acquainted with the crimes committed during Europe's colonial era' (2013, p. 125) and suggests that an approach of 'mourning as a social practice' might best 'accommodate complex arguments about the ethics and politics of recognition, restitution and reparation' (2013, p. 113). This, he states, is particularly pertinent, as 'the West's resurgent geo-political ambitions have made that history more relevant than ever' (2013, p. 125). Gilroy's suggestion is certainly relevant and timely, and yet throughout his chapter he addresses Britain as a whole, writing, for instance that 'a similarly ambivalent range of nationalist reactions has been galvanised by demotic sentiment against the supra-national modes of governance specified by the EU' (2013, p. 118). However, the SNP have cited Britain's recent

vote to leave the EU as solid grounds for holding a second referendum on Scottish independence (Cooper, 2016, n.p.). While these issues are still in development, they demonstrate an urgent need to separate British/English nationalism and Scottish nationalism; Gilroy's assumption that British 'nationalist reactions' spark 'demotic sentiment against the supra-national modes of governance specified by the EU' simply does not apply to Scottish nationalism. We are presented, then, with a nation that imagines itself as separate from a neoliberal and imperialist identity, but displaces its own colonial history through appeals to its own, often exaggerated, status as colonised, discussed in chapter two. Thus, renewed frameworks for understanding nationalism and imperialism within contemporary Britain are required. This is clearly a large question that will require further discussion and debate beyond the present study. However, the present analysis of Scottish literature and colonialism in the build up to the Scottish independence referendum hopes to offer one way into that much needed discussion.

In spite of the still-developing critical discourse on postcolonialism and Scottish literature, creative writers in Scotland have been engaging with postcolonial themes throughout the post-devolution period. Leila Aboulela's *The Translator* (1999) narrates Sammar's experience as a Sudanese widow working as a translator of Arabic at Aberdeen University and invites analysis through Bhabha's third space of hybridity as national and linguistic borders are broken down. James Robertson's *Joseph Knight* (2003) explores Scottish involvement in the slave trade through the story of Joseph Knight who was enslaved in Jamaica and was brought to Scotland by his 'master', Sir John Wedderburn. Knight then successfully challenged

his slavery legally and secured his emancipation. Finally, Louise Welsh engages with issues of Scotland's colonial legacy at points in *The Cutting Room* (2002) through focus on Glasgow's profits from tobacco and sugar plantations. Kay's memoir and Bissett's play have been chosen, however, because they offer the most sustained exploration of Scotland and colonialism in the run-up-to, and during the independence referendum.

Red Dust Road

A reading of Jackie Kay's memoir, *Red Dust Road* (2010), presents a departure from the first five chapters of this thesis and their focus on the novel. Kay's text consists of autobiographical writings that centre around her journey to find her birth parents. Having been adopted by Ellen and John as a baby and raised in Glasgow, Kay tracks down her birth father, Jonathan, an Igbo man from eastern Nigeria, and her birth mother, Elizabeth, from Nairn in the Highlands of Scotland. Kay's story is an entangled mix of elation and disappointment as she meets but then experiences rejection by her birth father and watches her birth mother's slow descent into Alzheimer's disease. Kay chooses the moment where she tracks down her half-brother, Sidney, in Lagos, Nigeria, and his acceptance of her, as the end point for her writings on the subject. Throughout the text, then, Kay explores a dual Nigerian and Scottish identity, and attempts to account for Scottish colonialism and racism alongside Scotland's marginality.

Kay's journey to find her birth parents could lead to an essentialist story in which the 'roots' of identity are uncovered. Instead, Kay offers a multifaceted

exploration of 'belonging', which puts the constructed nature of identity along national and cultural lines at its centre. Moreover, Kay interrogates the genre of autobiographical writing in order to explore the imaginary idea that there is a linear and truthful story that can be told in order to produce a stable and homogeneous self. At its outset, Kay introduces her reader to Hélène Cixous's statement that 'all biographies like all autobiographies like all narratives tell one story in place of another' (2010, n.p.). The repetition of 'like all' blurs the boundaries between the categorises of biography, autobiography, and narrative and then the assertion that all of these 'tell one story in place of another' undermines any idea of objective 'truth'. Thus from its outset, Kay's text promises no essentialist narrative, which is significant given her search for her birth parents and exploration of their respective national cultures. Instead Kay presents sections of writing in various fonts that switch between time periods, locations, and even writing styles; at times sections are purely descriptive, covering broad events very sweepingly and at other times Kay narrates particular encounters in a great deal of detail and blurs reality and fantasy in order to convey those events. The shifts in font do not correspond to any particular location, time period or writing style throughout the text. Kay tells her story, then, through a plethora of voices, all of which belong to her, but none of which pretend to convey any core or truth of her identity. In these terms, then, the text provides something of a third space; it provides its readers with various encounters of being out of time or out of place as the temporal and spatial dimensions of the text shift with every few pages. This form reflects Kay's

exploration of her own identity, and the impossibility of the imagined coherence promoted by national identity.

In many ways the history of colonialism forms a background feature of Kay's experiences in Nigeria. She introduces ideas of the Christian colonisation of Africa in the opening section of *Red Dust Road* when she encounters her father's Evangelicalism:

> I realize with a fresh horror that Jonathan is seeing me as the sin, me as impure, me the bastard, illegitimate. . . . Christianity has taken away his African culture and given him this. I'm thinking about colonialism and missionaries and not properly listening. I hear his voice in the background. (2010, p. 6)

A history of colonialism is inscribed into this personal encounter between Kay and Jonathan and thus, although the memoir is set up as an individual's search for their birth parents, it includes a wider history of national and cultural memory. Kay's reference to colonialism, however, is fleeting; it appears in the text just as quickly as it disappears through a distracted thought. Kay does not provide any sustained encounter with the topic at this stage. However, the interjection of this information in the text disrupts the scene and, like Kay, forces the reader into the briefest of encounters with a colonial history. Colonialism appears in the text, not so much as a directed confrontation with Kay's – or indeed the reader's – Scottish (and/or British) identity but rather as moments that disorientate that identity. These

encounters constitute the sort of challenge idenitfed in Bhabha's third space; they present a 'challenge to the limits of the self in the act of reaching out to what is liminal in the historic experience' (2009, p. xiii). While the historical fact of Scottish colonisation of African countries is unambiguous (Lucas, 1922, p. 72), Kay's presentation of this history disallows any sustained engagement with these events and, as such, she presents momentary encounters with this history that haunt Scottish/British identity and, to recall Bhabha's words, 'makes the structure of meaning and reference' for that identity 'an ambivalent process' ([1994] 2004, p. 54).

Kay sketches a topography of Nigeria in which a British colonial history repeatedly raises its head; upon arriving back in Lagos after a period travelling in rural Nigeria's villages, for instance, she writes that 'now it feels great to know when I'm in Victoria Island and when I'm in Lagos Island, when I'm going round the busy King George roundabout, and not to feel fazed by going round it any more' (2010, p. 260). Once again, Kay does not reflect at length upon the colonial history present in the names of Victoria Island or the King George roundabout; the narrative shifts focus to her personal experience of feeling more familiar with Lagos. And yet these names evidence a literal mark left by Britain's Empire as it 'names' these parts of Nigeria. To name implies ownership and categorisation, and thus these incidental place names evoke a memory of British colonisation for Kay's reader. Christine Berthin formulates a method of reading the shadows behind texts; she advocates paying due attention to the way in which 'reading mostly catches the noise of words, not the sound of their silence. It catches their meaning, not the way they drift'. But,

she continues, 'in the silence of words lies their haunting power' (2010, p. 33).

Berthin's words capture the way in which seemingly incidental references to

'Victoria Island' or 'the King George roundabout' cause a colonial history to lie

beneath *Red Dust Road*, appearing spectrally throughout its language and setting.

As Nioh argues, Christianity was entwined with colonial history. It played a

central role in justifying slavery when slavery was legitimised in the official law of

the Roman Catholic Church in 1226. Later 'Christian religious authorities' became

facilitators in the European exploitation of African countries (2006, p. 31).

Encounters with Christianity in Nigeria are therefore heavily loaded with colonial

history and imperialist attitudes, which are particularly present in the text when

Kay writes:

> The signs are everywhere in capital letters. COME LET US ADORE HIM JESUS
>
> CHIRST. GENESIS COVENANT CHURCH AKABOUKWU WHERE WE WORSHIP
>
> GOD BY FAITH. There's even, I notice, a big sign advertising a HOLY GHOST
>
> EVENING. (2010, p. 212-13)

Berthin notes that 'on a formal level, [textual haunting] manifests itself by attacks on

language' (2010, p. 5). Kay's capitalisation could constitute such an attack in that it

interrupts her prose and forces these words upon her reader. The capitalisation also

depicts the actual signs that Kay has seen and therefore produces the visual image of

these signs in her reader's mind. Thus the use of capitalisation forms not only a

disruption to the prose but also evokes the Nigerian landscape littered with these

reminders of Christian colonisation. Thus, like this landscape, Kay litters her text with various brief encounters with a colonial past that haunts the national identities constructed through the erasure of this history.

The fact that Kay was raised in Glasgow is significant as it embroils these colonial markers with a potential complication of the author's Scottish/British identity. Kay's Scottish identity and upbringing is particularly emphasised as her multiple narrative voices are all communicated in Glaswegian phonetics. Indeed, this is their only consistent feature. In many ways, throughout the narrative, Kay openly confronts the lack of belonging she experiences in Scotland due to her skin colour. In addition to the haunting colonial history, then, these moments ask further questions of Scotland and its late twentieth and twenty-first century identities.

Kay explores these ideas in her chapter 'Reality Britain', set across a 1980s Britain which saw racial tensions reach fever pitch. It is important to recognise that racial tensions in Britain across the 1970s and 1980s were arguably one of the most prominent social legacies of Empire. The years 1945-1962 saw the recruitment of 'colonial workers' to fill the post-war labour shortages in Britain. This new influx of immigration from remaining and ex-British colonies combined with 'a background of deepening economic crisis' in the 1970s which saw 'unemployment [rise] from 500,000 to over 1.5 million while inflation ate away at the wages of those still in work' (Brown, 1995, n.p.). This economic hardship correlated with a sharp rise in racism across Britain as immigrants were seen as competition for jobs and housing (Brown, 1995, n.p.).

Kay places her reader firmly in this setting in the opening of 'Reality Britain':

September, 1980. The doorbell of my flat in Abercromby Place, Stirling, rings. I'm frightened to go down the stairs to see who it is. Yesterday, a poster was put up at the university which read: 'The woman's collective are an ugly bunch of degenerate bastards. Would you be seen with that Irish Catholic wog called Jackie Kay?' . . . it was a British Movement poster, and there were at least thirty of them scattered round the campus at Stirling university. (p. 180)

Notably, Kay is expelled from Scotland through the assumption that she is Irish. This is, perhaps, no coincidence given the prominence of the Irish Republican Army at this time and the threat that was associated with Ireland in the British imagination. This association is emphasised through the labelling of Kay, not simply as Irish, but as Irish Catholic. The label becomes a reference not just to Ireland but also to the religion associated explicitly with the Republican Army. Kay is therefore 'othered' through her sex as woman, through the mislabelling of her as 'Irish Catholic', and through the racially derogatory language of 'wog'.

The organisation that is purging all of these 'others' is, of course, the British Movement, but their presence and prominence in Stirling university in 1980 is disturbing for a sense of Scottishness, usually imagined into being through the idea that Scotland itself is other and peripheral, not as the centre that creates and persecutes 'others'. The 2010 publication of this detail is significant particularly because there is a tendency in twenty-first century Scottish politics to cast Scotland

as fairer and more equal than Conservative-led England. This difference between 'socialist Scotland' and 'Tory England' was one of the driving ideologies behind the campaigns for Scottish independence. The SNP's construction of Scotland in these terms is particularly evident in their white paper on independence, *Scotland's Future* (2013), where two of their three overall arguments for independence are 'to create a more democratic Scotland' and 'to become a fairer society'. The white paper cites clearly Conservative policies in their outline of the Britain from which Scotland will be freed in order to create a fairer and more equal society. These read as follows:

> the privatisation of the Royal Mail, unfair welfare changes such as the 'bedroom tax', cuts in capital spending, harming economic recovery, a commitment to spend as much as £100 billion on the lifetime costs of a replacement nuclear weapon system. (The Scottish Government, 2013, n.p.)

This creates a Scottish national identity that is potentially simplified as almost a utopian alternative to Conservative England. This has clearly informed attitudes towards race and immigration in Scotland, which have been particularly evident in headline-grabbing events such as the 'hordes of protesters' that turned out in opposition to Nigel Farage's visit to Edinburgh in May 2014 (Peterkin, 2014, n.p.), and the largely positive response in Scotland, led by the SNP government, to the refugee crisis (*The Economist*, 2014, n.p.). Thus, arguably from 2007, when they emerged as the largest party in Scotland, the SNP have promoted a set of policies

that tangibly impacts upon the construction of Scottish national identity as fairer, more equal, and more positive on issues of race and immigration than England. While undoubtedly more positive than twentieth century Scottishness, it is important to recognise that these remain cultural constructions of national identity. The consequence of this is that racist England has been cast as something from which Scotland is intrinsically distinct. The result of this is that, reading chapters like Kay's 'Reality Britain', which opens with Stirling as a setting for the British Movement, appears to contradict contemporary imaginings of Scottishness. This incident reminds us that Scotland, contrary to contemporary national imagining, *was* embroiled in the racism of the 1970s and 1980s, widely understood as a legacy of Empire. Thus there is a danger that Scotland's continued construction of national identity in opposition to Conservative-led England will lead to the erasure of racism that stems from the legacies of Scotland's colonial age.

Kay reflects on the impact that Scotland's racism had on her own identity beyond the immediate context of the 1980s:

Where are you from, people have asked all my life. I used to just say Glasgow. Then they'd say and where are your parents from? And I used to say Glasgow and Fife, which is the truth, but not the one they were looking for. Sometimes I'd say, I'm adopted, my original father was from Nigeria, and they'd nod, with a kind of a 'That explains it' look on their face. (2010, pp. 192-193)

Inherent in these reactions to Kay is the idea that, because she is not white, she must be explained in some way, and, by extension, she must have roots outside of Scotland. This depicts the racial assumptions that underpin Scottish identity. As Kay elaborates: 'I felt it was being pointed out to me, in a more sophisticated manner, that I didn't belong in Scotland' (2010, p. 193). This exclusion of Kay from Scottishness leads her to a similar rejection of the nation: 'the problem was I went too far the other way, and didn't dwell on or even like being Scottish' (2010, p. 201). Thus, it would appear that the cultural identities of Nigerian and Scottish are set up as mutually exclusive, largely because of Scotland's colonialism and racism. This raises the question of how a Scottish national identity might be comfortably entertained when simultaneously faced with its colonial past and the realities of the legacy of racism that stemmed from the aftermath of Britain's Empire.

Kay, then, far from presenting a confortable narrative, makes room instead for the contradictions and disturbances of a Scottish identity. She writes that she excluded Scottishness from her identity:

until I met the African-American poet Audre Lorde, in 1984, who told me that I could be proudly African *and* Scottish and that I should embrace both. One need not exclude the other, she said in her decisive drawl. *Uh huh.* That was startling advice to receive at the age of twenty-three, and I took it. (2010, p. 201)

This moment would appear to offer some resolution for the identities of 'African' and 'Scottish'. And yet Kay's treatment of colonialism and racism that haunts Scottish identity presents a process whereby her Nigerian and Scottish heritage repeatedly exclude and displace one another. The text is marked by a tension between a drive towards a comfortable resolution of identity and the failure of these categories of national identity to provide any homogeneous sense of selfhood. Kay's refusal of a linear approach in her memoir undoes the apparent cohesion of her identity implied in this encounter with Lorde. On pondering her trip to Nigeria in an extract labelled '2003', Kay says that 'I wish that everything will go well in Nigeria. I wish that my father will like me. I wish that I'll return whole' (2010, p. 166). This desire for 'wholeness' contradicts the comfortable dual identity implied in Lorde's advice. This desire highlights Kay's feeling that she is not 'whole'. This alerts us to the fact the third space is an often deeply unsettling space to occupy.

Clarifying his ideas on the third space in 2009, Bhabha referred to 'a dark and desperate place' (p. ix) while, in his overview, Young recognises that 'the third space is above all a site of the production of anxiety, an untimely place of loss, of fading, of appearance and disappearance' (2009, p. 82). Thus, although it might seem a liberating and radical experience to live outside of and therefore expose the social construction of apparently natural and homogeneous national identity, we can recognise that these social constructions hold such weight precisely because they validate our identities as somehow rooted and complete. Thus, to live outside of them, or to abandon those structures, is to enter a deeply unsettling space.

Kay references something of this third space when writing about her

adoption:

> there is still a windy place right at the core of my heart. The windy place is
>
> like Wuthering Heights, out on open moors, rugged and wild and free and
>
> lonely . . . You think adoption is a story which has an end. But the point about
>
> it is that it has no end. It keeps changing its ending. (2010, p. 45-46)

Kay's reference to the open moors draws upon a liberating yet disorientating large

expanse of space while her reference to the story that has no end suggests endless

non-linear time that refuses resolution. This disorienting space is tied to Kay's

feelings of de-rootedness that arise from her adoption, one product of which is her

feelings of rejection within Scotland due to her skin colour. Kay recognises the dual

liberation and trauma associated with such a space when she recognises that it is

both 'free and lonely'. Bhabha recognises that the third space constitutes an

exposure of imagined cultural and national identities just as much as it involves

living outside of them: 'the great, though unsettling, advantage of this position is

that it makes you increasingly aware of the construction of culture and the invention

of tradition' ([1994] 2004: pp. 247-248). Similarly, Kay finds that this space also

helps her to articulate the falsity in the structures that apparently provide

coherence. She continues: 'I am alone only in the way that everybody is alone'

(2010, p. 46). Kay refuses to explain the 'windy place' in her heart exclusively

through her placement outside of structures of meaning and selfhood that are

somehow natural or stable. She recognises, instead, how they constantly fail to provide the coherence they promise when she imaginatively uncloaks everyone from the identities that construct coherent selfhood; 'everybody is alone'.

Lorde's advice, far from providing resolution, highlights the unsettling and changeable negotiations of identities through the third space. Like her narrative structure, Kay does not succumb to easy and coherent stories about identity; her own descriptions of her identity often mirror the temporal and spatial disorientation that constitutes the form of her text. And yet, Bhabha has written that this space, however unsettling, makes it possible occasionally for seemingly impossible ideas to lie alongside each other. He refers to 'a stillness sometimes heard in choral music when several voices hold the same note for a moment – *omnes et singulatum* – as it soars beyond any semblance of sameness' (2009, p. ix). This image conveys the liberating side of the third space, in that it makes room for several differences momentarily to harmoniously sit alongside each other. While Kay may not seek resolution, then, she does, in the spatial and temporal freedom of her text, explore moments where, however problematic, she finds ways for her Nigerian and Scottish identities to sit alongside each other. In doing so, she produces ways in which Scotland's colonial history is present in the same space with its subaltern position.

This idea is explored by Kay when she, in spite of her clear understanding of Scotland's colonial history, articulates a desire to establish some affiliation between the homes of her birth parents:

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I want to talk to old Igbo people about their customs and beliefs and how

they've changed over their lifetime; and then to do the same in the Scottish

Highland and Islands. It interests me that my father is from a village in

eastern Nigeria and my mother from a small town in the eastern Highlands of

Scotland. (2010, p. 217)

It is significant here that this affiliation involves her desire to talk to Igbo and

Highland and Island people about their customs and beliefs. This recalls the idea of

the oral tradition and its relationship to cultural memory. Michael Lynch's outline of

the Scottish oral tradition makes it clear that it has wider resonances for other

groups and cultures: 'oral sources give a voice in Scottish historical studies to

people, groups, and subjects absent from or inadequately represented in documents

or other forms of evidence' (2001, p. 464). This idea of the oral tradition that comes

out of cultural erasure is also clearly significant for Kay's exploration of the Biafra

war. The Biafra War (more widely, but problematically, remembered as The

Nigerian Civil War) took place from 1966-1970 and involved a literal and cultural

erasure of the Igbo people, who largely lived in eastern Nigeria (Jorre, 1972, p. 17).

Korieh points out that the level of annihilation suffered by the Igbo people makes

the naming of the war as a 'civil war' inaccurate (2012, pp. 3-4). Korieh names the

war as an 'invisible genocide', covered up by 'federal Nigeria' and 'major western

nations' (2012, pp. 3-4). The Biafra war involved the genocide of the Igbo people,

the erasure of their culture, and the erasure of their experience in history. This

cultural erasure is clearly conveyed by Kay as she quotes her father Jonathan's memories of Biafra:

> When I met him in Abuja he told me he had no photographs of himself as a young man or boy because they all got lost during the Biafra War . . . he shook his head and said, 'Biafra, Biafra, that was terrible, terrible,' and physically juddered. He said, 'It wiped us out. It took everything. All the photographic history, all the other family documents were completely lost during Biafra, everything personal'. (pp. 144-145)

This wiping out of a people as well as their visual and verbal documents clearly reflects Lynch's view of the oral tradition. It is, then, also significant that Jonathan's words here are quoted; his voice is inscribed into the text and his account of Biafra is then passed on to Kay's reader through her memoir. As such, the exposition of Biafra through the medium of personal memoir that directly quotes the voice of an Igbo person who experienced the war plays out a process of oral testimony as a process for preserving erased history. It is significant also that Kay names the conflict the 'Biafra war'. She clearly mirrors Jonathan's naming of the war and therefore continues the process that remains loyal to Igbo history, often erased under the more widely used 'Nigerian civil war'. This similarly plays out a pattern of oral history as Kay 'passes on' Jonathan's naming of the war as she introduces her reader to the conflict through an affiliation with the side of the conflict often erased under dominant historical narratives.

The oral tradition is also particularly central to Scottish culture and is often associated with a Gaelic or Highland tradition. Lynch states that:

in Scotland. . . and particularly but by no means exclusively in the Gaelic-speaking Highlands and Islands . . . the centrality of the oral tradition for knowledge and understanding of family and community history has long been attested. (2001, p. 463)

Through Lynch's observation that the oral tradition is associated with, but not limited to, the Highlands and Islands, we may establish a dual sense of marginality whereby Scotland is marginal to the wider British state, but its Highland and Island communities are also a marginalised part of the wider Scottish nation. As such, the oral tradition encompasses a complex and even contradictory process of 'Scotland-as-marginal' but also of those communities that are marginal even to Scotland. This requires an application of the sort of thinking advocated in Bhabha's notion of hybridity in order to be able to hold that the Scottish oral tradition involves a dualistic experience of marginality both for and within Scotland.

Music was central to the Scottish oral tradition as setting stories and historical accounts to music allowed them to be easily memorised and passed from one generation to another (Sheridan *et al.*, 2011, p. 176). Kay clearly embraces and celebrates Scottish music throughout *Red Dust Road*, recalling, for instance, parties at her parents' house where:

Alec Clark would sing 'Ae Fon Kiss', and Anna Ashton would sing 'John

Anderson my jo', and Peter Morton would sing, and Kenny Haldane would

sing, and I would feel happy, gloriously happy, surrounded by people who

had their songs with them. (2010, p. 31)

Kay certainly finds celebration in these Scottish songs, and roots this in particular in

the idea that these songs 'belong' to these people. To 'have their songs with them' is

to have the stories, histories, and cultures inscribed into these songs. Although

Scotland's marginality is not comparable to Biafra, or to the colonisation of African

countries by the Scots and English, Kay is able to celebrate Scotland's oral tradition

without this undoing her celebration of her Igbo history and culture. This is, of

course, only momentary and Kay does not imply that this provides any resolution of

these histories or, indeed, of her own identity, but she does make room for both

sides of her identity and both sides of Scottish history in this space.

Simultaneously, Kay is also able to entertain the idea of a heterogeneous

Scotland through song: 'And we sang our way to Torridon….And we sang our way to

Inverness . . . And we sang our way to Ballantrae' (2010, p. 119). Here it is Kay and

her family that have 'their songs with them' as they take a road trip to the far

reaches of Scotland. The complex and contradictory way in which the oral tradition

holds both Scotland's marginality and those places that are marginal within

Scotland seems to be inscribed into Kay's evocation of a heterogeneous topography

for Scotland. In these encounters Kay entertains both Scotland's history as coloniser

but also incorporates and celebrates the Scottish identity built up from its own

encounters with marginality. Through her interest in the oral tradition, not exclusive to, but often associated with Highland and Island traditions, Kay presents a contradictory and heterogeneous Scotland that is marginal in itself but also encompasses marginality. This, of course, is not a comfortable process; it recalls Scottish Lowland imperialist attitudes to the Highlands and the subsequent appropriation of Highland culture for generalised Scottish identity. Thus this is not a process of resolving Scottishness or its past; the third space exposes the construction of that identity. Nonetheless, Kay's text makes room for the various contradictions in this identity and history within the text. At times this is a jarring and haunting process but there are also moments where these contradictions are able to sit alongside each other.

This notion of an unsettling yet ultimately liberating reconfiguration of identity develops chapter four's argument that cosmopolitanism demands a necessary 'unhoming' as Zoe Strachan's Stella renegotiates her identity through a process of disorientation. In this chapter, and throughout this thesis, I have argued for devolution as a moment that entails queer disorientation for Scotland, as its old identity formations fall away as it gains increased autonomy. Through exploration of Bhabha's 'third space' in Kay's memoir, we can conclude that this unsettling ambiguity can be an expansive process. This approach makes room for an identity that is both Scottish and Nigerian, both Igbo and Highland, that recognises the facts of Scotland's colonial past and can still celebrate its oral traditions and, in those oral traditions can hold onto a Scotland that is both marginal in itself and yet contains its own marginalised communities. This is an important space to occupy given chapter

five's argument that Scotland's marginality has been repositioned as productively queer in the post-devolution period. It is pertinent, then, to investigate how Bissett's play conveys Scotland's colonial history at a time where the Yes campaign aimed to persuade voters that Scotland could be more democratic and could promote equality if not restricted by Conservative-led England.

Jock: Scotland on Trial

Like Kay's *Red Dust Road*, Bissett's play presents a departure from the predominant focus on prose writing throughout this thesis. This text has been selected, however, because it presents a literary intervention into the political and cultural debates at the time of the independence referendum and therefore offers some of the most productive analysis of how issues of colonialism and cultural memory are explored in the formative year of 2014. *Jock: Scotland on Trial* was first performed at Glasgow's Tron theatre, 15th-17th May 2014, and was later performed from 10th–13th September 2014 at London's Finborough Theatre. The dual English and Scottish locations of these performances, alongside the play's billing at both theatres as 'posing the question: is Scotland the colonised or the coloniser?' (Finborough Theatre, 2014), suggests an attempt to provide a more nuanced exploration of Scotland's relationship to colonisation. Moreover, the choice of drama as the genre for this exploration is significant; it imagines an audience that is necessary in order to 'judge' Scotland during its trial. Clearly, the first run of performances in Glasgow has the potential to disorientate the identities of that Glaswegian audience. Bissett sets the play in a police interrogation room, in which George, clearly representing

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England, questions Jock over his colonial crimes. The national distinction between the two is also conveyed via George's English dialect and Jock's use of Scots.

This 'interrogation' of Scotland draws attention to several notable moments that confront Jock with his colonial history and questions the cultural amnesia that surrounds this history. This confrontation with the Scottish tendency to reimagine its history is particularly persuasively articulated by Jackie Kay, whose 2007 article in *The Guardian*, previously discussed in this chapter, is quoted in the play in the form of a 'witness statement':

> at school, I learnt that Glasgow was a great merchant city. I learnt about the shipping industry, but not about the slave ship Neptune that arrived in Carlisle Bay, Barbados, on May 22 1731, after leaving Port Glasgow months earlier. (cited in Bissett, 2014b, p. 287)

Kay's outline of the way history is edited in her experience of the Scottish education system highlights that the teaching of history to schoolchildren is loaded with questions over what aspects of history to communicate to the 'future generation' of that nation. Kay continues her discussion of her Glaswegian education by saying that: 'it almost seems anti-Scottish to imagine all those MacDonalds out there in Jamaica' (cited in Bissett, 2014b, p. 287) and thus clearly ties this erasure of history to a crisis of national identity. This is similar to the juxtaposition set up when Kay places Stirling at the heart of 1980s 'Reality Britain' in *Red Dust Road*. The 'anti-

Scottish' image of MacDonalds in Jamaica reveals that this juxtaposition stems from a wider contradiction between reality and the Scottish imagination.

However, while the play certainly confronts its audience with some of the realities of Scotland's colonial crimes, the fact of Jock's being questioned by 'George' nonetheless places this exploration within the dynamic of Scotland/England relations. The effects of this approach are particularly prominent when, in a succession of evidence aimed to prove Jock's colonial crimes, George states:

> Or what about the great humanitarian, Robert Burns, in 1786: 'On A Scotch
> Bard Gone to the West Indies'. Sounds like he imagined quite the party over
> there, among the plantati-
> Aye, awright.
> It speaks! (2014b, p. 268)

The reference to Burns poem offers another point of confrontation for Scotland while Jock cuts off the word 'plantations', which furthers the sense of the exposition of colonialism as a traumatic memory that disturbs Scotland. And yet, in this exchange, we are left with George's condescending words, 'it speaks'. This establishes a hierarchy of the more articulate, more civilised George who outwits Jock, whose Scots accent is presented as less articulate, less educated by contrast. All of this is cemented by George's reference to Jock as 'it', which casts him as less human, and somehow more primitive than George, than England. This recalls Said's Orientalism and the tendency of western Europe to imagine its 'other' as less

civilised, more primitive, and almost animalistic. As such, this appeals to the side of

Scottish history in which it is cast as England's uncivilised periphery. This begs the

question of whether it is possible for Scotland to explore its own colonial guilt

outside of this coloniser/colonised relation with England.

Articulations of English abuse of Scotland appear throughout the play just as

overtly as confrontations with Scotland's colonial past. Jock defends himself against

George's accusations of Scottish colonialism with the words: 'alas ma maist fertile

lands – ma treasures – / lay towards the border, reached easily, / for those with will

to extend an armoured talon' (2014b, p. 271). The image of Scotland's 'treasures'

being stolen by an 'armoured talon' clearly vilifies England and undoubtedly sets up

a colonial image of England, the foreign country, unlawfully pillaging Scotland of its

'treasures'. This is not simply an articulation of Scottish marginality; rather, this

establishes a clear narrative of colonisation.

One particularly prominent scene further depicts George's mistreatment of

Scotland:

> Jock is eating his porridge. George is roaming around with a pocket calculator
> and totalling things up. Sheep keep bumping into him: 'Mehh'. Anther sheep
> bumps into him: 'Mehh'. He starts to count the sheep. He does a few more
> sums on the calculator. Wait a minute. . . .
> George knocks on Jock's door. Jock answers it, smiling.
> But then George instructs Jock: clear out. Jock is baffled. Come on, clear out!
> George brings out the gun and points it at Jock. . . .

Jock leaves the house with his hands up. He is forced out of his home,

bumping into sheep as he goes – 'Mehh' 'Mehh'. He wanders away, dejected.

George goes into Jock's house, does a patronising Highland fling. (2014b, p.

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George's use of a gun to clear Jock from his home clearly casts England as the

aggressor in this obvious depiction of the Highland Clearances, where Highlanders

were evicted from their crofts as the economic benefit of their agricultural land was

realised (Prebble, 1982, n.p.). George's 'patronising Highland fling' clearly positions

this along national lines; he is the southern invader who mocks Scotland's cultural

identity as he unfairly benefits from the resources of the land. Undoubtedly this

scene continues the vilification of England and clearly appeals to a narrative of

English colonisation of Scotland.

However, this is a simplified narrative of the Highland Clearances; as Prebble

outlines, clan chiefs 'lease[d] their glens and braes to sheep-farmers from the

Lowlands and England, they cleared the crofts of men, women and children, using

police and soldiers where necessary' (2002, pp. 331-332). Farmers from the Scottish

Lowlands as well as from England reaped the economic benefits from the

Clearances. Therefore, to understand the Clearances as a solely English crime

inaccurately redraws the relationship of oppressor/oppressed along

Scottish/English lines. Furthermore, this representation excludes the fact that the

Highlands were considered alien to Scotland at this time. If anything, the scene

draws attention to the Scottish association with - and appropriation of - Highland

identity across the nineteenth century. This enacts a further process of historical

erasure as the Scottish Lowland involvement in the Clearances is cast aside in

favour of a more comfortable story of brutal English colonisation. All of this, most

significantly, detracts from the play's exploration of Scotland's role as coloniser.

This scene's exploration of English colonisation of Scotland is brought up to

the late twentieth century through further stage directions:

> Jock picks at the ground to try and find some food. He finds . . . a can of oil?
>
> Shakes it, opens it, sniffs it. Grins. He starts soliciting offers for it.
>
> George looks outside, sees what's happening. He sneaks up behind Jock. He
>
> manages to steal the oil from Jock without him noticing. (p. 273)

This clearly recalls the 'It's Scotland's Oil' campaign that was instrumental in the

SNP's then most successful election campaign in 1974 (Brocklehurst, 2013, n.p.),

which undoubtedly refers to a Scotland/England relationship and appeals to a

colonial narrative (see figures one and two).

Figure One   *Figure Two*[4]

Figure One appeals to the fact of England as a larger nation than Scotland in its visual representation, but also by placing England above Scotland, it is cast as the more dominant oppressor that 'expects' Scotland's natural resources. The headline also clearly references Horatio Nelson's famous rallying cry that 'England expects that every man will do his duty' during the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. The Scots did fight alongside the rest of Britain in the Battle of Trafalgar (Pocock, 2005, p. 59); it is through such wars with France that Colley argues that a heterogeneous but collective British identity was created (Colley, 2005, p. 6). However, the phrase does evidence the synonymy implied between England and Britain, which casts the other nations of the UK as lesser or peripheral but 'expects' them too to fight for England/Britain. The reference to a battle with France in a Scottish context also tends to serve as a reminder of widely circulated cultural memories of the Auld Alliance 1295-1560. This was a treaty made between King John of Scotland and King Philip of France in 1295 as a defensive strategy against King Edward of England and

was renewed until 1560 (McDougal, 2001, p. 9). While this period is certainly of interest, it does end two hundred and forty-five years before the Battle of Trafalgar. As such, the phrase 'England expects' implies a history that recalls an association between France and Scotland that is something of a convenient historical bridge between two very different geo-political entities of 'Scotland'. Nonetheless, the inference serves to distance Scotland from Britain further, and simultaneously casts England, not the whole of the UK, as 'expecting' Scottish oil. Figure Two clearly furthers this colonial narrative as Thatcher is cast as the vampire who has 'got Scotland's oil'. The vampiric image clearly depicts Thatcher as a monster that preys upon Scotland and sucks its oil/blood and thus drains the body of the nation. This propaganda appeals to a narrative of robbery and thus clearly casts Scotland as subject to English imperial attitudes and, moreover, as unfairly colonised by England. Thus, Bissett's evocation of George taking Jock's oil undoubtedly appeals to the sort of propaganda that promotes an image of Scotland as colonised.

It is significant that these references to the English clearance of the Highlands and the theft of Scottish oil are made via stage direction in contrast to the evidence of Scotland's colonial crimes which is presented by 'witnesses' such as Kay. The latter offers the audience 'evidence' within a courtroom and thus places them as jury to decide whether the evidence persuades them or not. In contrast, the stage directions that convey English suppression of Scotland simply play out before the audience, implying that they are less open to debate than the witness statements. However, when weighing up the evidence and the scenes presented, we find evidence of Scotland's involvement in Empire not simply persuasive but

indisputable, whereas further exploration of the Highland Clearances and the 'It's

Scotland's Oil' campaign evidences both a continued simplification of Scottish

history and an appeal to 'Scotland-as-colonised' for the purposes of propaganda. As

such, through this presentation of English 'colonisation' of Scotland as an

unambiguous and simplistic narrative, *Jock: Scotland on Trial* paradoxically plays

out the process through which Scotland's colonial crimes are, even when

recognised, somehow 'justified' by the image of Scotland as unfairly colonised by

England. However, if Scotland can revise this myth of English dominance that

promotes Scottish inferiority then it may also begin to depart from the 'Scotland-as-

colonised' narrative that erases its own colonial history.

The Independence Referendum and its Aftermath

There is evidence, however, that since the 2014 referendum on Scottish

independence, there have been significant changes in the construction of Scottish

national identity. Put simply, Scotland has increasingly appeared as a disruptive,

antagonistic force within the wider context of the Conservative-led British state.

This has been most apparent in politics where the SNP claimed a landslide fifty-six

out of fifty-nine seats in Scotland at the 2015 UK general election. The presence of

fifty-six SNP MPs in the House of Commons, who are opposed to the union of the UK

and the governance of Scottish affairs at Westminster, clearly casts them as a

formidable force that threatens the stability of the United Kingdom and the security

of the traditional Westminster two-party system. This has been exemplified by Alex

Salmond's headline-grabbing statement that this SNP presence in the House of Commons will 'shake Westminster to its foundations' (cited in Dickie, 2015, n.p.).

This image of the SNP as a disruptive force has also clearly translated into an understanding of the wider Scottish nation as a radical force in the imagination of the Yes campaign. This is best illustrated in the formation of the Radical Independence Campaign, who, after the referendum result, issued 'The People's Vow' in response to the vow made by the three main Westminster parties to devolve more power to Scotland. Alan Bissett read 'The People's Vow' on behalf of the Radical Independence Campaign:

> we know that the referendum has changed Scotland utterly. For perhaps the first time in their lives, a majority of working-class people felt empowered to take politics into their own hands, standing up to a British state which has become unaccountable and corrupt beyond repair, staring, without blinking, into the eyes of those who had shown them only contempt. (Radical Independence Campaign, 2014, n.p.)

The British state is undoubtedly vilified here. However, the oppression/oppressor relationship is redrawn along class rather than national lines. Bissett continues this point by stating 'we are not the 45% but the 99%' (Radical Independence Campaign, 2014, n.p.). This clearly recalls the Occupy movement's slogan, which draws attention to the fact that 1% of the world population have more wealth than the bottom 90%. The British state is therefore vilified not as English suppression of

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Scotland, but as a system of power that maintains the neoliberal social order of late capitalism. The Vow is further internationalised as Scotland is imagined as a leader in a revolution against this order; Bissett states that Scotland 'can inspire fellow workers across the British Isles, Europe and the world to take up a struggle against their own masters' (Radical Independence Campaign, 2014, n.p.). The term 'masters' clearly holds colonial resonance, but this is not tied solely to England; it references the wider systems of power that constitute or maintain a social and political order made up of dramatic levels of inequality. In these terms, Scotland's own 'revolution' is recast as a necessary one across the British Isles, Europe and the world.

'The People's Vow' therefore evidences a movement away from the Scottish imagination that sees itself as the colonised victim of the English/British state. Moreover, Scotland is cast as the rebellious force, no longer inferior, but capable of taking on these 'unaccountable and corrupt' forces. The words of the Radical Independence Campaign's Vow are particularly emotive and thus present something of an extreme example of this new formation of the construction of Scottishness. However, the ideas articulated here do mirror the way in which the SNP are cast as disruptive forces in the House of Commons. Moreover, the success of the SNP in the 2015 election demonstrates that these ideas on Scottishness are permeating beyond the Yes campaign, and thus may become increasingly representative of a wider reconfiguration of Scottishness.

This thesis originally looked to Kath Browne and Catherine Nash's definition of queer as that which 'seeks to subvert, challenge and critique a host of taken for granted "stabilities" in our social lives' (2010, p. 7). Following this definition, across

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this thesis queer has been a disruptive and destabilising entity. Notably, the construction of a radical and disruptive Scottishness coheres with this definition of queer. Moreover, the rhetoric of 'The People's Vow' resonates with José Esteban Muñoz's famous evocation of queer futurity: 'Queerness is not yet here. Queerness is an ideality' (2009, p. 1). The Yes campaign's vision of an independent Scotland as the antidote to an austerity-driven, right-wing political establishment in the UK could easily replace Muñoz's outline of queer here. That is, Scottish independence involves daring to look into the eyes of the establishment and imagine a different order that resists right-wing politics, an imperialist nationalism, and a neoliberalism that are so often cast as inevitable both within the British State and across contemporary Europe.

Chapter five explored affiliations between Scotland and queer. The recent shift in Scottish identity might then be understood as the culmination of a radical possibility that had always been present within Scotland but was often suppressed under a more dominant narrative of Scotland-as-colonised and the reactionary hypermasculinity that stems from that. Importantly, then, for the first time this affiliation between Scotland and queer extends beyond their shared disruptive positions as Scotland's reconfiguration increasingly encompasses the gendered side of queer politics and theory. The evocation of the Union as a 'marriage', most famously used in David Cameron's warning that 'Independence would not be a trial separation, it would be a painful divorce' (Cameron cited in Watt, 2014, n.p.), casts Scotland as the aggressor set to destroy the – presumably heteronormative – 'marriage' of Scotland and England. These shifts in Scotland's gendered identity

have also had tangible effects since Nicola Sturgeon became the first female first minister of Scotland. As discussed in the opening statements of this thesis, one of Sturgeon's first moves was a cabinet reshuffle that ensured gender balance (Brooks, 2014, n.p.). This was also accompanied by the recognition that Scotland now has three openly gay ministers (Duffy, 2014, n.p.). Further to this, Scotland has recently been named the fairest country in Europe in terms of LGBT legal rights (Press Association, 2015, n.p.). In these terms, Scotland appears increasingly as a nation defined simultaneously by its socialist politics with a strong focus on gender and LGBT equality and by its destabilising impact on the Westminster establishment.

It must be recognised that this is purely national imagining; it does simplify the narrative of Scotland as much as any other narrative of Scottish national identity that this thesis has encountered. This is why texts such as Gerry Hassan's *Caledonian Dreaming* (2014), which interrogates the level to which Scotland truly is a fairer, more socialist country than England, remain important for exposing the difference between reality and the national imagination. And yet it is significant that Scotland seems to have replaced its image of itself as a 'hard-done-to wee nation' (Kay, 2007, n.p.) with a more positive queer, fragmentary image. This is important for this chapter because it demonstrates a shift in the 'Scotland-as-colonised' narrative and we may speculate that this is positive because it removes one of the key components of Scotland's displacement of its colonial past. More broadly, the shift away from this narrative of Scotland-as-colonised allows Scotland to realise its full queer potential; both theoretically as a disruptive force and tangibly in the changing position of women and LGBT people in Scotland's politics and culture.

<u>Conclusion</u>

Through Kay's text we find that the third space provides a valuable vehicle for Scotland to begin to make room for its own marginality and its colonial history. The task is then to bring these ideas to bear within the context of the independence referendum, in which a colonial narrative of Scotland becoming 'free' from England was particularly available. Undoubtedly this chapter also evidences that this dual focus on Scotland's colonial history and marginal position is not yet an entirely comfortable process for Scotland. As *Jock: Scotland on Trial* demonstrates in particular, a large part of this remains the tendency for that history to become 'justified' or 'explained' under an exaggeration of English colonisation of Scotland. However, there is evidence in the socio-political aftermath of the independence referendum that there has been a shift in Scottish national identity from a suppressed and 'colonised' nation to a queer and disruptive nation that holds an antagonistic position within the neo-imperial, Conservative-led British state. It remains to be seen whether this departure from Scottish colonial inferiority will allow for the sort of open-ended hybrid approach to Scotland's heterogeneous identity explored in *Red Dust Road*. For the present thesis, however, this shift away from inferiority towards something more antagonistically 'queer' is very significant. Repeatedly this thesis has encountered the mutual exclusivity between queer and Scotland due to the hypermasculinity that stems from Scotland's traditional victimised position. The increasingly 'queer' formation of Scottish identity in 2014-2015 therefore indicates a significant shift in the relationship between queerness

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and Scottishness that stems from a re-imagination of Scotland's marginal position

within the UK.

<u>Conclusion</u>

This thesis therefore shows that devolution, the moment that granted increased statehood to Scotland, actually entailed a moment of dramatic disorientation for the nation. It could never deliver on the imagined resurrection of a true and original Scottish identity previously 'dissolved' by the 1707 Act of Union. Moreover, it diminished the previous century's primary means for forming a Scottish national identity as it lessened the hold of Scotland's oppositional relationship with England. As such, devolution exposed the construction of national identity and in doing so disoriented the ideas of Scottishness that had been imagined across twentieth-century Scottish nationalism.

And yet this thesis does not understand the trauma implied in this moment of disorientation as negative or necessary of resolution. It shows that crisis is a productive state through which Scotland's identity – and hegemonic power structures more widely – are renegotiated. Chapter two demonstrated that the upending devolutionary moment opened up a space that appeared abject and stagnant in *Born Free* (1999) but this was necessary for the exploration of bodies, experiences, and identities that fell outside of safe reproductive models of being. This helped acknowledge that there can be no room for queerness – other than assimilative LGBT rights such as gay marriage - if there is not a process that overturns those safe normative structures. This overturned space of post-devolution Scotland loosens the rigid category of Scottishness and the possibilities inherent in readings of Scottish literature.

Chapters three and four evidenced the theoretical possibilities available

when reading Scottish literature not for its 'Scottishness', but in order to explore the

related questions of nationhood and its associated 'good life' alongside globalisation

and cosmopolitanism in the contemporary world. We might reflect that this has

consequences for Scottish criticism; as both *The Accidental* (2005) and *Negative*

Space (2002) prompt us to question why a queer wandering stranger such as

Smith's Amber or a queer nameless and lost women such as Strachan's Stella do not

seem obvious national symbols. This is not suggested in order to make sense of

these characters or to limit them as national symbols; in fact, it is suggested in order

to show that we can loosen our grip on what Scottishness means, and can reject the

apparent necessity for coherence in this disorientated post-devolution space. This

makes room for writing from Scotland to provide thorough theoretical engagement

with the ideas that surround nationhood, not in order to understand or resolve

'Scottishness', but to open thinking on the debates that surround nationhood and

belonging in a contemporary world. Following this approach, then, this thesis

argues for the critical and political value of moments of crisis. When we follow the

knee-jerk response and aim for resolution of crisis, we risk restoration of the

hegemonic structures of power that regulate social and political life. The queer

theory of writers such as Lee Edelman, Lauren Berlant, and Sarah Ahmed has guided

this argument, as has the application of these theories to post-devolution Scottish

writing.

Chapters five and six have considered what the arguments of the previous

chapters mean for a specifically Scottish identity. Chapter five continued the

previous chapters' exploration of trauma through its analysis of the gothic and found that contemporary writers are using the gothic genre to express a shared affinity between Scottishness and queerness. This approach is significant because it provides ways of thinking of Scotland not simply as a space that opens up to queerness, but one that is in itself queer. This entails a fundamental shift for the construction of Scottish identity. This approach recognises that, while opened-up Scottish criticism provides opportunities for the outwards-looking analysis of chapters three and four, there can simultaneously be room for an inwards-looking approach that is not restrictive or parochial. In fact, these lines of enquiry are necessary because they evidence fundamental ways in which the ingredients for a Scottish identity have changed from hypermasculine to queer.

Chapter six recognised that this new construction of national identity must fully acknowledge and incorporate its past colonial sins even if they do not provide a comfortable national picture. This would be a nation truly open to the incorporation of disorientating trauma so as not to erase that history under new 'positive' constructions of Scottishness. Chapter six considered these questions in relation to the independence referendum of 2014, which did hold within it a potentially restrictive drive towards coherence and consolidation of national identity. It is significant that discussions of Scotland's role in the slave trade and Empire entered the independence debate in Alan Bissett's play. As chapter six argued, this was by no means a fully satisfactory treatment of colonialism within Scotland's history and Bissett's treatment of Scotland, at times, appealed too closely to a Scotland-as-colonised narrative. And yet, Jackie Kay's voice in *Red Dust Road* (2010) did find

ways to confront Scottish identity with its past and also found ways in which a heterogeneous Scottish identity might evolve beyond this. We can hope that the twenty-first century treatment of Scotland's colonial past in literature and culture, although slow to start, will entail further dialogue on this theme. Jackie Kay's recent appointment as Makar of Scotland is a welcome move that, we can hope, will bring her writings on Scotland's colonial history further into public consciousness.

Scotland's queer moment, then, entails three main elements. Initially it refers to the way in which the idea of Scottishness has become disoriented and opened up to often unsettling ambiguity. This entails a process whereby more expansive queer readings of writing from Scotland and even queer readings of Scotland are possible. Lastly, this alerts us to the fact that this renewed national identity must increasingly accommodate the disturbances within its past, rather than erase them in the name of the restoration of a cohesive and comfortable identity.

Alan Bissett articulated something of Scotland's disoriented space during the referendum campaigns:

> Scotland at the moment reminds me of the Elastica principle, developed by physicist Leonhard Euler, whereby structures have a tendency, when forced out of their initial shape, to go through a period of distortion before assuming a new form. (2014a, n.p.)

Bissett's words demonstrate the way in which Scotland's disoriented moment was felt particularly at the height of the referendum campaigns in 2014. Yet, as this

thesis demonstrates, Scotland has been fluctuating within this 'period of distortion'

since 1999. As such, this thesis reads the build-up to the independence campaign as

the moment where Scotland's disorientation was most pronounced. Bissett's words

prompt thinking on whether the referendum could potentially have marked the end

of this disorientated period for Scotland. He is, after all, interested in the 'new form'

that Scotland will take once it emerges from this 'period of distortion'.

In the debates that surrounded the referendum, and now with an SNP

government, we are at risk of that new national identity, however positive,

becoming consolidated into an unproblematic and essentialised story of Scotland's

'natural' progressiveness. David Torrance has recently referred to the

'extraordinary transformation' from homophobic Scotland to the current political

discourse, which holds that 'Scotland possesses a more egalitarian, left-of-centre

politics than England', a key part of which is its progressive legislation on LGBT

rights and its having the highest number of gay political party leaders in the world

(2016, n.p.). He is clear that the fact of Scotland's delay in decriminalizing

homosexuality until 1980 'often takes people by surprise, not least in Scotland'

(2016, n.p.). This surprise demonstrates the cultural amnesia to which constructions

of national identity are prone; it is necessary that Scotland's opened up national

identity does not slip comfortably into another essentialist narrative of 'progressive

Scotland' that erases its homophobic history. Torrance is careful to uncover the

truth that 'until the 1990s survey evidence demonstrated that . . . when it came to

divorce, abortion and homosexuality, Scotland was significantly to the right of "Tory

England"' (2016, n.p.). This line of enquiry must remain within dialogue on

Scottishness, partly so that, like its memory of colonialism, Scotland's past can be preserved and used to challenge and confront Scottish national identity. Continued awareness of this past is also necessary because this contrast with Scotland's past exposes that the nation is a constructed and malleable entity. Only through this process can we deconstruct the hegemonic power of the nation and continue to be alert to ways in which the nation can be broken down and opened up to, in this case, more positive attitudes to LGBT identities but also, more widely, to debates on cosmopolitanism and post-colonialism.

It is worth, then, considering briefly how Scottish writing has responded to the referendum and, indeed, whether this context looks set to reframe Scottish writing as always in some way to do with nationhood. Scott Hames was quick to publish a collection of writers on the independence referendum in 2012. Significantly, however, he recognised that 'fewer than half the writers who accepted our invitation and sent us an essay are women (10 of 27). About two thirds of the male writers we invited, accepted' (2012, p. 12). Hames reflected further that 'the collection is very, even if uncomfortably white, but then so is the culture it's talking about' (2012, p. 12). Hames synonymised the collection and Scottish culture here, but all this collection represents is the demographic of those willing to write into an overt national framework. It is unsurprising that the writers included in the collection are predominantly male and predominantly white; they belong to a demographic largely unaffected by the labelling of their writing and are perhaps less wary of entering the categorisation implied by the title 'writers on Scottish independence'. Zoë Strachan, who is not included in the collection, articulated 'how

nice it would be to be known not as a "woman writer" or a "lesbian writer" or even as a "Scottish writer", but simply as a writer!' (2007, p. 55). It is problematic, then, to state that Hames's demographic of writers in any way reflects Scottish culture. Louise Welsh spoke at the National Library of Scotland discussion on independence on Thursday 22nd March 2012 and she used her platform to call out the idea of 'Scottish culture': 'sometimes when we talk about culture, it's as if we're talking about something else; something that belongs to other people' but 'successful culture reflects the society that it's in' (2012, n.p.). She observed that her panel consisted of ' three white guys and a funny looking women'. Although her comment roused a laugh from her audience, Welsh was serious in her point that this panel represented privileged Scottish culture; the kinds of people who sit on boards of companies or are heading departments at universities. But Welsh is clear that this is 'not representative of the culture that I see when I walk outside of my door'. She continues: 'there's a whole part of Scottish life, a whole experience of Scottish life which, at the moment, we are not hearing' (2012, n.p.). With Welsh's words in mind, we can recognise that perhaps the project is not for us to consolidate writers willing to write on Scottish independence together in order to gain some insight into the debate or on Scottish culture. Rather, we would do better to simply have our eyes and ears open to the diversity present across Scottish writers and themes in Scottish writing, and, indeed, throughout wider Scottish culture. Surely this is the only way to fully recognise the heterogeneity present in the experience of being Scottish.

This is not a particularly difficult project; the present thesis provides just a small sample of seven writers through which the identities of lesbian woman, gay

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man, and person of colour can easily be identified. It is perhaps unsurprising that, bar Alan Bissett, none of the writers included in this thesis contributed to Hames's collection. It hardly requires justification that this is not due to this thesis picking particularly 'against the grain' or obscure writers; the status of Ali Smith, Zoë Strachan, Louise Welsh, and Jackie Kay in the Scottish literature scene, in particular, is indisputable. This thesis has also not selected writers that are against Scottish independence; indeed, Zoë Strachan and Louise Welsh openly supported independence while Ali Smith and Jackie Kay, although careful not to express an opinion during the campaigns, described their being '55% relieved and 45% disappointed' with the outcome of the vote at the Brighton book festival in the May of 2015 (2015, n.p.). The writers in this thesis were not selected for their fulfilment of any 'labels' but it is clear to see that simply by turning away from rigid interpretations of Scottish literature, the heterogeneous identities held within the category of 'Scottish' do emerge across their writings. Our critical endeavour must therefore be to resist simple categorisation of this literature. Only then will the heterogeneous and loosened sense of Scottishness be allowed to continue to breathe beyond the independence referendum.

However problematic the questions that it raises are, Hames' collection does present a particularly significant essay from Christopher Whyte. He writes in support of independence, but is clear that this must be accompanied by a relinquishment of Scotland's victim position (2012, p. 194). He is clear that only then will Scotland be fully able to encounter its history of colonialism, of class inequality, and of repression of sexuality. He goes so far to state that 'public

apologies need to be made' (2012, p. 195). Whyte's idea that independence might force Scotland to relinquish its victim position once and for all follows the foundational argument in this thesis that devolution prompted a similar moment of introspection. It is important then that in these writings for independence Whyte articulates a desire not for independence to somehow consolidate Scotland, but actually to continue the disorientating process of introspection advocated by this thesis. Whyte also articulates that only in this space can Scotland fully reach a space where it can confront itself with its past. This, again, coheres with my proposal that increased statehood for Scotland actually dismantles its traditional constructions of national identity and opens the way for a heterogeneous nation-space capable of encountering its disturbing past. Whyte's view of independence is significant given his anxious response to devolution, which questioned 'if we want to bring back a Scotland that once was, what place will there be in it for blacks or lesbians or the children of Pakistani immigrants?' (1995, p. xii). Inherent in this anxiety is the idea that devolution would consolidate traditional narrow-minded Scottish identity. Whyte's position on independence shows that argument that increased Scottish statehood, far from consolidating Scottish identity, has actually disorientated it, has materialised across the post-devolution period. We can only speculate on whether an independent Scotland would have succeeded in moving forwards with the proposals in this thesis. And, indeed, whether a successful second Scottish independence referendum – which looks likely since the UK vote for Brexit – will continue to develop a disorientated, heterogeneous, and queer Scottish nationhood. It is more urgent that we turn finally to writers' response to the 'No' vote on

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independence in 2014 in order to consider how this political event in Scotland will impact upon the arguments made in this thesis.

Just as Whyte was anxious that devolution would consolidate restrictive Scottish national identity, we must also remember that the 1979 'No' vote for devolution did consolidate Scottish identity in writing. In 1979 it was understood that the task of the politicians fell to the writers and as such the years 1979-1999 were marked by the critical tendency to restrict literature from Scotland as little more than a voice for the stateless nation. If the 1979-1999 years are at all comparable with the aftermath of the 2014 'No' vote to independence, this cements just how much ideas of Scottishness have opened up. Rather than seek to articulate and define Scotland or Scottishness, writers are more at ease with ambiguity. Following the 'No' vote, Bissett wrote that 'the artists have now entered a period of introspection, replacing the creative campaign's colour and noise with a new ambivalence about what the Scottish arts are for' (2015, n.p.). This is not a period of introspection in which writers take up the task of representing the nation; it is, in Bissett's words, marked by 'ambivalence' and this ambiguity precisely concerns the question of 'what the Scottish arts are for'. This sounds far more like the moment of introspection that followed devolution, in which the parameters of Scottishness and Scottish literature were overturned and radically expanded. Bissett articulates something of this ambivalence in the very nation in question: 'feelings shift, and the political character of any nation is always in flux' (2015, n.p.). This articulates a sense of on-going changeability in the nation and, as such, appears a development in Bissett's earlier thoughts on the Elastica principle, in which he described Scotland as

going 'through a period of distortion before assuming a new form' (2014a, n.p.). There is an indication here that the 'No' vote denied Bissett whatever 'new form' he imagined for Scotland and, as such, he articulates a key idea of this thesis; that all nations are constructed and as such are always ambivalent and malleable. This is perhaps one of the most productive ways to approach the contemporary nation. Thus, the 'No' vote, in defying the anticipations of this writer, has forced a similar moment of disorientating introspection as this thesis identifies in devolution. Far from responding to this through a project of defining Scotland, Bissett, instead seems to have welcomed the ambivalence and fragility of the nation.

An embrace of heterogeneity and a refusal to seek confortable coherence has marked the wider Scottish artistic scene. This was largely due to the websites Bella Caledonia, National Collective, and Wings Over Scotland that sprung up during the independence campaign in order to provide a platform for discussions around independence, autonomy, and self-determination. These websites provided a space for a great deal of dialogue on these topics, ranging from the arts, to the economy, to Scottish landownership, to education, and they articulated voices from the yes, no, and unsure camps, which of course was also accompanied by various contributors changing their position throughout the debate. These platforms opened a space for that which could not be simplistically understood or categorised to exist. Importantly, they have continued beyond the 'No' vote and remain an important space for the debates that continue to thrive across Scotland. Mike Small, editor of Bella Caledonia, has gone so far as to write that post-referendum 'it's got a wonderful third space dynamic energy underpinning it all' (2014, n.p.). Small's is a

throwaway comment that, admittedly, simplifies Bhabha's notion of 'third space' discussed in chapter six. Broadly, however, we can observe that he appeals to a language of postcolonialism, but it articulates, not a victim mentality of Scotland-as-colonised, but a celebration of the not-easily-defined, of the ambivalent 'in between' space that permits this 'dynamic energy'. This evidences a shift in Scotland's imagination of itself, even after the 'no' vote, it is no longer suppressed victim of the British state but has reimagined itself as a heterogeneous, opened, and antagonistic space.

If the notion of an antagonistic queer 'crisis point' for Scotland has been advocated anywhere since the referendum, however, it is in Kieran Hurley's 'Five Strategies For Artists Wondering What They Should Do About Scotland' presented at the 'Culture: What Next?' event in 2015. The fifth and final piece of advice from this Yes supporter is:

Destroy Scotland

Aye. Tear it to the ground. Destroy Scotland even to the extent to which it means destroying ourselves, or at the very least the privileged position that this Scotland of ours has afforded us. Like any nation on the planet Scotland is just the name we give to a set of structures, institutions, and establishments within a defined geographical place. The only art of any value whatsoever is art which seeks to illuminate the dehumanising power relations within these structures with the express aim of ultimately dismantling them. (2015, n.p.)

The antagonistic idea of overturning hegemonic structures is at the heart of Hurley's words here. Importantly, he does not attempt to redeem or sanitise this process but instead appeals to an extreme rhetoric in order to emphasise that crisis: 'Aye. Tear it to the ground'. He is clear also on the consequences of this for safe formations of identity when he recognises that we must destroy Scotland even if it means 'destroying ourselves'. In this he acknowledges what has often been a point of focus for this thesis; that we often find ideas of disorientation unsettling or 'negative' because they upend the identities that we have formed through these structures. But Hurley is clear here that this process must be embraced if Scotland is to be 'dismantled' and so upend the 'dehumanising power relations' inherent in 'these structures'. Of course, Hurley is only able to call for the destruction of Scottishness because he recognises its constructed nature in the first place. This clearly follows my argument that if nations are constructed then they can equally be deconstructed and opened up to more productive and permeable forms in the contemporary. At the start of this thesis I defined queer as that which is 'anti-normative and seeks to subvert, challenge and critique a host of taken for granted "stabilities" in our social lives' (Browne and Nash, 2010, p. 7). This is clearly Hurley's approach in 'tearing down' Scotland; he recognises that the disorientation of the stability of Scotland might be a traumatic idea, but it is necessary in order to open up the space that is 'Scotland'. It is significant that these words are spoken by a Yes supporter, who seeks not to consolidate, but to dismantle Scotland. This is testament to the way in

which ideas of Scotland have been made malleable. Moreover, it evidences the ultimate materialisation of the post-devolutionary upending queer space.

There are multiple reasons why Scotland has responded to the 'no' vote to independence so differently from the 1979 'no' vote to devolution. This thesis has two main suggestions; it evidences a materialisation of the shifting cultural landscape of Scotland over the post-devolution period; one that, through its initial 1999 disorientation has become more at ease with that which is heterogeneous, disorientating, and unsettling. Secondly, there is significant work to do on the comparison of the novel form that dominated late twentieth-century Scottish writing with the contemporary Internet platforms that are providing this 'third space' for debate. It is clear that this is a factor in the opening up of dialogues on Scottishness; these sites, hand in hand with Scotland's post-devolution disorientation, appear to be the most prominent driving forces behind this recent move to ambiguity. These ideas will have to form the basis for future writings on this topic. For the present thesis, it is suffice to observe that Scotland's post-devolution 'queer moment' continues to materialise post-referendum.

The 'no' vote has certainly consolidated the ideas of disorientated Scottish identity laid out in my exploration of post-devolution literature in this thesis. We can only speculate on whether a yes vote would have yielded the same results. I stated in the introduction to this thesis that there was not an option in the referendum that did not involve nationalism. This remains true and what we do know is that Scottish independence would have severely disorientated the idea of the British state. We can be certain that independence would have yielded a new

'crisis point', this time for British nationhood, in the contemporary. This reveals an urgent need to incorporate this renewed attention to the fragility of nations into our critical approaches to nationhood in the twenty-first century. Moreover, since the UK's vote to leave the EU and with a second referendum on Scottish independence looking highly likely, we can be certain that the models for thinking through national identity and how to 'queer' outlined in this thesis it will remain more pertinent than ever in these coming years.

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