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28. Nancy, *Inoperative Community*, p.52.
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30. Nancy, 'La Comparation', p.372. Italics in original. It is notable for the purposes of this parallel that the word 'compear', which Strong uses to translate 'comparation', is derived from Scottish law.
31. Robb, p.51. Italics in original.
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### DOGGED MASCULINITIES: MALE SUBJECTIVITY AND SOCIALIST DESPAIR IN KELMAN AND McILVANNEY

James Kelman's literary politics have most often been explained in terms of the 'formal democracy'<sup>1</sup> of his technique: his narrative style dissolves class-based discursive hierarchies and treats vernacular Scots as a language of 'literary' perception, expression and authority. It is proper that the politics of economic inequality and cultural imperialism are central to Kelman criticism. But Kelman's work has been illuminated from another angle by critics such as Ben Knights and Neil McMillan. The contention of this article is that their approach not only reveals an important, largely submerged dimension of Kelman's politics of form, but also casts substantial light on his position within modern Scottish writing. This perspective arises from the discourse of gender politics, and focuses particularly on Kelman's representations of masculine subjectivity.

Though Kelman's politics of representation are oriented above all to class hierarchies, they also have a gendered dimension, underscored by the author in a 1995 interview:

[S]ome of the most important writers in the tradition that I think I am part of have been women. They're the ones that have had to subvert the whole paternalistic male dominated value system which works within literature.<sup>2</sup>

This paper seeks to relate a gendered reading of interiority in Kelman's work to a Scottish literary-political debate we might construct between himself and William McIlvanney. Kelman has often defined his work against a tradition of working-class realism he regards as romantic and sentimental, whose democratic gestures are traduced by narrative techniques which reinforce, at the level of form, the social and linguistic hierarchies they protest against at the level of content. Of course, a number of leftwing critics would counter that Kelman's emphasis on private struggles for autonomy rather than collective struggles for justice endorse a 'bourgeois' conception of the individual irreconcilable with the socialist principles he would claim to share with McIlvanney.<sup>3</sup> Cairns Craig situates Kelman within Scottish working-class fiction in precisely these terms, by contrasting Kelman's faithless monads with the proletarian survivors of McIlvanney's work:

Kelman's depiction is not of a working-class *community* so much as a working class world which has become atomised, fragmented, and in which individuals are isolated from each other [...] however much [Kelman's characters] may look back nostalgically upon a world of

communal solidarity and directed struggle, they know it to be redundant.<sup>4</sup>

The contrasting place of history in these writers' work is illustrative: while McIlvanney's idealism depends upon the hope of political redemption, the working class Kelman portrays is

without a possible salvation through the political or economic transformation of history [...] The crises which Kelman's protagonists face [...] are not resolvable by action and event; they are conditions of suffering which are permanent, reflecting the stasis, both political and social, of the worlds which they inhabit.<sup>5</sup>

The pattern of Kelman's characters' lives is not of struggle, development, liberation, but of stasis, failure and resignation: no 'future' is possible which is not merely a dilation of the present. The masculinity of Kelman's protagonists is accordingly vexed: his men of inaction are stoic but ineffectual; if they are enslaved by objective circumstances, they are unchallenged masters of the interior reality to which they escape, the ideologically 'feminine' space where their moral and intellectual selfhood is most firmly anchored. The place of gender politics in the debate between McIlvanney's social idealism and Kelman's 'defeatism' is here examined by attending closely to the representation of masculinity, and the primacy of individual versus collective values and experience, in two strikingly parallel stories: Kelman's 'Greyhound for Breakfast' (1987), and McIlvanney's 'In the Steps of Spartacus' (1989).

### Gendering Kelman's Literary Politics

Kelman's politics of form centre on what the French philosopher Jacques Rancière would call the 'distribution of sensibility'<sup>6</sup> which allocates to the narrator a disembodied Olympian subjectivity, replete in self-knowledge and in total control of its expressive powers, while the characters it brings to life remain Sartrean 'in-itself' (*en-soi*), opaque objects of the narrative consciousness whose actions are readable only as products of bodily appetites and external forces, and whose speech attests to their own lack of reflexive consciousness. It is worth noting that this disproportion corresponds very closely with the gender mythology Simone de Beauvoir anatomised in *The Second Sex*, which locates the myth of 'Feminine Mystery' in self-obscure, rock-like 'immanence' and masculinity in crystalline self-transparency and 'transcendence'.<sup>7</sup> By this masculine 'snare of false objectivity' (p.290), 'the "true woman" is required to make herself object, to be the Other' (p.291) of the male 'for-itself' (*pour-soi*). Having aligned her self-understanding with an uncomprehending male gaze, the 'true woman' eventually accepts her putative 'mysteriousness' as intrinsic; her self-identity is alienated by a myth of essential and insurmountable *self-mystery*. One of Patrick Doyle's digressions in *A Disaffection* takes precisely this gendered 'objectivation' as its theme:

Listen Julie Stewart, who is it gives names to women or do ye truly believe they give them to themselves and each other because you know full well what I've been telling you all about the naming process and imperialism, colonisation of the subject, obliteration of the subject, you as object, even in your own eyes.<sup>8</sup>

For a number of Kelman's characters, complicity with such structures of dominance – for the male gaze in particular, see 'Pictures' in *The Burn* – makes active political engagement seem futile and naïve. Patrick Doyle is paralysed by the awareness that his own intellectual freedom is beholden to a repressive education system; his fantasies of escape and suicide typify a pattern of 'internal flight' the critic Ben Knights has identified in Kelman's many narratives of men

who find their situation intolerable but for whom there is nowhere else to go. Forced by poverty into the private world of flats or lone wandering, the only place to flee is into an interior world, a virtuoso performance to an audience in the head. The isolated man acts out imaginary roles before an interior audience. The theatre of the typical subject of Kelman's fiction has a tendency to move in a solipsistic direction.<sup>9</sup>

In this retreat into inwardness, Kelman, as Neil McMillan points out, 'locates his characters in ideologically feminine spaces of interiority, passivity and pathos'.<sup>10</sup> But the gender politics of interiority are not so straightforward. As Peter Middleton has pointed out, male self-consciousness can also offer a protective sense of rational self-possession, a refuge from the threats and disorders of the external world, and hence function as a form of 'masculine self-aggrandizement, in which masculine subjectivity [...] inflates itself into sublimity'.<sup>11</sup> Thus the 'inward gaze' as a practice of self-mastery: one which affirms the self-presence of the ego and raises its transparency to the status of 'objective' self-control.<sup>12</sup> Despite the strong propensity of Kelman's characters to live inside their own skulls, they are never permitted these consolations of self-mastery. Instead of affirming the male subject in his control over his own boundaries, Kelman's men are far closer to Knights' 'vulnerable subject-in-process', often tormented by the disorder of their inner worlds, and their *lack* of rational self-discipline.

As Knights observes, *inwardness* is the locus of masculine self-identity, and of escape from social and economic restraints in Kelman's fiction. William McIlvanney's work, by contrast, is closer to the Lukácsian tradition of socialist aesthetics, naturally gravitating toward an 'objective' accounting of a more stable and shared social reality. McIlvanney's elegant, humanistic narrators generally operate at a certain distance from the sphere of his characters, from where their poetic insights and explications gain the authority of 'perspective'. For Lukács,

the great realist writer is alone able to grasp and portray trends and phenomena truthfully in their historical development – 'trends' not so

much in the social and political field, as in that area where human behaviour is moulded and evaluated, where existing types are developed further and new types emerge. Men are changed by forces in their environment. But it is not only the character of individual human beings that changes. [...] Perspective, in this concrete form, is central to our problem. For there is an intimate connection between a writer's ability to create lasting human types (the real criterion of literary achievement) and his allegiance to an ideology which allows of a belief in social development.<sup>13</sup>

McIlvanney's socialist poetics belong to this 'realist' tradition, broadly speaking. A 'Lukácsian' emphasis on typology and perspective clearly shape his representations of masculinity, which have often been criticised for endorsing conservative (or simply outdated) emblems of working-class machismo.<sup>14</sup> Whereas Kelman's self-confined heroes belong firmly in the stream of modernist 'anti-realism' – a 'superficial *verisme*' which uncritically reflects the dissolution of history, objectivity and personality (Lukács, pp.24-28) – the arena of masculinity in McIlvanney's work is located very firmly outside the self, in the public sphere where historical forces can be made visible. It is here that an active, engaged masculinity can be 'enacted' and performed, and – as importantly – socially recognised, verified and positioned vis-à-vis the 'tradition' that underpins communal values. Textually speaking, this stable 'objective' sphere is *produced* and ordered by a notably 'masculine' narratorial consciousness.

### Walking Wounded

McIlvanney's *Walking Wounded* (1989) is an elegiac damage assessment of working-class life in west-central Scotland. The collection's linked stories are preoccupied with unfulfilled dreams, both private and collective, and plaintive in their affection for fading patterns of community. The traditional rituals and values of working-class masculinity are especially prominent, and McIlvanney finds dignity and quiet heroism in the predicaments of men struggling to recover their self-worth in conditions of economic and social destruction. The collection strongly characterises masculinity as a performance, and links the failure of men to successfully enact their traditional roles with the decline of industry and collective life in 'Graithnock', the fictionalised Kilmarnock of *Docherty*. The impossibility of 'real' masculinity under such conditions is made clear in 'Performance', as the small-time criminal 'Fast' Frankie White offers his withering estimation of a socialist bar-room intellectual – a cipher of the author? – who appears in several stories in the collection:

Gus McPhater depressed him. People listened to him as if the noises he made with his mouth meant something. He was a balloon. [...]

Gus seemed to Frankie an appropriate patron saint for Graithnock. He was like the town itself – over the hill and sitting in dark pubs inventing the past. Frankie could remember this place when the industry

was still going strong. There had been some vigour about the place then. They were all losers now – phoneys, like Gus McPhater.<sup>15</sup>

Without the proper economic script, it seems impossible to 'realise' the role of manliness with any hope of success. But Frankie sees himself as the exception, and is determined to assert his own freedom from the determinations of history:

Frankie couldn't believe this place. The only kind of spirit in it was bottled. He felt like an orchid in a cabbage-patch. Where was the old style, the old working-class gallousness? Since the Tory government had come to power, it had really done a job on them, slaughtering all the major industry. They believed they were as useless as the government had told them they were. [...] Well, he was different. If the system was trying to screw him, he would screw it. [...] That was what you had to do: defy your circumstances. You were what you declared yourself to be. (*WW* pp.28-29)

Frankie's humble act of self-invention is to spontaneously and ostentatiously buy a round of drinks for Gus McPhater and his table ('He pulled his money from his pocket. In the flourish of the gesture he became a successful criminal' (*WW* p.29)). But once he has left the bar, the 'stage' of communal life on which masculinity is acted and spectated, the hollowness of this exhibition becomes clear: 'He side-stepped into a shop doorway and checked his wad of money. He had three fivers left and he repositioned them carefully to make sure they were concealing the packing of toilet paper inside that made them look like a hundred' (*WW* p.30). Gus McPhater, a man of all words and no action, may be a 'phony', but the premeditation of Frank's 'performance' makes him something worse: a man in denial of the objective economic facts, spinning fantasies of self-mastery. The gratuitous act which should have offered him a frisson of authentic self-authorship is made to ring false here, by a domineering authorial discourse whose determinations he can never evade. With the detail of the fake 'props', Frankie's cod-existentialist rebellion is reduced to a shabby fabrication, an almost shameful *simulation* of masculine self-transcendence, whereas the measured and self-possessed narrative voice seems to embody an ideal masculine sensibility which knows how to face facts without becoming callous, or falling into bad faith.

The conclusion of 'Performance' brings us close to the resigned pathos of Kelman's hopeless gamblers and doomed itinerants, but *Walking Wounded* is importantly different from Kelman's rendering of post-industrial masculinity. McIlvanney locates masculinity in traditional patterns of collective life, rather than in private revolts from the socially normative, and stages its performance in the concrete, objective social world realised by his poetic God-narrators, rather than within the fraught echo-chamber of masculine subjectivity. Most criticism of McIlvanney's gender politics takes issue with his seeming glorification of symbolic male violence, in novels such as *The Big Man* and *Docherty*.

In *Walking Wounded*, violence (and the threat of violence) are seen to underwrite the stability and authority of the fixed system of social relations by which masculinity is defined. The rules of pub etiquette are ferociously enforced in 'At the bar'.<sup>16</sup> A brash local man drinks the beer of the outsider protagonist while he is visiting the toilet, and admits it without apology in an attempt at macho provocation. Rather than reacting, 'the big man' capitulates, and graciously buys another drink for the admitted thief in order to defuse the situation: "Oh, look," he said. "What does it matter? Ah can afford another one. Forget it." (WW p.80). But it is made clear that more than beer is at stake in this scenario ('The barman felt as if he was pouring out the big man's blood' (WW p.80)), and as the provocateur accepts the pint of beer, his challenge to the big man's honour is revenged with the spectacular brutality of a Hollywood action sequence, complete with stylish exit:

'Cheers,' he said to the big man, smiling at him. 'Your good health. You obviously value it.'

He hadn't managed his first mouthful before the side of the big man's clenched right hand had hit the base of the glass like a demolition-ball. There was a splintered scream among the shards of exploding glass and the volleying beer.

Not unused to fast violence, the barman was stunned. The big man picked up his paper. He laid the price of a pint on the counter and nodded to the barman.

'If he's lookin' for me,' he said, 'the name's Rafferty. Cheerio. Nice shop you run.' (WW p.80)

That the archetypic 'big man' acquires a specific identity through this act points to the self-defining existential masculinism McIlvanney and Kelman to some extent share. But the more basic meaning of this violence, the big man's refusal to trade self-respect for a quiet life, is sealed as the barman informs the bleeding victim that he, rather than the big man, is barred from the pub.

In 'How many miles to Babylon?', too, a potentially violent confrontation between two fellow workers on a building site, one of whom has risked the other's life in a childish prank, is averted by their foreman's swift act of retribution:

'Wait a minute, Benny,' Tank said and, spinning on his heel, hit Matt O'Neill on the jaw with a hand clenched into a club.

Matt sprawled among a pile of stone chips as if he was going to drown in them. He surfaced and spat a couple of chips. Tank had turned to Benny.

'Ah'm site foreman, Benny,' he said. 'It was ma instruction Matt ignored. So it's ma responsibility. And it's finished. Okay?' (WW p.23)

This wallop not only achieves justice for the wronged man, while re-affirming the authority of the site foreman, it produces a strange sort of male solidarity among the workers: 'The crisis shared and averted developed a temporary camaraderie among them, like a small war survived with no serious casualties' (WW p.23). They repair to the pub to celebrate. In *Walking Wounded* masculinity implies action – even consciously aesthetic, performative action – in the sphere of collective life, and especially action in defence of the social conditions of male fraternity and social respect.

One story in the collection demands special attention. 'In the Steps of Spartacus' makes a powerful connection between Scottish maleness and the broken hope of egalitarianism. In the latter part of the discussion that follows, I will read this story as McIlvanney, the more established writer, *contesting* Kelman's vision of post-industrial working-class masculinity.

### 'Greyhound for Breakfast'

It is difficult to avoid reading 'In the Steps of Spartacus' as a response to 'Greyhound for Breakfast', an earlier Kelman story with an almost identical premise, cast of characters, and moral problematic. This story contains all the key elements of Kelman's portrayal of working-class masculinity, and will repay extended analysis when we come to compare it to McIlvanney's story. 'Greyhound for Breakfast', in Kelman's 1987 collection of the same title, is the story of Ronnie, an unemployed Glaswegian, and his doomed attempt to reinvent himself as a dog-racing man. The story begins with Ronnie entering his local pub with the greyhound he has just bought. His friends are bemused by his plans to race the dog, which aggravates Ronnie's own self-doubt and leads to a tense and hostile atmosphere. The friends later attempt to show interest in Ronnie's plan by asking a number of less critical questions about his plans for keeping and training the animal. The symbolism of the greyhound becomes clear in Ronnie's guarded and eventually angry response:

Heh Ronnie, said McInnes. Where you going to keep it?

Ronnie wrapped the leash round his hand and he nodded slightly, lifted the box of matches.

No in the house? grinned Tam McColl.

There was a silence.

You're fucking mad!

Whereabouts in the house? asked Jimmy Peters.

Ronnie struck the match and tilted his head while getting the roll-up burning; he exhaled smoke: The boy's room, he said. Just meantime. He's no here the now. He's away with a couple of his mates. Down to London... He sniffed and dragged on the dowp again. [...]

Both McInnes and McColl and now Jimmy Peters were looking at him. Ronnie said, In the name of fuck! What you's looking at!

Aye, well, muttered McInnes, Your boy's fucked off to England and you've went out and bought a dog.

What?

There was no further comment. Ronnie shook his head and added, For fuck sake I've been wanting to buy a dog for years.

Aye, well it's a wee bit funny how it's only the now you've managed it.

What?

Your boy goes off to England and you go out and buy a dog ... McInnes stared at Ronnie.<sup>17</sup>

Ronnie leaves the pub incensed, and much of the remainder of the story finds him alone, wandering the streets and parks of Glasgow reflecting on his dream and gradually coming to accept his friends' view of it as a childish fantasy. The dog's symbolism shifts from the lost comradeship of the son to the virility and masculine poise unavailable to Ronnie himself:

Now standing squarely, like a middleweight boxer; and its long thin tail curling down to between its hind legs. So placid. It was strange. Sometimes when you saw them at the track – especially after the race – they were fierce, really fierce; going for each other, fangs bared inside the wire muzzles. Even just now, seeing its shoulders and that barrel chest, the power there, so palpable, the power, it could have stepped right out the fucking jungle. (GB p.216)

The dog at first holds out the promise of fulfilment, prosperity and self-assertion; but before it has even raced the greyhound is transformed into damning evidence of Ronnie's own weakness and failure. He realises he will be completely unable to explain the dog, and its extravagant cost, to his wife:

What did he actually go and buy it for? Stupid. That would be her first question too and he couldn't fucking answer it, her first fucking question, he wouldn't be able to answer it, he wouldn't be able to give a straight answer to it. Thirty-five years of age, soon to be thirty-six, married for nearly nineteen years, a son of eighteen – a fucking granpa he could be. (GB p.219)

The dog is a substitute for the absent son, but also signifies the childishness of the father. The son is eighteen years of age, on the cusp of manhood, but the fact that 'Ronnie had been his father at that age' (p.229), and is still indulging in the fantasy of becoming a 'doggie man' an entire boyhood later, suggests a failure to accept adult realities. In this respect Ronnie anticipates the protagonist of 'It happened to me once' in *The Good Times*, who in the midst of a similarly juvenile crisis thinks to himself 'what age are ye now? How far have ye fucking got!'<sup>18</sup>

The impossibility of learning from experience is linked to another familiar theme in Kelman's work: the total hopelessness of men making 'progress' in the realisation of their fantasies. In a suggestive scene from *A Disaffection*, the

idea of spontaneous and wholesale self-reinvention is identified as an explicitly male delusion by a female member of Patrick Doyle's class. The discussion follows from Patrick's contemplation of the obverse male nightmare, of total domination and captivity in the world of work, which reduces the man to the status of 'immanence' – passive inertness – as against the possibility of self-surpassing 'transcendence'. This image of self-entrapment resonates with the teacher's own predicament:

Okay females... Pat said: A mate of my da's who used to work in a carfactory down in Linwood before they got done in by the capitalists, he worked on the assemblyline and his job was to grease the insides of the doorpanels. And the poor fucker had this recurring nightmarish fantasy, that he would get wedged inside one of them – one of the doorpanels, and then he would get sealed in and flattened by the heavyduty punchgun process with his mouth twisted so unnaturally and badly awry that he wouldn't be able to shout for help. Okay. Then one day he fucking disappeared. It was teabreak. The guys didn't know where he had got to. He was never fucking seen again [...] But him and his missus had been having some difficult quarrels at the time so when he didn't reappear she just put it down to that, the quarrels, that he had just fucked off to start a new life in England or something. Instead of which he had got squashed.

That's sickening, said Sheila Ramsay.

[...]

Sheila Ramsay: what is 'a new life'?

Well done, said Patrick. Negation! [...]

[Sheila] said: I just don't accept 'new lives'. To me it's a sign of floundering around. I think it's not something to ever be proud of. I can't conceive of a person who can think of it.

Would it usually always be a man? said Ingrid Jones.

A male to answer! called Sheila; she returned the bag to Evelyn Reilly.

Silence.

Patrick! called Sheila.

He cleared his throat before replying: I would never think of 'a new life'.<sup>19</sup>

This haunting figure of the worker trapped inside the car door is close to Ronnie's 'nutshell' subjectivity. (That his disappearance is thought to be explained by domestic troubles is also suggestive.) Throughout Kelman's work, efforts to escape the 'objective' imprisonment of work often lead to self-entrapment in a bunker of interiority, constructed to defend against the depredations of the job (a pattern seen most clearly in *The Busconductor Hines*). But Ronnie is out of work, and has no prospect of getting any. His failures are traced back to purely internal causes, which makes the fantasy of self-emancipation all the more urgent, and more tragic. As he wanders the parks and public places of Glasgow, Ronnie realises that he doesn't know the first thing about dogs, and

has no idea how to race the aged greyhound, anymore than he knows how to show his son the way to succeed where he has failed. He returns to the pub later in the evening, and is reconciled with two of his friends, despite a tense moment in which one warns him to 'screw the fucking nut cause the way it's going you're going to wind up bad news, bad news' (GB p.221). Ronnie rebuffs this paternalistic advice by boasting that he has at least had the courage to gamble on his dream, which he knows several of his friends share ('I mean I've got to laugh at yous cunts. All talk. All fucking talk.' (GB p.222)). But he soon becomes resigned to its childish impossibility. He leaves the pub in a state of despair, eager to escape the company of his friends but unable to face his wife and daughters. Instead he withdraws into a literary mode of subjectivity powerfully associated with a disrupted paternal legacy:

He wasn't going to go home just now, definitely not. He wasn't feeling right for it. That was it in a nutshell. What was that thing about Hamlet? Like a king. Something. Ronnie just felt fucking, he felt lousy. (GB pp.224-25)

If 'bad dreams' spoil Hamlet's dominion over an infinite inner space<sup>20</sup>, Ronnie's is marred by a gnawing awareness of his own family responsibilities. In the final section of the story he retreats deeper into this interiority, by way of evading the domestic sphere and its obligations ('He couldn't face them, the wife and weans, that was it, in a fucking nutshell' (GB p.225); 'he'd let them all down, the whole lot, the lassies and Babs and the boy' (GB p.226)). Physically and emotionally isolated, he contemplates suicide as he walks by the Clydeside docks, once a hive of industrial activity, and the mythic cradle of Scottish socialism, but in the narrative present a haunted and toxic backwater. The defensive bunker of Ronnie's subjectivity, like Hamlet's, soon proves less lucid than he would hope, and he too hears the voice of 'an apparition [...] a fucking ghost!' shouting out to him, in a voice originating 'from inside the head' (GB p.229). This threat to his psychic self-mastery is linked to the river's temporal symbolism. As he looks into the waters of the Clyde Ronnie 'minded well as a boy when he used to hang over the side and see if he could see any fish, and he couldn't see anything it was so cloudy, so fucking mawkit' (GB p.227). The lasting opacity of the river reflects his own troubled relation with the past, and his inability to emplot himself in a narrative of progress, the conventional symbolism of the river (as, for example, in *Waverley*: 'like those who drift down the stream of a deep and smooth river, we are not aware of the progress we have made until we fix our eye on the now distant point from which we set out'<sup>21</sup>). It is clear that Ronnie has made no such progress: the 'cloudy' river water seems more naturally to belong to the stagnant pond where he sees two young boys playing earlier in the story (GB p.214). The river evokes memories of his own boyhood, but cannot provide any clear indication of Ronnie's change or development.<sup>22</sup>

In these surroundings the greyhound's symbolism, too, grows more powerful and complex:

And there was the big dog! So fucking placid. That was it about these animals, how placid they were and then when you see them at the track they're so fucking fierce, so fierce looking; fangs bared and fucking drooling, drooling at the mouth and ready to fucking – bite, kill, kill the hare except its [*sic*] a bundle of stupid fucking rags. Imagine being as easy conned as that! Letting yourself get lulled into it, racing round and round and fucking round just to catch this stupid fucking bundle of rags. It made you feel sorry for it. Dogs and all the rest of the animals. And people of course, they were no different – they seemed different but they weren't; they seemed as if they were different but they weren't; they really fucking weren't, they just thought they were, it made you smile. Because there they were, running round and round trying to fucking catch it, a crock of gold, and did they ever catch it, did they fuck. The boy was like that, off to London; and what would happen to him, fuck all, nothing. He would just wind up getting a job somewhere and it would be fucking awful, and maybe he would just stay in London or else he'd come back. And if he stayed in London that'd be that and he probably'd hardly ever see them again. It was fucking strange. And Ronnie actually felt like doing himself in. (GB pp.225-26)

The pointless chasing of the dog and the son resonates with Ronnie's own memory of senselessly 'racing' his fellow commuters en route to a factory job of 'terrible monotony', an image which evokes a form of ambiguously 'shared' experience where even the sense of comradely competition is strictly private, potentially isolating:

The good bit about it was the race, every cunt racing each other but kidding on they were just walking fast. Maybe they were walking fast. Maybe he was the only person racing. Not at all. Everybody was at it ... (GB p.227)

To cement the association, Ronnie has earlier described his son's need 'to move fast' in order to get the London job even as he boasts of the speed of the dog (GB pp.210, 212). The dog is the son, who will turn out the same as Ronnie: led into futile and meaningless work, or 'conned' into the pursuit of laughable illusions

### The Inner Gaze

The shame of this failure is compounded by its conscious acknowledgement. Ronnie's deepening inwardness offers a comforting sense of reflexive self-possession, but does not fend off the problems of the external world. The 'inner gaze' of masculine self-consciousness is double-edged: it operates not only as a practice of self-mastery, affirming the self-presence of the transparent ego. When this reflexive gaze perceives incompleteness, or lack in the self, it is forced

to acknowledge its own subjectivity, and hence the possibility of misperception. Recognising the deficiency of the inner self constitutively undermines the lucidity of the inner gaze by which it is perceived. The aggrandising 'objectivity' of the inward gaze (which 'inflates [masculine subjectivity] into sublimity'<sup>23</sup>) is reduced to the articulation of self-as-lack, pathos, and a surrender to the very determinations outside the self which the 'inner gaze' was meant to guard against. It now deforms rather than idealises self-understanding. Unable any longer to entertain the fantasy of himself as 'sovereign' and self-transparent, because of his so evident limitations and self-deceptions, Ronnie despairs, and projects his self-loathing onto the boyishly silly 'racing names' he imagines giving the dog ('*Shitey*', *Keech*' (pp. 227, 228)). These abasements do not stick. Unlike Ronnie, the dog's lack of self-mastery is not its own responsibility ('getting led by [Ronnie] and not knowing where in the name of fuck it's going. Stupid' (GB p. 226)); it is an effect of power relations external to the self: 'And the fucking power, letting itself get led' (GB p. 226). If the dog, symbolising the crippled autonomy of Ronnie and his son, is here enacting their shared emasculation, it is only in the terms of extrinsic forces. A more thorough humiliation – but elsewhere in Kelman's work, a genuine humility – is triggered by men's self-consciousness of the futility and slavishness of striving after idealised masculine roles, such as that of the leisured/professional 'doggie man'.

Ronnie's deformed masculinity is defined by femininity in a circular way. His weakness is both blamed on his wife ('maybe she should just have kept her mouth shut, if she had kept her mouth shut and let him fucking get on with it [quitting smoking]') and accommodated by her: 'Babs would just – she wouldnt bother, she would be okay' (GB pp. 215, 224). As the story reaches its close, we realise that it is the women in Ronnie's life who will bear the burden of his latest failure; his daughters will be left to care for the dog (GB p. 218) while his wife will now worry not only about their absent son, but also her useless and deluded husband. Ronnie is both feminised and infantilised by this realisation:

She would maybe be worrying about him now. Would she? Aye, she would be, she would be worrying about him because he hadnt phoned. Fuck sake, of course she would; what was the fucking point of fucking, trying to fucking keep it away, of course she'd be fucking worrying about him. On top of the boy; on top of the boy she would now be worrying about him. And the lassies, they'd know something was up because they'd see the way she was looking; if they were watching the telly, they'd see she wasnt really seeing what was on, her attention would be fucking, it would be nowhere near it. (GB pp. 229-30)

His emasculation is complete in the final lines of the story, which suggests a total resignation from male responsibility: 'He would just tell Babs something or other, what the fuck he didnt know, it didnt fucking matter; what did it matter; it didn't fucking matter' (GB p. 230). This resignation very firmly locates him – with many other Kelman men, as Neil McMillan has pointed out –

in 'ideologically feminine spaces'<sup>24</sup>, at some distance from the reality of history and economic life.

Ronnie's *emasculation* is linked to his withdrawal from collective life and social space, in favour of a deepening and self-enclosing interiority (compare the big man in 'At the bar': 'He retreated inside himself', *WW*, p. 78). This lonely and deeply private masculinity is extruded from the social relationships – father, husband, friend – which make it meaningful, and so withers to a state of fragility in which Ronnie is unable either to sustain fantasies of self-transcendence or to endure level-headed self-examination. The masculine inner gaze deforms what it perceives, and destroys its own clear-sightedness. A tableaux from Ronnie's wanderings stands as a symbolic realisation of these anxieties. Ronnie sees two young boys, a 'pair of bloody eedjits', fooling about on a paddle boat:

But there were stacks of broken glass at the bottom of the pond, that was what they failed to realize. It wasnt just him being totally out of order and losing his temper with them. If one of them fell in he could really hurt himself, he could cut himself quite badly, that was what happened, something fucking silly, turning into something serious. (GB p. 214)

The purchase of the dog is one such silly-serious affair, which unexpectedly reveals a crippling and unavoidable sense of Ronnie's inadequacy. As with the pond, so with his 'inner gaze': a hidden, fragmentary menace lies beneath the surface clarity.

### 'In the Steps of Spartacus'

In what I will read as McIlvanney's response to 'Greyhound for Breakfast', the role of Ronnie is played by Fin Barclay, who is strongly characterised as a member of a male fraternity, centred on the local pub, rather than as an isolated individual. The story begins with a framing narrative establishing as a focaliser Benny Mullen, the local dog 'expert' whom Fin consults on first bringing his greyhound to the pub, and another member of the ensemble who eventually race the dog after taking collective ownership of it. Later in the story, Benny will play the role of appraising the greyhound and then challenging the honour of the man who sold it to Fin, so it is appropriate that his introductory narrative sets up a particular relationship between masculinity and dogs. Benny's own habit of 'developing' dogs has an internal cause, and is explicitly linked to disruptions in his emotional life:

Benny Mullen had dogs. It wasn't that he deliberately kept dogs or bought them or reared them. They were a periodic manifestation in his life, like acne in teenagers. Every so often he developed a dog.

Perhaps the condition wasn't unrelated to the fact that he had become a widower in his early thirties. His wife, Noreen, had encouraged him to acknowledge the helpless compassion that was

hidden at the centre of his nature and he still felt it, like internal lesions. Maybe dogs could sniff it out. He certainly couldn't explain their affinity for him. (WW p.81)

Whereas the dog in Kelman's story symbolised a complex series of masculine identifications, McIlvanney's dogs are immediately characterised as substitutes for an absent 'female' appreciation of men's emotional needs. (The dog's name, 'Bisto', underscores its status as a convenient stand-in.) It is as though the presence of women and dogs 'triggers' this hidden faculty for empathy by providing an outlet for it external to the self, so bringing it to men's empirical awareness. When men are alone, this sensitivity can only be felt, not understood, and is perceived as a painful vulnerability. Benny's 'helpless compassion' firmly connects this feminised sphere of affective life with a blind-spot in the 'inner gaze', and a lack of masculine self-mastery. Benny encounters his latest dog in hyper-masculine circumstances:

One night when he came out of the pictures feeling particularly aggressive (it had been a Clint Eastwood film), he got on a bus with the one-dimensional purpose of coming home. But by the time he stepped off the bus, he realised he had a dog. He thought maybe it had been waiting in the darkness near the bus-stop. The first time he had been aware of it was when it was padding unconcernedly beside him. He stopped. It stopped. He walked on. It walked on. It might have been trained to obey him. (WW p.81)

Benny's aggression has disappeared, and the hard edges of his lonely, purposeful, unselfconscious manhood are softening to domestic habituation. Immediately, the dog is established as a feminising anchor in the emotional sphere, which brings a vital balance to men's sensibilities in the absence of female companionship. If the dog in Kelman's story was a vehicle for the protagonist's masculine identifications, rendered through a deeply 'subjectivised' mode of ongoing self-analysis, the dog in McIlvanney's story represents emotions and relationships outside the self, which draw the protagonist into forms of collective experience in which his masculinity can be enacted and affirmed.

Benny's almost organic 'development' of the dog seems based on some invisible emotional bond. By contrast, Ronnie buys his dog strictly as a calculated investment, regards it as a means to an end, and explicitly disavows its value as a companion or pet:

[Jimmy Peters] said to Ronnie, Aye it's a pally big animal.

Ronnie nodded. Then he noticed Kelly's facial expression and he frowned. Naw, replied Kelly, grinning. I was just thinking there – somebody asking what its form was: oh it's pally! a pally big dog! Fuck speed but it likes getting petted!

That's a good joke, said Ronnie.

The other four laughed.

Ronnie nodded. On you go, he said, nothing like a good fucking joke. [...] The others were grinning at him. Fuck you! he said and reached for the leash.

(GB p.208)

Both Ronnie and Fin Barelay are ridiculed when they first introduce their new greyhounds to their drinking companions. In each story a sceptical assessment of the dog's physical prowess leads to a derisive appraisal of its worth. But in 'In the Steps of Spartacus' McIlvanney's character defends his new acquisition in precisely the terms that Ronnie disowns:

Benny Mullen rose solemnly and walked round Bisto [...] felt its haunches and pursed his lips. He made a couple of mystic passes down its forelegs. He stood up straight and stared at it. Fin was silent, awaiting the decision.

'You was robbed,' Benny said.

'I like it,' Fin said, 'I like it,' repetitively buffing up his dream of owning a greyhound. Benny's breath was clouding it. (WW p.83)

Here it is brutal realism which 'clouds' a consciously sentimental vision, rather than a childish fantasy deluding Ronnie's essentially rational self-image. Fin's insistent fondness for the dog discounts his friends' callously instrumental estimations, and reasserts the dog's worth in the sphere of affective life.

This shift from the head to the heart typifies McIlvanney's wider project of rehabilitating a social idealism grounded in the 'humanly experientable'.<sup>25</sup> In *Surviving the Shipwreck*, his collection of essays on 'the loss of belief in our ability significantly to reconstruct society towards a more justly shared community of living', he celebrates a distinctive 'cultural style' characterised by the 'fusion of intellect and passion': 'the Scottish tradition, it seems to me, has always insisted that thought and feeling are happy only as a married couple. They should never be divorced' (*SSH* pp. 11-13). 'In the Steps of Spartacus', and indeed *Walking Wounded* as a whole, reasserts the relevance of this tradition for a more hopeful narrative of socialist aspiration. McIlvanney's robust defence of that tradition could almost be read as a criticism of Kelman's pessimistic subjectivism:

The Scottish tradition, I believe, has long distrusted the concept for its own sake. I share that distrust. To follow the seductive logic of ideas in separation from the constantly re-earned reality of our daily, individual experience can lead the most powerful of minds into determinedly held positions that are humanly uninhabitable.

(*SSH*, p.14)

Kelman, in the last analysis, is also a humanist, and his genius for dramatising such 'uninhabitable' mental predicaments – which register in his work as concrete *experiences*, howsoever rooted in 'concepts' – are central to his



achievement as an artist. McIlvanney's cultural activism, on the other hand, and his determination to recover (or 'buff up') dreams of individual and cultural self-transformation, politically require a different, idealised emphasis on collective life and solidarity. And so we find in 'In the Steps of Spartacus', as the collective denigration of 'Bisto' quickly turns into a collective resolution to defend Fin from his own vulnerabilities:

'If ye got that dog for nothin', Benny said, 'ye should ask for yer money back. You was robbed.'

The dog had started to attract the attention of others in the bar. [...]

'No dogs allowed in the bar, Fin,' [the barman] said. 'But you're in the clear wi' that.'

There was general laughter. Gus and Benny looked at each other. Kind people called Fin naïve. Unkind people didn't. But he was their friend. Something would have to be done. (WW p.83)

The value of the dog is that it provides an outlet for male compassion, and almost by extension, a platform for establishing communal bonds. What follows firmly connects this collective self-defence with paternalistic authority, guaranteed once again by the threat of violence. It is decided that Benny and Fin will confront the seller of 'Bisto', Davie Brunton, and demand Fin's money back. The two men are warmly received by Davie's wife, Betty, and wait for Davie to return from work. There is a neat division between the separate spheres of men and women in this countriest and most 'decent' of traditional working-class homes:

'With ye in a minute, boys,' he said. 'Just gi'e the face a wash.' He went through to the kitchen. 'Something good the night, Betty?'

'It's yer steak and sausage.'

'Ah married a wee genius.'

He came back through, stripped to his vest and towelling himself.

'Well boys, what can Ah do ye for? You're no havin' problems with the animal, are ye, son?'

'Ah think the problem's yours, sir' Benny said.

Davie Brunton's eyes widened. He thoughtfully finished drying his arms and his hands. He threw the towel on a chair.

'Come again,' he said.

'It's just like this,' Benny said. 'You will give that boy his money back or you will have to perform.'

Davie Brunton nodded.

'Uh-huh,' he said. He crossed the living-room and closed the door.

'Well, we'll just perform right now. On yer feet.'

Benny seemed to have forgotten his script. He saw the instant ignition into anger in the small man's eyes. He noticed the ominous bulge of his biceps. He looked at his wife. She was laying the table.

'Now wait a minute, sir', Benny said. 'Let's not be hasty here. We're here to talk.'

'Naw,' Dave Brunton said. 'You're here tae listen. Get your fat arse out that chair or shut your mouth.'

'Davie!'

'Ah'm all right, Betty. You come into a man's house an' threaten 'im? Are you a Martian? Silence. I'll tell you when to leave.'

He turned to Fin.

'Ah'm sorry, Mr Brunton -'

'Not your problem, son. Ah know what happened here. Ah was weaned onto solids quite a while ago. You happy wi' the dog, son?'

'Definitely.'

'Then you keep the dog.' (WW pp.85-86)

The end of the scene is a contrived vindication of the more 'human' connection between Fin and the dog which Davie recognises and shares, and whose warmth and naturalness chime with his and Betty's traditional gender roles. (Even the sale of the dog is redeemed from materialism when Fin's money is refunded.) But it is the authenticity of Davie's masculinity which is more pungently and intriguingly rendered here. His implicit understanding of the situation and prompt, unruffled refusal to be intimidated are sharply distinguished from Benny's stilted and artificial challenge, and his mealy-mouthed retreat into 'talk' when it is unexpectedly taken up. In explicitly referring to masculine self-assertion as a performance, and then finding himself without a 'script' of physical courage with which to execute the role, Benny Mullen follows Frankie White in his exposure as a 'phony'. Davie Brunton is unmistakably a 'real man', and his example forcefully shows that masculinity is meaningless as a mere 'act', or as an inward conviction of one's virtue; like all abstractions, these ideas must be authenticated by concrete experience, and tested against other, competing masculinities if they are to be affirmed in the sphere of collective life.

This is the sphere that really matters. As the action of the story draws to its conclusion, the dog is rapidly tested, trained and registered to race by Fin, Gus, Benny and other recurring characters from the local pub. The story's title is finally explained in the leadenly authorial scene in which the dog is renamed (by Gus McPhater, naturally) and symbolically 'collectivised':

'Ah like Bisto,' Fin said.

'Ah quite like Bisto as a flavourin' for ma mince as well, Fin. But it's not a name for our dog.'

Fin was delighted by the use of 'our'.

'This isn't just a dog, ye see. It's a wee chariot of dreams. When it runs at Thornbank, it'll be carryin' the hope of a better future for all of us. It needs a name that fits it.'

The moment had become the ceremony of the naming of the dog.

[...]

'Spartacus,' [Gus] said. 'The hero of the working man.'

The other two said nothing.

'Trust me, boys,' Gus said. 'It's Spartacus.' (WW p.88)

Needless to say, the climax of the story finds Spartacus hurtling round the track in a race the men have laid heavy bets on:

As he came round the last bend into the home straight, the other dogs were a diminishing cloud behind him.

Five mouths were screaming triumph that suddenly stuck in their throats. For Spartacus, approaching them, slowed to a lollipop. They realised with horror that he was looking for a face in the crowd. While the other dogs swept past him in a knot of confused endeavour, Spartacus put his paws on the fence and barked happily into Fin's face, waiting for appreciation of how well he had done. (WW p.89)

The dog's earlier rootedness in the feminine, emotional sphere is his Achilles heel, and by extension that of the men who invested in it their own hopes of self-transcendence. Spartacus fails because he feels too much. The final scene of the story links the dog and his namesake with a 'Scottish' affinity for glorious failures, and underscores the danger to masculinity of home and its comforts:

'Ah got the name wrong,' Gus said.

'How's that?' Benny said.

'Spartacus. Know what he did, Benny? He led a rebellion that brought Rome to its knees. Then when he had the city at his mercy, he turned back and went to Sicily. His home, like. They killed him there. It was the wrong name.' (WW p.89)

But that the dog loses the race seems finally unimportant; it has occasioned a powerful male solidarity by activating a dormant capacity for compassion normally known only to the women in these men's lives. 'Spartacus' has brought the men outside themselves and banded them together in the sphere of collective endeavour, safely distanced from the dangers of inwardness and excessive subjectivity which afflicted Ronnie. As the story ends it is left to the imperiously poetic narrator, who is assured and clear-sighted enough to navigate the dangerous territory of reflection and self-consciousness, to capture the consolations of a male fraternity which makes any failure seem bearable:

They had all finished eating the cheese sandwiches Benny had brought with him and finished drinking Gus's flask-tea. Gus and Benny were lying in bright sunshine in the hilly part of a field while below them Fin was playing with Spartacus, the homing greyhound. In the happy plenitude of such moments a burp can taste of profundity and maybe mayflies hallucinate eternity. (WW p.89)

### Conclusions

'In the Steps of Spartacus' and 'Greyhound for Breakfast' present two opposing visions of post-industrial manliness: one 'objective', centred on collective life and its consolations, and strongly narratorial; the other deeply inward,

profoundly particularised, and historically pessimistic. We also see in these stories two opposed accounts of how masculine subjectivity relates to the objective world. Despite McIlvanney's emphasis on earning the right to ideas through experience, his narrative subject is well above the battle, distanced from the texture of life, and in total command of its own perceptive and expressive powers. There is a clear and stable distance between this narrative voice and the world of objects it produces. In Kelman's story, there is almost no aesthetic distance between the third-person narrator's 'inner speech' about the outside world and that world itself; we are forced to *experience* the dramatic contortions of moment-to-moment consciousness by hearing the narrator's voice as subsidiary to the character's perceptions. In the latter case a form of intellectual *self*-experience is dramatised, in the territory of Middleton's 'inner gaze', where masculine self-consciousness operates as a form of defensive and deforming 'self-mastery'.

By contrast, McIlvanney's perceptive, controlling narrative discourse can only regard the social world as a stable set of object relations by assuming *a priori* the lucidity and completeness of its own narrative subject ('Trust me, boys'), realised above all in its imperious command of language, and its readiness to express the thoughts of its characters *for* them. Kelman's 'leakier' narrative subjects exercise less control over their own boundaries, and carry with them a disabling awareness of the limits of their mental life, but convey a more fully particularised mode of male subjectivity. Despite his emphasis on 'earning' ideas, it is McIlvanney's 'objective' narrator who retreats into abstractions which falsify experience ('a burp can taste of profundity'), and who traduces self-commanding characters' sovereignty by at times reducing them to puppets of a rhetorically accomplished God-narrator. McIlvanney speaks to a discourse of shared values and political goals, but does so from a position, judged in narrative terms, which is anti-democratic. The limiting 'masculinity' of his objective socialist aesthetic is illuminated by comparison with Kelman's technique, which affords his male narrators a freedom over their inner lives they cannot exercise in the sphere of history and political struggle. Jeremy Idle has observed that McIlvanney's level-headed, clear-sighted men 'are more suited to backgrounds of historical change, as they are closer to reality' than women.<sup>26</sup> In Kelman's work, this sturdy 'reality' – economic and social – is precisely the empirical condition male characters struggle to escape, in elation and despair.

### Notes

1. Laura Cumming, 'Blind Justice', *Guardian*, 22 March 1994, G2, pp.12-13.
2. James Kelman, 'K is for Culture' in *Scottish Trade Union Review*, 68 (Jan/Feb 1995), 24-29 (p.26). Gertrude Stein, Katherine Anne Porter, Tillie Olsen and Kathy Acker are among the women writers Kelman has cited as influences. (This preponderance of American names bears out Kelman's more general and well-documented malaise with British 'high' literary culture.)
3. See Willy Maley, both 'Swearing Blind: Kelman and the Curse of the Working

- Classes', *Edinburgh Review*, 95 (1996), 105-112, and 'Denizens, Citizens, Tourists, and Others: Marginality and Mobility in the Writings of James Kelman and Irvine Welsh' in *City Visions*, ed. by David Bell and Azzedine Haddou (Harlow: Longman, 2000), pp.60-72, and Lee Spinks, 'In Juxtaposition to Which: Narrative, System and Subjectivity in the Fiction of James Kelman', *Edinburgh Review*, 108 (2001), 85-105.
4. Cairns Craig, 'Resisting Arrest: James Kelman' in *The Scottish Novel Since the Seventies: New Visions, Old Dreams*, ed. by Gavin Wallace and Randall Stevenson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), pp.99-114 (p.101).
  5. *Ibid.*, pp.101, 104.
  6. 'This apportionment of parts and positions is based on a distribution of spaces, times, and forms of activity that determines the very manner in which something in common lends itself to participation and in what ways various individuals have a part in this distribution [...] There is thus an 'aesthetics' at the core of politics [...] it is a delimitation of spaces and times, of the visible and the invisible, of speech and noise, that simultaneously determines the place and the stakes of politics as a form of experience.' Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, trans. Gabriel Rockhill (London: Continuum, 2004), pp.12-13.
  7. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. and ed. by H.M Parsley (1949; London: Vintage, 1997), pp.282-92.
  8. James Kelman, *A Disaffection* (1989; London: Vintage, 1999), p.196.
  9. Ben Knights, *Writing Masculinities: Male Narratives in Twentieth-Century Fiction* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1999), p.190. I am grateful to Dr Carole Jones of Trinity College, Dublin, for bringing this source to my attention.
  10. Neil McMillan, 'Wilting, or the "Poor Wee Boy Syndrome": Kelman and Masculinity', *Edinburgh Review*, 108 (2001), 41-55 (p.41).
  11. Peter Middleton, *The Inward Gaze: Masculinity and Subjectivity and Modern Culture* (London: Routledge, 1992) p.9.
  12. In criticising (as undialectical) the 'absolute radicalism' of hyper-subjective modernist art, Theodor Adorno identified precisely the same 'tendency to seek relief from the weakness of the ego by reifying subjective accomplishments, by putting them outside of the subject, as it were, and mistaking them for iron-clad guarantees of objectivity' (*Aesthetic Theory*, ed. by Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann, trans. by C. Lenhardt (1970; London: Routledge, 1984), p.43). The self-consciously formal character of Kelman's subjectivism, I would argue, is immune to this charge, with its strong emphasis on 'the idea of construction, which has been fundamental to modernism, [and] has always implied the primacy of constructive methods over subjective imagination' (*Ibid.*, p.35).
  13. Georg Lukács, *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism*, trans. by John and Necke Mander (London: Merlin, 1962), pp.56-57.
  14. For example, Christopher Whyte positions McIlvanney as Neil Gunn's successor in the 'gender kailyard': his 'nostalgic paeans to a heroic masculinity for which post-industrial Scotland no longer (thankfully) has a place' are seen to render 'the man' as a 'totem McIlvanney treats with almost religious reverence'. *Gendering the Nation: Studies in Modern Scottish Literature*, ed. by Christopher Whyte (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995), p.xi.
  15. William McIlvanney, *Walking Wounded* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1989), p.28.

16. This story is also anthologised in *The Picador Book of Contemporary Scottish Fiction*, ed. by Peter Kravitz (London: Picador, 1997).
17. James Kelman, *Greyhound for Breakfast* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1987), pp.210-12.
18. James Kelman, *The Good Times* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1998), p.55.
19. James Kelman, *A Disaffection* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1989), pp.246-47.
20. See *The Norton Shakespeare*, *Hamlet* II.2.248-250.
21. Sir Walter Scott, *Waverley*, ed. by Claire Lamont (1814; Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1986), p.340.
22. Cairns Craig notes that 'Kelman's narratives are not concerned with progressions along a temporal trajectory of events: they are concerned with an unchangeable context into which human beings are thrown and from which there is no escape.' 'Resisting Arrest', p.105.
23. Middleton, p.9.
24. McMillan, p.41.
25. William McIlvanney, *Surviving the Shipwreck* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1991), p.12.
26. Jeremy Idle, 'McIlvanney, Masculinity and Scottish Literature', *Scottish Affairs* 2 (1993), 50-57 (p.56). I am indebted to the anonymous reviewer for this reference and for a number of other helpful comments and suggestions.

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