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‘Getting By’: Enduring Selves in the Work of Three Contemporary Scottish  
Writers: Ron Butlin, Janice Galloway and James Robertson

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## Abstract

This thesis considers the persistence of the self in the work of three contemporary Scottish writers. It moves beyond current criticism's emphasis on political and national concerns and themes of self-pity in Scottish literature from the 1980s onwards. Instead, it analyses how characters' relationships with themselves and other selves are central to their happiness and worth, as well as forming their sense of belonging within both the domestic home and the wider community, regardless of their nation or politics. The primary texts are: Ron Butlin's *The Sound of My Voice* (1987), Janice Galloway's *This Is Not About Me* (2008) and James Robertson's *And the Land Lay Still* (2010). 'The Potential of Human Relationships' investigates the depiction of human relationships in these three texts and the ways in which many of the characters struggle to interact meaningfully with others. This first chapter shows how these texts reveal that a relationship with one's self is an essential step towards forming bonds with others. 'Belonging and Unbelonging' discusses themes of 'home' and 'belonging' in the writing of Butlin, Galloway and Robertson and considers the self in its most immediate social context, both in terms of the domestic and the wider community. By examining 'home' and what it means to 'belong', this chapter also builds on chapter one in its consideration of the ways in which these characters' selves shift and alter between their private selves and the selves they choose to portray to the outside world. 'Coming Home' considers the evolution of the self in these texts in relation to the themes of self-forgiveness and forgiveness of others, in order to discuss the persistence of the self in the face of fragmentation. This chapter argues that acceptance and forgiveness of former or even present selves is necessary in order to allow for the evolution of the self as key to its survival as well as its meaningfulness to others. This concluding chapter reveals the way in which the protagonists in the above-mentioned texts continue to endure everyday life in order to lead a worthwhile existence. Therefore, this dissertation will contribute new readings of these well-known contemporary Scottish texts by analysing characters' relationships with themselves and other selves to reveal how they are central to their happiness and worth, as well as forming their sense of belonging.

Keywords: home, belonging, self, selves, voice, domestic, community, relationships, fragmentation, survival, Janice Galloway, Ron Butlin, James Robertson, contemporary Scottish literature.

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## Abbreviations

<i>Colonel Blimp:</i>	<i>The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp</i>
<i>Lanark:</i>	<i>Lanark: A Life in Four Books</i>
<i>LLS:</i>	<i>And the Land Lay Still</i>
<i>NAM:</i>	<i>This is Not About Me</i>
<i>SMV:</i>	<i>The Sound of My Voice</i>
<i>The Trick:</i>	<i>The Trick is to Keep Breathing</i>

## Introduction

Current literary criticism of contemporary Scottish fiction places an emphasis on the extraordinary volume of work that emerged in the 1980s due to political events in Scotland,<sup>1</sup> in particular, the unsuccessful referendum on self-rule in March 1979.<sup>2</sup> Douglas Gifford cites the work of Alasdair Gray, Iain Banks and Alan Massie among others as signalling the most dramatic change in Scottish fiction in terms of an increase in new genres and ‘contemporary eclecticism’,<sup>3</sup> but he notes that ‘change was in the air in the late ’70s’,<sup>4</sup> before these authors’ major works appeared. Therefore, it could be suggested that political concerns are only one of a number of reasons for the ‘second’ Scottish Literary Renaissance, following Hugh MacDiarmid’s proclamation of a new Scottish Literary Renaissance in the 1920s. However, this thesis will move beyond these ‘political concerns’ towards an analysis of contemporary Scottish authors’ portrayal of self beyond a political framework.

In addition to issues of nation, current criticism also asserts a tendency in contemporary Scottish writing to ‘present a protagonist in nightmare’,<sup>5</sup> in a Scotland that is portrayed as ‘hopelessly bleak and violent’,<sup>6</sup> with themes of ‘breakdown and damaged identity.’<sup>7</sup> In *The Scottish Novel Since the Seventies* (1993), Gavin Wallace describes Scottish writing, and the Scottish self, as ‘a grey and morose beast prone to lengthy fits of self-pity.’<sup>8</sup> Wallace also cites themes of ‘inarticulacy and alienation through alcoholism; destructive mental instability; the paralysing hyper-awareness of class and cultural differentiation; crippling incapacities to give love, or to receive it’.<sup>9</sup> Many of these themes, which Wallace terms ‘the Scottish malaise’,<sup>10</sup> are present in Scottish novels post-1980, and in an interview with Kirsty McNeill, James Kelman further contributes to the idea that self-

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<sup>1</sup> Duncan Petrie, *Contemporary Scottish Fiction: Film, Television and the Novel* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004) p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Berthold Schoene, ‘Introduction: Post-devolution Scottish Writing’ in (ed.) Berthold Schoene, *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007) pp. 1-4, (p. 1).

<sup>3</sup> Douglas Gifford, ‘Breaking Boundaries: From Modern to Contemporary in Scottish Fiction’ in (ed.) Ian Brown, *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature, Volume Three: Modern Transformations: New Identities (from 1918)* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007) pp. 237-252 (p. 237).

<sup>4</sup> Douglas Gifford, Sarah Dunnigan and Alan MacGillivray (eds.) *Scottish Literature in English and Scots* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002) p. 900.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p. 928.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p. 934.

<sup>7</sup> Gavin Wallace, ‘Introduction’, in (eds.) Gavin Wallace and Randall Stevenson, *The Scottish Novel Since the Seventies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993) pp. 1-7 (p. 6).

<sup>8</sup> Gavin Wallace, ‘The Novel of Damaged Identity’, in (eds.) Gavin Wallace and Randall Stevenson, *The Scottish Novel Since the Seventies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993) pp. 217-231 (p. 220).

<sup>9</sup> Wallace, ‘The Novel of Damaged Identity’, p. 217.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

pity and misery are traits specific to Scotland. Kelman is quoted as stating that in Scotland: 'All you've got to do is follow some people around and look at their existence for 24 hours, and it will be horror. It will just be horror.'<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, Duncan Petrie claims 'One of the most striking features of Scottish cultural production of the past twenty years is an unsettling sense of nastiness permeating both literary and cinematic works.'<sup>12</sup> In *The Glass Half-Full: Moving Beyond Scottish Miserablism*, Eleanor Yule and David Manderson suggest the presence of a 'miserablist' strand in twentieth-century Scottish literature, identifying seventeen key characteristics of Scottish miserablism. According to Yule, the study aims to 'highlight a 'self-defeating' narrative that the Scots have been telling themselves for generations'.<sup>13</sup> Such characteristics of the miserablist paradigm include: 'guilt and unconsciously repressed religious values, a co-dependent sense of worthlessness generated by the idea that a superior power has the upper hand over Scotland's destiny', and ultimately, 'a belief that there is no escape'.<sup>14</sup> It is this belief that there is no escape, that the protagonists of contemporary Scottish fiction are 'doomed to failure',<sup>15</sup> and 'Change is impossible',<sup>16</sup> that this thesis rejects.

Although Yule and Manderson argue for a move 'beyond' miserablism and call for a 'Re-writing' of the 'self-defeating narrative',<sup>17</sup> the identification and application of such a trope to a wide range of Scottish film and fiction reveals that there is in fact a need to re-read these works. Indeed, Yule and Manderson divide Scottish literature into two distinct and opposing categories, the 'Kailyard',<sup>18</sup> and the 'Miserablist', ultimately suggesting that 'Across the canon, across the decades, there has been no real shift toward recovery or redemption.'<sup>19</sup> It is necessary to consider Scottish fiction beyond the limitations of such categorisation in order to reveal its redemptive qualities. Although Yule and Manderson do argue that there is a need 'to abandon our cherished affection for only the extremes, for fixed duality, and understand that truths also lie with everything in between',<sup>20</sup> they also suggest Scottish literature is still wedded to the idea of the Caledonian antiszygy which

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<sup>11</sup> Kirsty McNeill, 'Interview with James Kelman', *Chapman*, 57, (Edinburgh: Chapman Magazine, 1989) pp. 1-9 (p. 9).

<sup>12</sup> Petrie, p. 115.

<sup>13</sup> Eleanor Yule, 'Changing Scotland's narrative', *Soundings: A journal of politics and culture*, Issue 59, Spring 2015, pp. 28-32, (p. 29).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. p. 29.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. p. 30.

<sup>16</sup> Eleanor Yule and David Manderson, *The Glass Half Full, Moving Beyond Scottish Miserablism* (Edinburgh: Luath Press, 2014) p. 30.

<sup>17</sup> Yule, p. 31.

<sup>18</sup> Yule and Manderson describe Kailyard fiction as the overtly stereotyped, sentimentalised depiction of Scotland, the 'cabbage patch that is the antithesis of miserablism.' (See pp. 59-60).

<sup>19</sup> Yule and Manderson, p. 24.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. p. 57.

this thesis rejects. Murray Roston also suggests there is a ‘predominantly pessimistic mood among the leading poets, novelists and dramatics of this century’,<sup>21</sup> although he does note that ‘the frustrations implicit in mortal existence, have been lamented in every generation’,<sup>22</sup> arguing the ‘writing produced was by no means consistently gloomy.’<sup>23</sup> However, it is Berthold Schoene who argues against such a ‘defeatist’ approach and suggests the need for a ‘critical re-imagining’.<sup>24</sup>

Therefore, issues of nation and self-pity are only part of the story of Scottish literature and it is one of the key intentions of this thesis to disentangle James Robertson’s (b. 1958) portrayal of the self from current criticism’s emphasis on political and national concerns in his work. Instead, this thesis draws attention to different, and more enduring, themes in this and other Scottish texts, namely how in contemporary Scottish fiction, characters’ relationships with themselves and other selves are central to their happiness and worth, as well as forming their sense of belonging within both the domestic ‘home’ and the wider community. In addition to Robertson’s *And the Land Lay Still* (2010), this thesis will also re-examine work by two other writers, Janice Galloway (b. 1955), notably *This Is Not About Me* (2008) and Ron Butlin (b. 1949), in particular his *The Sound of My Voice* (1987). This thesis is concerned with masculinities as much as femininities, and with the emotional trajectories of central characters. These texts have been chosen in order to carry out a varied exploration of self. There has been a tendency to focus on the marginalised female voice in Scottish literary studies;<sup>25</sup> however, the work of these male and female writers reveals the repression of voice in both genders. *This Is Not About Me* is the story of a young girl’s struggle for selfhood, and the search to find her own voice in a chaotic, repressive home with dysfunctional familial relationships. While *The Sound of My Voice* deals with an adult male’s search for voice, again in the domestic context, there is also a preoccupation with the formative effect of one’s childhood experiences and the repression of one’s voice and emotions as a means of self-preservation. Morris must learn

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<sup>21</sup> Murray Roston, *The Search for Selfhood in Modern Literature* (England and New York: Palgrave, 2001) p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p. 3.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p. 2.

<sup>24</sup> Schoene, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Especially in Galloway’s work, where criticism centres on her first novel *The Trick is to Keep Breathing* (1989). For a discussion of the marginalisation of the female voice in Galloway’s writing see: Dorothy McMillan, ‘Gender and Creativity in the Fictions of Janice Galloway’ in (eds.) James Acheson and Sarah C. E. Ross, *The Contemporary British Novel Since 1980* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005) pp. 154-164; Margery Metzstein, ‘Of Myths and Men: Aspects of Gender in the Fiction of Janice Galloway’ in (eds.) Gavin Wallace and Randall Stevenson, *The Scottish Novel Since the Seventies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993) pp. 136-146; Andrew Hock Soon Ng, ‘Coping with Reality: The Solace of Objects and Language in Janice Galloway’s *The Trick Is to Keep Breathing*’, *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, 53:3, pp. 238-250.



to forgive his father and his former self in order to reunite with his present self. Although *And the Land Lay Still* deals with a number of characters across a broader historical timeline, at the novel's heart, the men and women are all engaged in the search for self, regardless of their sexuality, gender or race. These texts demonstrate that the search for self-acceptance is not gender specific. While Butlin, Galloway and Robertson have different methods, they all seek to reconstitute mind, body and voice in order for their characters to gain self-knowledge and form meaningful relationships with other selves.

Chapter One, 'The Potential of Human Relationships', will investigate the depiction of human relationships in the writing of Butlin, Galloway and Robertson, and the ways in which many of their characters struggle to interact meaningfully with others. This first chapter will show how these texts reveal that a relationship with one's self is essential in forming relationships with others. I will demonstrate that relationships – whether intimate, familial, domestic, social, local, national or political – loom large in all of these authors' creations of the self. Secondly, 'Belonging and Unbelonging' will discuss themes of 'home' and 'belonging' in these three texts and will consider the self in its most immediate social context. This will include a study of characters' domestic environments, as well as their relationships with the wider community, which is especially significant for the character Jack Gordon in Robertson's *LLS*. By examining 'home' and what it means to 'belong', this chapter will also consider the ways in which these characters' selves shift and alter between their private selves and the selves they choose to portray to the outside world. Finally, 'Coming Home' will discuss the evolution of the self in these texts in relation to the themes of self-forgiveness and forgiveness of others, in order to discuss the persistence of the self against all odds and in the face of fragmentation. This chapter will argue that acceptance and forgiveness of former or even present selves is necessary in order to allow for the evolution of the self as key to its survival. Ultimately, this thesis aims to analyse the foregrounding of characters' everyday heroism and persistence of selves in the writing of Butlin, Galloway and Robertson in texts that embrace both the dark and the light in humanity.

Arguably, there are many images of light and hope to be found in contemporary Scottish writing. As Gifford suggests, the 'traditional sceptical bleakness of Scottish fiction could hardly disappear overnight [but] is combined with humour and positive vision.'<sup>26</sup> For example, Janice Galloway's first novel *The Trick is to Keep Breathing* (1989), is, despite its often harrowing subject matter, at times 'hilariously and embarrassingly funny.'<sup>27</sup> While

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<sup>26</sup> Gifford et al., p. 937.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. p. 939.

themes of depression, anorexia and self-loathing are present, Galloway shows the reader that Joy Stone's apparent break-down is necessary in order for her break-through and to allow Joy the self-forgiveness that is essential to her recovery of self. By the end of the novel, Joy is described taking 'one step further forward',<sup>28</sup> in a way that is reminiscent of Alan Warner's female protagonist in *Morvern Callar* (1995), who is described at the end of the novel 'walking forwards into that night'.<sup>29</sup> The image of Joy and Morvern moving forwards is key to revealing the persistence of their selves and this thesis will show how characters in *LLS*, *NAM* and *SMV* also move beyond horror and self-pity to self-acceptance.

In her non-fiction account *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* (1997), A. L. Kennedy considers the self and themes of 'home' and 'belonging' in Powell and Pressburger's film of the same title (1943). In the text Kennedy relates their films to her own experiences: 'They form part of my comprehension of my self, my personal truth, my understanding of life and death, of time and home.'<sup>30</sup> Like the characters in, and authors of, *LLS*, *NAM* and *SMV*, Kennedy seeks an understanding and acceptance of selves across time and questions what it means to belong. It is clear Kennedy never felt quite 'at home' growing up, both geographically, in Scotland she is 'a foreigner',<sup>31</sup> and personally, where she feels 'a great deal of what I was and what had happened to me was unmentionable and therefore, in a way, unreal'.<sup>32</sup> The word 'unmentionable' suggests the suppression of her voice, which in turn diminishes her sense of self, as though not having a voice meant she did not exist. The examples of Butlin, Galloway and Robertson's writing that this thesis discusses have characters who, as a means of self-preservation, become disengaged with reality. Reminiscent of Kennedy's own account, the female characters in *NAM* avoid voicing their feelings in order to prevent themselves from becoming vulnerable. Like the protagonists in *SMV*, *NAM* and *LLS*, Kennedy's childhood self has affected her adult self and her ability to feel she belongs. Thus, it must be noted, the emphasis on 'voice', 'home' and 'selves' in many contemporary Scottish texts can be read as a political longing but also a deeply personal, psychological and social one.

All of these contemporary Scottish writers question what it is that forces human beings to carry on in the face of adversity and these selected Scottish authors clearly imply that a forgiving relationship with the self is central to human persistence and, in turn, to a

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<sup>28</sup> Janice Galloway, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing* (London: Vintage, 1999) p. 227.

<sup>29</sup> Alan Warner, *Morvern Callar* (London: Vintage, 1996) p. 229.

<sup>30</sup> A. L. Kennedy, *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* (London: British Film Institute, 1997) p. 10.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* p. 11.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.* p. 16.

sense of belonging and of forming meaningful relationships with others. In *Colonel Blimp* Kennedy emphasises the importance of humanity, ‘because [...] people matter’.<sup>33</sup> This is reiterated when she asserts that the film’s characters are exceptional ‘because they are human beings, and human beings are remarkable’,<sup>34</sup> later emphasising ‘the precious parts of humanity without which there will be no home.’<sup>35</sup> For Kennedy, to know your self is to be yourself and therefore, belong. Ultimately, Butlin, Galloway and Robertson also consider what makes us human, in the literal, physical sense of the ‘parts’ that form the self in terms of the body; in the psychological sense of the mind; the voice; and in the sense of being humane, where ‘humane’ is defined as being forgiving and compassionate – to both one’s self and others. What will prove to be ‘remarkable’ is the ability of these characters to endure the challenges of everyday life.

With these examples in mind, it is also helpful to consider recent work on theories of affect and trauma in literary studies. In the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) eighteenth-century economist and philosopher Adam Smith (1723-1790) identifies the ‘impartial spectator’, where one has the ability to stand outside oneself and observe one’s actions, thus allowing for an awareness of other selves.<sup>36</sup> Smith argues this awareness of others enables people to feel sympathy, ‘we imagine how we would feel in the circumstances of others’,<sup>37</sup> in order to relate to other selves. In recent years, affect or emotion theory has been described as an ability to affect and be affected, and according to Eric Shouse it is ‘not a personal feeling’,<sup>38</sup> but rather ‘a non-conscious experience’,<sup>39</sup> ‘a measure of the body’s readiness to act in a given circumstance’.<sup>40</sup> Shouse suggests one needs affect in order to feel, with affect playing ‘an important role in determining the relationship between our bodies, our environment, and others’.<sup>41</sup> Thus, affect is necessary in order to ‘access the feelings, desires, and beliefs of others in their expressive behaviour.’<sup>42</sup> Similarly, Ben Anderson argues affect allows people to actively engage with

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<sup>33</sup> Kennedy, *Colonel Blimp*, p. 13.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. p. 62.

<sup>36</sup> Robert Twigger, ‘Adam Smith’s Impartial Spectator’, June 2009, <<http://www.roberttwigger.com/journal/2009/6/6/adam-smiths-impartial-spectator.html>> [Accessed February 2017].

<sup>37</sup> Samuel Fleischacker, ‘Adam Smith’s Moral and Political Philosophy’, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2017 Edition), (ed.) Edward N. Zalta <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2017/entries/smith-moral-political/>> [Accessed February 2017].

<sup>38</sup> Eric Shouse, ‘Feeling, Emotion, Affect’, *M/C Journal*, Vol. 8, Issue 6, December 2005, pp. 1-3, (p. 1).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Dan Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood, Investigating the First-Person Perspective* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2008) p. 155.

the world, in order to be ‘affected’ by one’s experiences,<sup>43</sup> also noting that ‘when you affect something, you are at the same time opening yourself up to being affected in turn’,<sup>44</sup> further highlighting the importance of relationships. For Anderson, the term ‘affect’ begins with the assumption that life is full of intersections, including those with other selves.<sup>45</sup> Anderson also proposes an argument for ‘hope *through* affect’,<sup>46</sup> claiming that ‘to suffer’ is ‘to bear, endure, or undergo’,<sup>47</sup> but that this suffering is necessary for the emergence of hope and hopefulness. He refers to Marcel’s belief that ‘the conditions that make it possible to hope are strictly the same as those that make it possible to despair’.<sup>48</sup> This suggests not only the importance of engaging with both self and other, but that in order to feel hopeful, it is necessary to know despair. Anderson claims ‘certain types of hopefulness are akin to a sort of will to live [...] to persist in being’,<sup>49</sup> and this cycle of despair, hope and endurance can be seen in the characters discussed in this thesis. According to affect theory it is therefore necessary to both affect and be affected by others, and meaningful relationships are key to this premise as will be argued below.

The term ‘trauma theory’ first appeared in Cathy Caruth’s *Unclaimed Experience* (1976)<sup>50</sup> and is exemplified in the subsequent writings of Felman and Laub among others. In *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995) Caruth notes that post-traumatic stress disorder, defined in the 1980s, was used ‘to understand rape, child abuse and other violent occurrences’,<sup>51</sup> both human and natural. Caruth defines PTSD as a delayed response to an overwhelming event,<sup>52</sup> as a result of repression and of not fully experiencing the event at the time.<sup>53</sup> She argues that trauma lies in how one subsequently experiences the event, in flashbacks, dreams or through memory. Likewise, Kali Tal notes that ‘Trauma is enacted in a liminal state, outside of the bounds of “normal” human experience’,<sup>54</sup> which suggests

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<sup>43</sup> Ben Anderson, ‘Becoming and being hopeful: towards a theory of affect’, *Environmental and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol. 24, 2006, pp. 733-752, (p. 747).

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. p. 735.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. p. 749.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. p. 733.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. p. 740.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. p. 743.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. p. 743.

<sup>50</sup> Susannah Radstone, ‘Trauma Theory: Contexts, Politics, Ethics’, *Paragraph*, Vol. 30, Issue 1, March 2007, pp. 9-29, (p. 10).

<sup>51</sup> Cathy Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995) p. 3.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. p. 4.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. p. 7. Freud’s model of ‘archaeological excavation’ was ‘developed to address the phenomenon of repressed or traumatic memory.’ (See: Nicola King, *Memory, Narrative, Identity: Remembering the Self* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000) p. 12). Freud’s theory was that ‘the unconscious was the infantile or repressed self, where ‘repression’ suggests ‘the burial of the past [...] as if behind closed doors.’ (King, p. 13).

<sup>54</sup> Kali Tal, *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literature of Trauma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) p. 15.

a transitional phase of not fully experiencing. Reina Van der Wiel claims Caruth ‘opened up the Humanities to trauma’<sup>55</sup> and she distinguishes between trauma resulting from natural ‘disasters’ and ‘atrocities’ at the hands of others,<sup>56</sup> such as war or sexual abuse.<sup>57</sup> This thesis is concerned with the latter, more specifically the effects of childhood trauma, and with individual rather than collective experience in *The Sound of My Voice, This is not About Me* and *And the Land Lay Still*. Like Caruth, Susannah Radstone identifies the ‘unknowable nature of the traumatic event’,<sup>58</sup> arguing that a traumatic event becomes a different type of memory to that of an ordinary event, where the traumatic event is ‘encoded’ in a different way.<sup>59</sup> Thus, Radstone deduces ‘it is not an event, which is by its nature ‘toxic’ to the mind, but what the mind later does to memory’,<sup>60</sup> as will be discussed in relation to the central characters; Morris in *SMV*, Janice in *NAM*, and Peter Bond, Jack and David Eddelstane in *LLS*. Furthermore, Nicola King suggests memories of traumatic experiences ‘may make the relationship between the self ‘before’ and the self ‘after’ much more problematic’,<sup>61</sup> as ‘identity and sense of life-continuity have been disrupted by trauma’.<sup>62</sup> In terms of the relationship between former, present and possible future selves, the impact of traumatic childhood events is an important concept that this thesis will explore further. As King notes, ‘the complex identifications between parents and children are also negotiated, and the self reconstructed in a process of revising and reinterpreting the past.’<sup>63</sup> Thus, childhood experiences and memories of the past are central to the construct of self in the present, which is also argued by Van der Wiel, who makes an important assumption that ‘childhood experience moulds the adult’.<sup>64</sup> Caruth also describes the relationship between trauma and survival, suggesting ‘that survival itself [...] can be a crisis’<sup>65</sup> and this notion of the struggle to endure everyday life is key to this thesis. Radstone claims trauma theory ultimately ‘moves through and beyond modernity’s supposition of a coherent, autonomous, knowing subject, but without simply rendering

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<sup>55</sup> Reina Van der Wiel, *Literary Aesthetics of Trauma: Virginia Woolf and Jeanette Winterson* (United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) p. 2.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid. p. 3.

<sup>57</sup> Emily Horton also defines trauma in terms of ‘both personal and public catastrophe’ in Emily Horton, “‘Everything You Ever Dreamed’: Post-9/11 Trauma and Fantasy in Ali Smith’s *The Accidental*”, *MFS Modern Fiction Studies*, Vol. 58, No. 3, Autumn 2012, pp. 637-654, (p. 639).

<sup>58</sup> Radstone, p. 12.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid. p. 13.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. p. 17.

<sup>61</sup> Nicola King, *Memory, Narrative, Identity: Remembering the Self* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000, p. 3.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid. p. 4.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. p. 32.

<sup>64</sup> Van der Wiel, p. 3.

<sup>65</sup> Caruth, p. 9.

subjectivity *incoherent*, unknowing, fragmented',<sup>66</sup> suggesting a development and move away from modernism's notion of the self as coherent and post-modernism's decentred self. This thesis will explore the aforementioned characters' evolving selves, considering the impact of their childhood experiences on their current self, and ultimately revealing an acceptance of an unfixed self.

In terms of the question of 'self', in *Subjectivity and Selfhood* Dan Zahavi begins by asking the question 'What is a self?', noting it would be an 'exaggeration to claim that the concept of self is unequivocal and there is widespread consensus about what, exactly, it means to be a self.'<sup>67</sup> Zahavi identifies two main arguments surrounding a definition of self; the self of 'narrative construction' and the 'experiential' self, ultimately suggesting the two notions are 'complementary'.<sup>68</sup> According to Zahavi, Kant (1724-1804) argues for the self as a 'pure identity-pole', his philosophy centring on the idea of an identical 'core self' across time, which undergoes multiple and changing experiences.<sup>69</sup> In line with Kant, the experiential approach, primarily defended by Husserl and Henry,<sup>70</sup> calls for a self that is constructed by 'immediate experiential reality'<sup>71</sup> and involves first-person perspective in terms of one's feelings and perception of the world forming a sense of self. However, the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) understood the self 'not as an autonomous and rational selfhood, but rather as a particular historical articulation of a vital force.'<sup>72</sup> Similarly, Nietzsche (1844-1900) was also 'resistant to the idea that human identity can be grasped in relation to consciousness' or first-person perspective.<sup>73</sup> Ultimately, Nietzsche and Schopenhauer argue that human life is 'not a rational and calculated project'<sup>74</sup> and there can be no autonomous self.

To return to Zahavi's discussion of the experiential versus the narrative self, the experiential notion of self suggests that to be 'self-aware', one must be 'worldly-engaged'.<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, this definition of self emphasises the importance of 'social interaction',<sup>76</sup> or relationships, that is 'To exist as a person is to exist socialized into a communal horizon, where one's bearing to oneself is appropriated from the others'.<sup>77</sup> It is

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<sup>66</sup> Radstone, p. 19.

<sup>67</sup> Zahavi, p. 1.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. p. 8.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. p. 104.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. p. 8.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid. p. 106.

<sup>72</sup> Morag Shiach, *Modernism, Labour and Selfhood in British Literature and Culture, 1890 – 1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) p. 48.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. p. 49.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. p. 158.

<sup>75</sup> Zahavi, p. 125.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. p. 130.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

also helpful to consider Scottish philosopher John MacMurray's definition of self. MacMurray (1891-1976) insists the self should not be viewed as 'an isolated individual [but as] a person, and that personal existence is constituted by the relations of persons'.<sup>78</sup> The word 'relations' suggests the importance of the relationships of the self with other selves. MacMurray criticised the Enlightenment for its view of the human body, which he argues 'isolates the self from others, splits mind from body, the spiritual from the material, and separates thinking from sense experience, feeling and action.'<sup>79</sup> In addition to relationships with others, MacMurray places emphasis on the importance of a relationship with oneself, thus mind, body and voice must interact with each other in order to achieve self-understanding. MacMurray claims that in order to 'repossess humanity of all its facilities, making it whole again'<sup>80</sup> it is necessary to form meaningful relationships with others. However, unlike MacMurray, I will argue that one's self need not necessarily be 'whole' in terms of being complete or unchanging or 'of one piece',<sup>81</sup> but whole in the sense of accepting and forgiving a multiplicity and even discontinuity of selves in order to evolve and survive, as Chapter Three proposes.

MacMurray's emphasis on the importance of human relationships both with one's own self and others is shared by Tilo Kircher and Anthony David in *The Self in Neuroscience and Psychiatry* (2003):

Who are we and what makes us who we are? Like our world, our self is a construction of our minds. But we do not live in isolation. The self is also a construction of our relation with other selves. And most intriguingly, the self is a construction of its relation with itself.<sup>82</sup>

The opening question, 'Who are we and what makes us who we are?' is key to the search for self, both in terms of thinking about what physically forms a self: body, voice and mind, but also in terms of one's past selves and the interactions between self, family and community. Kircher and David argue it is not only necessary to form meaningful relationships with others, it is also essential to understand one's self, including the different roles a person can have and how these selves interact and change over time. The question

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<sup>78</sup> John MacMurray in Berthold Schoene, 'Going Cosmopolitan', in (ed.) Berthold Schoene, *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007) pp. 7-16, (p. 11).

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> For further discussion on the split self see: R. D. Laing's *The Divided Self: A Study of Sanity and Madness* (London: Tavistock, 1960). In studies in Scottish literature there is a tendency to refer to the 'Caledonian Antisyzygy', 'split self' or the 'double', especially in relation to texts such as Robert Louis Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde* (1886) and James Hogg's *Justified Sinner* (1824).

<sup>82</sup> Tilo Kircher and Anthony S. David, 'Introduction: the self and neuroscience' in (eds.) Tilo Kircher and Anthony S. David, *The Self in Neuroscience and Psychiatry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) pp. 1-8 (p. 1).

‘Who are we and what makes us who we are?’ permeates all of the texts discussed here and Galloway’s aim is to show the reader ‘how we become who we are’,<sup>83</sup> as Janice attempts to understand her existence in relation to her surroundings.

The importance of relationships is highlighted by Kircher and David, John McMurray and by the argument for an experiential self. Likewise, the construction of self through narrative also ‘involves a complex social interaction’.<sup>84</sup> However, the narrative concept of self differs in its ideas surrounding self-understanding. Developed by Ricoeur (1913-2005), the narrative concept of self claims that first-person perspective is not enough; a narrative is required and the self is constructed through such narration,<sup>85</sup> a key concept for this thesis. Paul Rhodes suggests Ricoeur ‘argued against essentialist versions of the human subject, [...] but also against postmodern versions of a radically de-centred non-subject-determined by discourse (Foucault), or language (Derrida).’<sup>86</sup> Roston also suggests a postmodern fragmentation of self in the twentieth century as a result of the demise of religion, the impact of World War One and new findings in Freudian psychology,<sup>87</sup> suggesting these factors led to the ‘disintegration’ of the family unit, and that without such ‘stability’ the sense of self was impaired.<sup>88</sup> Contrary to Foucault’s postmodern concept of the de-centred self, instead, Ricoeur proposes ‘a version of the human subject in which personal identity is not fully stable or self-transparent, but is also not incoherent or self-alienated.’<sup>89</sup> Thus, the narrative model suggests the possibility of an ever-evolving self, which changes and mutates throughout a lifetime.<sup>90</sup> Similarly, King also argues in favour of the ‘complex and shifting relationship between past and present selves’.<sup>91</sup> Ricoeur’s argument for an unstable self is key to the examples of Galloway, Robertson and Butlin’s writing discussed here. Although many of the characters begin the novels as self-alienated, they are guided towards an awareness and acceptance of self.

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<sup>83</sup> Jenny Diski, ‘Janice Galloway in Discussion with Jenny Diski’, *London Review Bookshop Podcast 133*, 24<sup>th</sup> September 2008  
<<https://itunes.apple.com/gb/podcast/janicegallowaythisisnot/id734373360?i=169567981&mt=2>> [Accessed November 2015].

<sup>84</sup> Zahavi, p. 105.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. See also: Velleman’s reflexive theory of the self, where he argues that it is ‘ascribing an autobiographical narrator to the self [...] that brings selfhood to life’ in Diana Tietjens Meyers, ‘Who’s There? Selfhood, Self-Regard, and Social Relations’, *Hypatia*, Vol. 20, No. 4, *Analytic Feminism*, Autumn, 2005, pp. 200-215, (p. 213). Similarly, King also argues for a self ‘constructed by and through narrative: the stories we all tell ourselves and each other about our lives’. (King, p. 2).

<sup>86</sup> Paul Rhodes, *Psychology Today*, ‘Paul Ricoeur and Narrative Identity’,  
<<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/post-clinical/201604/paul-ricoeur-and-narrative-identity>>  
[Accessed February 2017] pp. 1-3, (p. 1).

<sup>87</sup> Roston, p. 33.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. p. 44.

<sup>89</sup> Rhodes, p. 1.

<sup>90</sup> Zahavi, p. 108.

<sup>91</sup> King, p. 3.



McMillan notes Galloway 'refuses to coerce her characters into reformation of definitive change', allowing them 'the freedom to be inconsistent'.<sup>92</sup> These three authors, and these examples of their writing, advocate that the self is not stable, or unchanging, but rather, is fluid and ever-evolving.

Similarly, poet and psychiatrist Femi Oyeboode has argued for a modern identity that is both 'fluid' and 'fragile', stating that to try to 'pigeon-hole human beings' is 'impossible'.<sup>93</sup> The narrative concept of self ultimately argues that 'The self is not a thing; it is not something fixed and unchangeable'.<sup>94</sup> One problem Zahavi highlights with regard to the notion of a self constructed through narrative is the potential for 'elaborate storytelling',<sup>95</sup> or the inability to guarantee the truthfulness of others' narratives and of one's own self-narrative. Appearances, truth and reality, and the public versus the private self are central to many of the characters' struggles in these examples of contemporary Scottish fiction. Zahavi concludes that 'to be a self is not simply a question of storytelling',<sup>96</sup> but to 'remain true to oneself' and 'to be somebody others can count on. It is to assume responsibility for one's past actions and for the future consequences.'<sup>97</sup> To assume responsibility for a past self also infers the possibility of forgiveness of a past self and as Morris and Bond in particular will discover, this is essential to them moving forward in the present.

Most importantly, what can ultimately be deduced from all of these accounts of 'self' or 'selfhood', is the recognition that it is impossible to define the self in a conclusive way. As such, this thesis is in agreement with the narrative perspective that the self is fluid and unfixed and argues for the importance of an awareness of 'other', whether that is the natural world or other selves in the wider community. In their depictions of self, Butlin, Galloway and Robertson share this notion of the self as ever-evolving and they embrace the unstable, yet enduring self, allowing for the acceptance of an imperfect self that is persisting in order to 'get by'.

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<sup>92</sup> Dorothy McMillan, 'Gender and Creativity in the Fiction of Janice Galloway' in (eds.) James Acheson and Sarah C. E. Ross, *The Contemporary British Novel Since 1980* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005) pp. 154-164, (p. 159).

<sup>93</sup> Femi Oyeboode, 'Professor Femi Oyeboode; Sheila Kohler; Stephen Boxer; Heloise Tunstall-Behrens', *BBC Radio 4, Midweek*, 1<sup>st</sup> February 2017, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08byp5p#play>> [Accessed February 2017].

<sup>94</sup> Zahavi, p. 105.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid. p. 110.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid. p. 114.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter One: The Potential of Human Relationships

Robertson claims the best way to portray the change that has taken place in Scotland is to tell ‘various individual fictional stories spread out over that period and for those stories to begin to become interlinked’,<sup>98</sup> which is precisely what *And the Land Lay Still* (2010) does. It is important to note briefly the many layers of societal change, both positive and negative, that Robertson portrays in the novel. From a positive perspective, James Campbell argues that the ‘new Scotland, as represented here, is heterogeneous but no longer forbiddingly heterosexual’,<sup>99</sup> as one of the novel’s main protagonists, Mike Pendreich, is gay and ‘feminism makes its presence felt’,<sup>100</sup> via strong female characters such as Ellen Imlach and her mother Mary, Jean Barbour and Liz Lennie. In an interview with Helen Brown, Robertson states: ‘There used to be a stereotypical definition of Scottishness, but we’ve become a lot more liberal, diverse and accepting of difference’,<sup>101</sup> which is key to creating a sense of multiplicity. Scotland from 1947 to the present day gives Robertson great scope for the novel, ‘from the global (oil, industry, services) to the national (sectarianism, communism, Thatcherism, devolution and destruction) to the direct and personal.’<sup>102</sup> Furthermore, Bathurst notes, ‘behind all of it are the reverberations of deeper themes: war and war’s legacy, the sea, the land, the future’,<sup>103</sup> suggesting a correlation between the way Scotland’s people use the land and their future living in that land. However, it is important to note, as Robertson does, that ‘The land is only an aspect of this story, in fact, that stays still.’<sup>104</sup> Therefore, although the novel does deal with people and place on a large scale, it is also very much about communities and Robertson’s portrayal of characters’ intimate relationships, or lack of, and their sense of belonging is central to the novel. He looks closely at the stories people have to tell and in the words of Jean Barbour, ‘That’s all you can do. Trust the story.’<sup>105</sup> Jonathon Derbyshire notes that

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<sup>98</sup> James Robertson, Interview with *Scottish Book Trust*, *Scottish Book Trust*, February 2013 <[www.scottishbooktrust.com/podcasts/audio/book-talk-extra-james-robertson-interview](http://www.scottishbooktrust.com/podcasts/audio/book-talk-extra-james-robertson-interview)> [Accessed February 2016].

<sup>99</sup> James Campbell, ‘A Life in Writing: James Robertson’, *The Guardian*, 14<sup>th</sup> August 2010 <[www.theguardian.com/books/2010/aug/14/james-robertson-land-still-profile](http://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/aug/14/james-robertson-land-still-profile)> [Accessed February 2016].

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> James Robertson, ‘James Robertson: Interview with Helen Brown’, *The Telegraph*, 10<sup>th</sup> August 2010 <[www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/7936711/James-Robertson-Interview.html](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/books/7936711/James-Robertson-Interview.html)> [Accessed February 2016].

<sup>102</sup> Bella Bathurst, ‘*And the Land Lay Still* by James Robertson’, *The Guardian*, 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2010 <[www.theguardian.com/books/2010/aug/15/and-land-lay-still-robertson](http://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/aug/15/and-land-lay-still-robertson)> [Accessed February 2016].

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Anon. ‘Interview: James Robertson, author’, *The Scotsman*, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2010 <<http://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/interview-james-robertson-author-1-477284>> [Accessed February 2016].

<sup>105</sup> James Robertson, *And the Land Lay Still*, (London: Penguin Books, 2011) p. 128 (This and subsequent references are to the Penguin Books edition).

Robertson is ‘reminding the reader that there is more to history than bald facts and figures, and that the stories people tell about themselves [...] matter.’<sup>106</sup> Many critics focus on *LLS* as a novel that deals first and foremost with nation and Scottish society at large. However, Jeanette Harris argues it is the different characters across many layers of Scottish life at that time that makes *And the Land Lay Still* successful, and she comments on Robertson’s ability to write characters that are ‘real people’.<sup>107</sup> Furthermore, Ian Jack notes the way in which Robertson’s novel ‘draws characters from every social class and manages to be sympathetic to all of them’,<sup>108</sup> while Allan Massie claims Robertson has ‘a sympathy in the way he deals with his characters [...] an ability to enter into the lives of people who are not like him.’<sup>109</sup> It is these characters, and their relationships with others, that this chapter will discuss.

The novel’s title, *And the Land Lay Still*, is taken from a line in a poem in Edwin Morgan’s *Sonnets from Scotland* (1984), ‘The year was ending, and the land lay still’<sup>110</sup> and Robertson has printed ‘The Summons’ at the start of *LLS*. Morgan’s *Sonnets* were published five years after the failed devolution referendum of 1979,<sup>111</sup> and Robertson has said they ‘were a hugely uplifting read during a politically frustrating time’,<sup>112</sup> published three years after Alasdair Gray’s ‘state-of-the-nation’ novel *Lanark* (1981). In his short essay ‘Becoming a Writer’, Robertson describes the 1980s as ‘years of frustration, despair and anger’, but continues to note, ‘they were also, gradually, years of hope, determination and renewal’.<sup>113</sup> It is this sense of despair developing into hope that can be seen in many of the characters he depicts in *LLS*, where their enduring ability to survive is emphasised. Morgan’s ‘The Summons’ deals with the departure of alien observers, who are ‘loath to go’,<sup>114</sup> their reluctance, ‘like a slate we could not clean / of characters, yet could not read, or write / our answers on, or smash, or take with us.’<sup>115</sup> The cause of their unwillingness to

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<sup>106</sup> Jonathon Derbyshire, ‘*And the Land Lay Still* Review’, *New Statesman*, 9<sup>th</sup> August 2010 <[www.newstatesman.com/books/2010/08/land-lay-novel-robertson](http://www.newstatesman.com/books/2010/08/land-lay-novel-robertson)> [Accessed February 2016].

<sup>107</sup> Jeanette Harris, ‘Book Talk: *And the Land Lay Still*’, *Scottish Book Trust Podcast*, 30<sup>th</sup> January 2013 <<https://itunes.apple.com/gb/podcast/scottish-book-trust-reading/id573565331?mt=2>> [Accessed February 2016].

<sup>108</sup> Ian Jack, ‘Metaphors, Mysteries and Mountains...the Battle for Scotland has Begun’, *The Guardian*, 27<sup>th</sup> January 2012 <[www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/jan/27/ian-jack-battle-for-scotland](http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/jan/27/ian-jack-battle-for-scotland)> [Accessed February 2016].

<sup>109</sup> Allan Massie, quoted in James Campbell, ‘A Life in Writing’.

<sup>110</sup> Edwin Morgan, ‘The Summons’, from *Sonnets from Scotland* in James Robertson, *And the Land Lay Still* (London: Penguin Books, 2011) Line 1.

<sup>111</sup> Anon. ‘Interview: James Robertson, author’, *The Scotsman*.

<sup>112</sup> *Scottish Poetry Library*, ‘Edwin Morgan (1920-2010)’ <<http://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poetry/poets/edwin-morgan>> [Accessed March 2016].

<sup>113</sup> James Robertson, ‘Becoming a Writer’ in (ed.) Paul Henderson Scott, *Spirits of the Age: Scottish Self Portraits* (Edinburgh: The Saltire Society, 2005), pp. 339-352, (p. 351).

<sup>114</sup> Morgan, ‘The Summons’, Line 2.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.* Lines 7-9.

leave is the affection they now feel for the people and the land they have been watching over. The word ‘characters’ is ambiguous as it refers to the letters or words written on the slate, but also has connotations of the people the aliens will not forget. The poem suggests the need for new ways of looking at Scotland, not to erase the past or the writing on the slate, but to find new ways of writing about and representing Scotland. Morgan’s sonnet sequence suggests different possible futures for Scotland and its people with an emphasis on change, and Robertson claims he is also ‘interested in that relationship between past and present’.<sup>116</sup> In *LLS* Robertson is looking back at the past in order to reveal the potential the future holds, and the ways in which people can learn from their shared history and from their interactions with the people around them. However, Robertson also considers the ways in which the present can ‘influence the past, because the past only looks the way it does because of the way we see it.’<sup>117</sup> However, in spite of all the change that has and will take place in countries, communities and selves, as Jack Gordon states in the novel, ‘*Only the land will remain.*’<sup>118</sup> Most importantly in *LLS* however, is that there is a future not only for Scotland, but for Robertson’s characters, and the reader is left with the sense that, as Harris notes, ‘Mike Pendreich and various other characters have a future, the next section of life for all of them was looking as though it was going to be reasonably alright.’<sup>119</sup> The novel follows various characters’ triumphs and tribulations as they struggle to understand each other and themselves.

In Janice Galloway’s short essay ‘Anything But Ordinary’ she discusses her love of ‘pictures and growing things, words and animals’<sup>120</sup> and, in particular, Pieter Breughel’s paintings, admiring his ‘love of humanity – at a time when the merely human counted for so very little [...] his cherishing of our smallness and commonality is profoundly moving.’<sup>121</sup> Ultimately, Galloway claims Breughel (1525-1569) ‘taught me it is not fancy or far-flung subject matter, not conventional or even ethereal beauty that matters in the grand scheme of things, but our extraordinary persistence as human beings.’<sup>122</sup> It is this persistence and endurance of the human self that she explores in much of her fiction, from her first novel *The Trick is to Keep Breathing* (1989) to her recent memoir-cum-novel *This*

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<sup>116</sup> Alan Taylor, ‘Scottish Review of Books Interview: James Robertson’, *Scottish Review of Books*, Volume 9, Issue 2 (2013) pp. 4-6, (p. 5).

<sup>117</sup> James Robertson, ‘James Robertson’ in (ed.) Isobel Murray, *Scottish Writers Talking 4* (Glasgow: Kennedy & Boyd, 2008) pp. 121-179, (p. 160).

<sup>118</sup> *LLS*, p. 522.

<sup>119</sup> Harris.

<sup>120</sup> Janice Galloway, ‘Anything But Ordinary’ in *The Edinburgh Review*, Issue 130: Wynd (2010) pp. 12-16, (p. 12).

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.* p. 14.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

*Is Not About Me* (2008). The text is based on Galloway's childhood experience and the relationships she had with her mother and sister and follows the semi-fictional character 'Janice' from early childhood to puberty and secondary education. Galloway maintains that the text is '*Not About Me*' and it is important to note her emphasis on the fictional nature of *NAM* and writing in general. However, Galloway also makes it clear she is always writing from experience at some level.<sup>123</sup> Galloway emphasises the fictional nature of the characters in *NAM* and she is:

Acutely aware that the stories we tell about our own lives are either elaborated, or full of things we've misremembered, or things that we've written over the top of, or several memories clustered together.<sup>124</sup>

The novel considers the ways in which childhood memories of home and family relationships can both form and misinform one's construct of self. King suggests that in many narratives of the self 'we are witness not to lives and identities as fixed and given, but improvised, constructed, negotiated in conditions of danger or shame, class or family conflict',<sup>125</sup> highlighting the effect of the relationship with one's surroundings on the self, and particularly the importance of domestic relationships. Lavinia Greenlaw notes *NAM* is 'a model of how to write out of, rather than about, yourself, and a concentrated account of how the world acts upon us when we are too young to take action against it.'<sup>126</sup> The idea of writing 'out of yourself' evokes connotations of writing that comes from a deeper, inner self, and also suggests the novel is more than about 'me'; Janice's story can provide truths for the reader too. Furthermore, in terms of the persistence of self, 'writing out of yourself' almost has connotations of an involuntary ejection of words, as though the story will unavoidably and unapologetically tell itself. Galloway concludes 'Anything But Ordinary' by commenting on how Breughel 'restores our faith, our dignity: he shows us we were at least there',<sup>127</sup> highlighting her emphasis on the persistence of self and her recognition of the importance of seemingly 'ordinary' people's lives, who provide the subject matter for *NAM*. Ultimately, Galloway argues that the whole experience of childhood is about 'forging your way forward somehow and that was what [she] wanted to get across'<sup>128</sup> in

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<sup>123</sup> Janice Galloway, 'Interview with Zoë Strachan', *Creative Conversations*, Glasgow University Chapel, University of Glasgow, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2016.

<sup>124</sup> Janice Galloway, 'Janice Galloway in Discussion with Jenny Diski', *London Review Bookshop Podcast* 133, 24<sup>th</sup> September 2008 <<https://itunes.apple.com/gb/podcast/janice-galloway-this-is-not/id734373360?i=169567981&mt=2>> [Accessed November 2015].

<sup>125</sup> King, p. 7.

<sup>126</sup> Lavinia Greenlaw, 'Caught in the Middle', *The Guardian*, 13<sup>th</sup> September 2008 <[www.theguardian.com/culture/2008/sep/13/biography](http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2008/sep/13/biography)> [Accessed November 2015].

<sup>127</sup> Galloway, 'Anything But Ordinary', p. 16.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

*This Is Not About Me*. This image of moving ‘forward’ is key as it features in all three texts this thesis considers and is symbolic of the persistence of self.

The complex workings of a family unit and its relationships are central to *NAM* and Rachel Cooke notes that Beth, Janice and Cora do not love each other in ‘the usual ways’.<sup>129</sup> In a 2008 interview with *The Herald*, Galloway notes, ‘I realised to my surprise that it was my mother I was writing about’,<sup>130</sup> yet she continues to argue *This Is Not About Me*:

As a writer, you just need to shift your head out the way and let whatever is rising subconsciously come out. It’s a story about human nature. How you work out who you can trust, what you can trust, and the biggest question of all – what the hell is going on?<sup>131</sup>

This question of ‘what the hell is going on?’ is key to the search for self, and in asking ‘who am I?’ Galloway implies that the self-awareness advocated by Adam Smith is vital in order to be aware of, and to trust others. As King notes the notion of ‘self’ establishes the self as distinct, individual, different *from* the other’,<sup>132</sup> but this also identifies the need to note the ‘other’ and to have an awareness of others. In order to gain a sense of distance in *This Is Not About Me*, some names have been changed in the novel: although ‘Janice’ remains the same; her sister Nora becomes ‘Cora’; her mother’s name is changed from Janet to ‘Beth’, while her father, James, becomes ‘Eddie’. Nora was born seventeen years prior to Janice; her mother was forty when she conceived Janice, apparently mistaking her symptoms as the onset of menopause.

The title *This is Not About Me* immediately playfully suggests there is in fact much about ‘Me’, despite Galloway’s insistence: ‘it is not a book about me, I think it is a book about the experience of growing up and how we become who we are’,<sup>133</sup> and the universal search for self is the text’s central concern. In the same way, Janice’s primary school teacher returns her play to her, with the comment that writing is ‘not about *me me me*.’<sup>134</sup> In addition, the title also signals a lack of self and voice, as Janice assumes the position of quiet observer, which is emphasised by the repetition of ‘*Shhhhh*’<sup>135</sup> throughout. Later in the book, when Cora and one of her many admirers are in the box room where Janice, Cora

<sup>129</sup> Rachel Cooke, ‘The day my sister set fire to my hair’, *The Guardian*, 21<sup>st</sup> September 2008, <<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/sep/21/biography.books>> [Accessed November 2015].

<sup>130</sup> Anon., ‘All About My Mother’, *The Herald*, 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2008 <[www.heraldsotland.com/news/12760191.All\\_about\\_my\\_mother/](http://www.heraldsotland.com/news/12760191.All_about_my_mother/)> [Accessed February 2016].

<sup>131</sup> ‘All About My Mother’.

<sup>132</sup> King, *Memory*, p. 31.

<sup>133</sup> Diski.

<sup>134</sup> Janice Galloway, *This Is Not About Me* (London: Granta Books, 2009) p. 231 (This and subsequent references are to the Granta Books edition).

<sup>135</sup> *NAM*, p. 25

and Beth live, Janice is banished to the window, where she glares out at the shops and ‘imagined being over there instead of here, looking at the ordered rows of pens and writing paper, the comics and Observer’s books in clean, white covers.’<sup>136</sup> Blending into the background affords Janice a role within the family unit and in gazing out of the window she is able to imagine she is elsewhere, becoming both outsider and insider. She continues to seek order and stability in a household that is disordered and centres around dysfunctional family relationships.

Unlike Cora, Janice is ‘mousy, withdrawn and nearly five: in bed at night I barely breathed. Creeping bloody Jesus, Cora said. You wouldn’t know if she upped and died.’<sup>137</sup> However, there is also an awareness of the uncertainty in Janice’s life, and a sense of her anxiety and fear, which suggests another reason for her silence. Greenlaw notes that Galloway ‘doesn’t so much redraw the past as reignite it so that we see the world flare up or collapse or slam into her, without warning or sense’,<sup>138</sup> emphasising the lack of safety and unpredictability the young Janice faces through use of violent words such as, ‘flare’, ‘collapse’ and ‘slam’. In later life Galloway claims, ‘I distinctly remember thinking that nobody was connected with anybody. Everybody told lies, everybody was untrustworthy.’<sup>139</sup> For example, the details of her father’s death are ‘half-remembered, misremembered, bent out of shape by lies and heavy truths.’<sup>140</sup> Galloway says part of her purpose in writing the memoir was to reveal and work through ‘what happened to you [...] the stuff you have to make sense of before you have anything to offer the world’,<sup>141</sup> implying her own search for self as a writer. In all of the texts considered in this thesis, Galloway’s *This Is Not About Me*, Ron Butlin’s *The Sound of My Voice* and James Robertson’s *And The Land Lay Still*, there is the idea of the importance of understanding, forgiving, and accepting one’s self, both past and present, in order to form meaningful relationships with others. Even the dedication in *NAM*, ‘To my mother, for then; my husband, for now’, suggests the shift in selves in both the novel and in Galloway’s life and ultimately, Galloway states: ‘there is somebody called Janice in this book, but she is not me now.’<sup>142</sup> According to Cooke, Galloway does not fill her memoirs with ‘the knowing reflections of the adult’, rather, ‘she has crept on her hands and knees, right into the world of her childhood self.’<sup>143</sup> As King notes this further suggests the ‘complex and shifting

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<sup>136</sup> *NAM*, p. 95.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.* p. 85.

<sup>138</sup> Greenlaw.

<sup>139</sup> ‘All About My Mother’.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> Diski.

<sup>143</sup> Cooke.

relationship between past and present selves',<sup>144</sup> the importance of forming a relationship with one's self, and the ways in which the self evolves and develops across time and through interaction with others.

References to photographs feature in both *This is Not About Me* and *And the Land Lay Still*. Marie-Odile Pittin-Hedon notes that in *LLS*, the 'central photographic metaphor of the book [...] reminds the reader of the intrinsic but key notion of perspective that is inherent in any reconstruction of national identity.'<sup>145</sup> However, for Mike, the photographs also prove to be of importance in terms of personal identity, and the 'key notion of perspective' can be applied to the history of, or evolving self as well as the nation. The word 'perspective' implies distance and suggests the importance of reflecting on one's past selves in order to move forward, and the importance of former selves on the present will be further discussed below. As 'perspective' is also an individual viewpoint it is open to interpretation and Angus' photographs enable Mike to 'construct a story, his own story, out of his father's pictures',<sup>146</sup> a story which Pittin-Hedon identifies as something that is not a 'monolithic or fixed whole, but rather a multiplicity of possible journeys'.<sup>147</sup> Similarly, in *NAM*, photographs are often used to expose the gaps between truth and reality, but unlike *LLS*, the photographs are 'read'<sup>148</sup> through a child's eyes and there is an emphasis on Janice's desire for security, certainty and selfhood which is sought through looking at photographs of her and her family. Marianne Hirsch suggests that photographs can provoke 'a moment of self-discovery'<sup>149</sup> and often act as 'traces of an irrecoverable past',<sup>150</sup> where one tries or hopes 'to find some truth about the past, mine and my family's'.<sup>151</sup> However, Hirsch, like Galloway the adult writer, knows that photographs cannot tell the whole truth as 'Looking at them we both construct a fantastic past and set out on a detective trail to find other versions of a 'real' one',<sup>152</sup> suggesting the ideal photographs can represent versus the reality of life. *NAM* opens with a description of a photograph, which is also on the cover of the 2008 edition: 'This is my family. We're ranged on a sofa and too close because the sofa is meant for two. The photographer's

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<sup>144</sup> King, p. 3.

<sup>145</sup> Marie-Odile Pittin-Hedon, *The Space of Fiction, Voices From Scotland in a Post-Devolution Age* (Glasgow: Scottish Literature International, 2015) p. 60.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid. p. 67.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid. p. 67.

<sup>148</sup> Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1997) p. 1.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid. p. 2.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid. p. 5.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid. p. 6.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid. p. 14.



idea.<sup>153</sup> Their positions on the sofa, ‘meant for two’, immediately create a sense of the tension between the three female characters: Galloway aged five, her mother and her sister, ‘the older woman is placatory, the younger truculent, the girl anxious. Her mouth is pressed shut.’<sup>154</sup> Janice’s firmly closed mouth exemplifies her role as observer early on in the novel as she is depicted again as silent and still. Meanwhile Cora remains a dominant presence throughout the novel, overruling both Janice and Beth on many occasions, which is suggested here in her aggressive body language: ‘Her shoulders are high, chin forward like a boxer, her half-shut eyes wondering who the hell you think you’re looking at’,<sup>155</sup> she is ‘full-on all over.’<sup>156</sup> The reader is informed there is a photographer present and therefore, ‘we’re not at ease, not really, but if every picture tells a story we want this story to suggest we amount to something, that we are, at the least, getting by.’<sup>157</sup> While Janice’s adult self is able to interpret the photo, her childhood self is still aware of tensions between the women. In the novel, the ability of Janice, her mother and sister to endure is emphasised and although they may not have much, they are indeed ‘getting by’, which Galloway argues is ‘what makes human beings heroic’.<sup>158</sup>

In *And the Land Lay Still*, the novel opens as Mike Pendreich is working on an exhibition of his father’s photos and as he does so, he is drawn to recall memories of growing up in Scotland.<sup>159</sup> Robert Alan Jamieson notes, ‘By going to see one of Angus’s former lovers in search of assistance, Michael sets off a process of reminiscence’,<sup>160</sup> with the photographic images evoking memories of people and place. Memory plays an important role in the novel, and the time period of the photographs which feature in the exhibition, ‘The Angus Angle: Fifty years of Scottish Life, 1947-1997’,<sup>161</sup> correlates with the historical period covered in the novel, so that Angus’ photographs ‘document’<sup>162</sup> both Scotland’s story and the lives of the characters in the novel. By the end of the novel, many of the characters come together at the exhibition’s Private View in the fictional National Gallery of Photography in Edinburgh, either as guests or as subjects in the photographs. Mike describes the opening photograph of the novel: ‘You’re looking at probably the only

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<sup>153</sup> *NAM*, p. 1.

<sup>154</sup> Greenlaw.

<sup>155</sup> *NAM*, p. 3.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.* p. 1.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2.

<sup>158</sup> Christie Leigh March, ‘Interview, Christie Leigh March and Janice Galloway, 21 March 1999’, in (ed.) Sophy Dale, *Exchanges, Edinburgh Review Issue 101* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp. 85-98 (p. 96).

<sup>159</sup> Robertson, Interview with *Scottish Book Trust*.

<sup>160</sup> Robert Alan Jamieson, ‘Book Review: And the Land Lay Still by James Robertson’, *The Bottle Imp*, Issue 8, November 2010, pp. 1-2, (p. 1).

<sup>161</sup> *LLS*, p. 26.

<sup>162</sup> Jamieson, p. 1.

photograph in existence of the three of us together. My father, my mother and myself, I mean', <sup>163</sup> the only image in the archive that has not been taken by Angus. However, the words, 'My family, such as it was. My father moved out later that year and they got divorced not long after that', <sup>164</sup> place emphasis on the transient nature of memories and reveals that photographs do not necessarily emulate reality, with this particular photo revealing the 'contradiction between the myth of the ideal family and the lived reality of family life.' <sup>165</sup> Like Galloway's description of photographs from her childhood, Mike is aware of the distance between what the photo appears to depict and the reality of the events surrounding it, 'whatever this photo was recording it wasn't family happiness.' <sup>166</sup> Mike considers his appearance in the photo, 'it looks like him, the way he was – but it doesn't feel like him', <sup>167</sup> which suggests the potential for change, and how Mike's former self has developed into his present self. The development of selves is further revealed in the words, 'Michael and Mum and Dad. And they became Mike and Isobel and Angus. Shifting, uncertain identities', <sup>168</sup> as their relationships break down shortly after, with the family assuming their own individual identities. The novel jumps back and forth in time as Mike recalls a memory from his schooldays when he is asked if he is gay. When his friend Freddy says, 'I think my brother is', Mike remembers, 'It seemed to reveal to [him] something not about Freddy's brother, not even about Freddy, but about himself.' <sup>169</sup> Years later, when Mike acknowledges his own sexuality, his new sense of self-understanding is reflected in the phrase 'I finally knew who I was.' <sup>170</sup> In the past tense 'was', there is the suggestion that Mike now has an understanding of his past self, but there is also the implication of the effect that this acceptance of, and relationship with, his past self has on the present, 'I finally know who I am'. There is also the further implication that there is a past self and a present one; and that this proves that identity across time is fluid, not fixed, suggesting, 'I finally know who I was', in a play on past and present tenses and selves.

Furthermore, when he visits a gay bar for the first time, for Mike, 'simply pushing through its doors was an act of self-recognition', <sup>171</sup> further suggesting his newfound self-knowledge and acceptance of self. However, Mike's mother Isobel is not so accepting at first, forcing Mike to argue 'This is who I am, so you may as well get used to it. [...]

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<sup>163</sup> *LLS*, p. 6.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.* p. 7.

<sup>165</sup> Hirsch, p. 8.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.* p. 10.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.* p. 9.

<sup>168</sup> *LLS*, p. 13.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.* p. 24.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.* p. 77.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.* p. 81.

Perhaps somewhere deep inside he'd hoped for a miracle, an acceptance',<sup>172</sup> which reveals that self-acceptance does not necessarily correlate with that of others. Mike asks Isobel, 'Do you want me as I am or as you'd prefer me to be? [...] Do you want a bit of honesty in your life?'<sup>173</sup> The word 'honesty' suggests Mike has reached a point of reconciliation between selves, whereas Isobel is still concerned with outward appearance and the opinions of others; 'she was working out how to accommodate the dreadful fact into the other facts of her existence.'<sup>174</sup> When Mike is beaten up in Edinburgh walking home he thinks:

Well, I had a choice. I could have betrayed myself [...] or I could've done what I did. And I did what I did, and that was the right choice, but there's a price, Michael Pendreich, for being gay in this country, and you just paid it.'<sup>175</sup>

This idea of self acceptance is key to finding a sense of self, and there is the suggestion that although the consequences may be unpleasant, Mike has made the 'right choice' by being true to himself and his sexuality. As Miller identifies, 'how inconceivable it is really to love others [...] 'if one cannot love oneself as one really is',<sup>176</sup> suggesting the importance of self-acceptance in order to form meaningful relationships with others. Mike's friend Sam tells him if you are gay, you have to 'flaunt it',<sup>177</sup> 'Why?' Because if you don't, if *we* don't, we're still not visible',<sup>178</sup> which reveals the prevailing attitude to the gay minority and their mistreatment,<sup>179</sup> but also the idea of promotion of both self and sexuality in order to be seen. However, for Mike, his search for self is not about promoting his sexuality or the beliefs of others, but rather, a newfound awareness and acceptance of who he is, and although this includes his sexuality, it relates to his wider construct of self. The chapter of the novel dedicated to Mike's story concludes with a conversation between Mike and his lover Murdo, who has never had a sexual relationship before:

'But you could have gone away. You could have gone some place where you could have been yourself.'

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<sup>172</sup> *LLS*, pp. 82-83.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.* p. 84.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.* p. 88.

<sup>176</sup> Alice Miller, *The Drama of Being a Child and the Search for the True Self*, translated by Ruth Ward (London: Virago Press, 1987) p. 14.

<sup>177</sup> *LLS*, p. 89.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>179</sup> In England and Wales, homosexuality was decriminalised for men over the age of twenty-one by the 1967 Sexual Offences Act. However, it remained illegal to be homosexual in Scotland until 1980. See: Steven Brocklehurst, 'Comin Oot: The fabulous history of gay Scotland', November 2015, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-34910016>> [Accessed August 2016].

Murdo doesn't often get angry but he flared up at that. 'Be myself? Do you think I've not been myself all these years? Do you think I would have to go away from here to be myself? This is my home. I love it.'<sup>180</sup>

Murdo's anger shows that his sense of self comes from the feeling that he belongs, an identity of place and, like Mike, that is not defined by sexual identity. However, unlike Mike, Murdo has been content to stay in the small community where he grew up, where, 'the possibility that he might have sex with another person had never really entered his mind.'<sup>181</sup> Although Murdo is private, 'he'd never made a pretence',<sup>182</sup> further reinforcing the idea of the importance of being honest both with oneself and in relationships. At the end of the first chapter, Mike and Murdo's relationship remains slightly discordant, but for Mike, 'although he feels the lack of Murdo, he also likes the fact that they are independent and alone',<sup>183</sup> and ultimately able to be themselves, both together and separately. Arguably, although Mike and Murdo pursue selfhood in different ways, their searches for self are equally honest.

The photographs in *NAM* are important in the sense that they reveal things about these three women's lives and their relationships with each other. Most of the photographs are of women, 'These were my people',<sup>184</sup> and very few men feature in the novel. Galloway suggests this is partly due to the women in her family, who, 'were very forceful'.<sup>185</sup> Carole Jones notes that, 'Male dominance is not merely subverted in Galloway's novels; men's naturalised authority is dismissed out of hand in a radical feminist re-envisioning of gender relations',<sup>186</sup> to the extent where men are almost entirely absent from *NAM*. This is often due to death and alcoholism and Jones also comments that Galloway's corpus is 'suffused with male death'.<sup>187</sup> Eddie goes out drinking as 'The house, he said it more than once, [...] was always full of bloody women.'<sup>188</sup> At times in her fiction, Galloway may seem critical of male figures, however, there is the sense in *NAM* that she also yearns for a responsible male voice. The women in the book have to live without men, albeit sometimes by choice, for example, both Beth and Cora leave their

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<sup>180</sup> *LLS*, p. 144.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.* p. 143.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.* p. 144.

<sup>184</sup> *NAM*, p. 10.

<sup>185</sup> 'All About My Mother'

<sup>186</sup> Carole Jones, 'Burying the Man that was: Janice Galloway and Gender Disorientation' in (ed.) Berthold Schoene, *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007) pp. 210-218, (p. 218).

<sup>187</sup> Carole Jones, *Disappearing Men: Gender Disorientation in Scottish Fiction 1979-1999* (Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi, 2009) p. 69.

<sup>188</sup> *NAM*, p. 33.

husbands. However, Eddie is far from the ideal husband, he is portrayed as a ‘clumsy’,<sup>189</sup> drunk, ‘a whole series of accidents waiting to happen’,<sup>190</sup> and dies when Janice is young. While Eddie’s death may seem insignificant, it becomes more intriguing in terms of the lack of male protagonists in the novel, as Beth and Eddie’s first child, Robert, is also dead, and Cora leaves not only her husband, but abandons her son too. Although Cora will only read books written by men, and the voices of Elvis and Tom Jones are listened to on the record player, notably these men remain at a safe distance. Cora’s choice of novel may reveal her own personal search for a male role model or male voice, resulting in her suppression of the female voices around her, namely Beth and Janice’s. Meanwhile, Janice is so moved by the male singers she hears on the record player that she rations her listening time, until:

As I’d learn to do years later with sex, [I] would effect the blankest of faces in the hope I’d look as though I hadn’t done it at all. I wasn’t stupid. I knew the words were soppy and that real men didn’t say those things out loud.<sup>191</sup>

It is notable in this most intimate of relationships with another person, that it becomes so alien and lacking in emotion, with the ‘blankest of faces’. For Janice, her mother and sister, it seems that to express emotion is to reveal a weakness and leave yourself vulnerable. Their relationships appear increasingly more fragile throughout the novel as they keep each other at a distance, and Mary McGlynn notes ‘the inadequacies of family’ in Galloway’s writing,<sup>192</sup> yet it is clear the women also rely heavily upon one another. It becomes evident that in order to form meaningful relationships, it is necessary to show some level of emotion. In line with recent theories of affect, Zahavi notes that one’s experience and understanding of others is often fallible, however, ‘This should not cause us to conclude that we cannot understand others and that empathy is to be distrusted.’<sup>193</sup> Therefore, it may be necessary to make oneself vulnerable in order to be open to others and to enable the self to feel. The words ‘real men’ reveal Janice’s distrust of men, as she has little experience of love or affection from any of the men she has encountered. However, Jones also notes that Galloway makes a ‘reconstructive move in inserting a redeeming male figure’,<sup>194</sup> and later in *NAM*, Janice describes Beth’s partner Duncan: ‘[Men] took up lots of space but they were *handy*. [...] He knew about oiling hinges. He’d shifted the

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<sup>189</sup> *NAM*, p. 39.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.* p. 247.

<sup>192</sup> Mary, McGlynn, ‘“Make Out it’s Not Unnatural At All”: Janice Galloway’s Mother Tongue’ in *Narratives of Class in New Irish and Scottish Literature* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008) pp. 131-172, p. 134.

<sup>193</sup> Zahavi, p. 155.

<sup>194</sup> Jones, *Disappearing Men*, p. 69.

heavy record player and wasn't even pink from the effort.'<sup>195</sup> While Duncan may not necessarily be described as a 'redeeming' male figure as he only features momentarily, he is a kind man, but Janice's focus remains purely on Duncan's physical attributes and his practicality, rather than engaging at an emotional level. The reader is told Janice's mother liked 'warm men, men who made her laugh, and who sang and played and smiled with all their teeth on show',<sup>196</sup> whereas, 'Cora's tippie was good-time boys with a mean lip.'<sup>197</sup> However, there are negative connotations of crocodiles associated with these teeth-baring smiles, providing further connotations of 'crocodile tears' and of falsity. This is also reminiscent of Joy's psychiatrist in *The Trick* who 'smiled slowly like a crocodile',<sup>198</sup> so that like Janice, Joy concludes: 'You have to be suspicious of everything.'<sup>199</sup> As McMillan notes, the protagonists in Galloway's writing must find their own way 'to go on without armour, even without love, to forgive people for letting one down',<sup>200</sup> to begin to trust others and to forgive themselves. Janice suggests that if one wants to hide one's emotions, it is safer to watch television, which also 'brought us men',<sup>201</sup> but via another medium for maintaining only small doses of men in their lives. For these women there is a sense of danger and vulnerability in showing any signs of emotion, but Shiach advocates the possibility of 'openness to the Other rather than the obliteration of the Other',<sup>202</sup> an openness which Jones suggests informs Galloway's 'foregrounding of relations[hips]'<sup>203</sup> in her writing.

Although the women hurt each other, both emotionally and physically, they can rely on each other, whereas men are often shown to be unreliable. For example, when Beth is locked outside in the rain and Eddie plays draughts with three-year-old Janice 'in the middle of the most awful, ghastly, domestic mess',<sup>204</sup> Galloway describes the event: 'I [...] couldn't possibly have known how to play draughts, but it was almost like he made the metaphor of playing games literal.'<sup>205</sup> She reveals Eddie's stony disaffectedness in the face of Beth's desperation:

He doesn't even look up, just goes on fishing in the drawer. [...] He snaps his fingers again, knowing I'll turn away from her, that I'll turn towards him. [...] But she's still behind me, getting louder. It makes no sense he can't see. Whether he

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<sup>195</sup> *NAM*, pp. 243-244.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.* p. 250.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>198</sup> Galloway, *The Trick*, p. 102.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.* p. 103.

<sup>200</sup> McMillan, p. 158.

<sup>201</sup> *NAM*, p. 248.

<sup>202</sup> Morag Shiach, *Hélène Cixous: A Politics of Writing* (Oxford: Routledge, 1991) p. 23.

<sup>203</sup> Jones, *Disappearing Men*, p. 68.

<sup>204</sup> 'All About My Mother'.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*

can or not, he doesn't. And for now, for this moment, I know something. There is what is real and what people can force you to pretend is real, and pretending is wrong.<sup>206</sup>

In the words 'real' and 'pretending is wrong', there is a sense of Janice's newfound awareness of the complexities of adult behaviour and relationships, the concept of right and wrong and the manipulative nature of her father. Galloway the adult writer understands his behaviour, but Janice as a child could only feel in a physical way: 'I don't know it in as many words but I know it in my fingers. They're stiff, rusted up with refusal.'<sup>207</sup> Janice's search for truth and stability is highlighted by numerous references to lies woven throughout the novel, 'Things were wrong in our house. Things were not the way things should be.'<sup>208</sup> At Christmas, Janice sees Beth and Cora with the presents and realises 'There was no magic, only your own family hiding things in wardrobes and taking them out when they thought you didn't know.'<sup>209</sup> Janice feels an immense sense of guilt for what she has witnessed, but she also feels guilty for the resulting decision to pretend she has not seen the presents:

We were all pretending together now, even me. [...] In the morning I would pretend the presents were a fine surprise. [...] But I had a sneaking feeling they'd see a difference in my face and *know*. This had something to do with growing up, the lying and the knowing at the same time. It changed the look of you, the way your eyes met someone else's. It made you feel torn in two.<sup>210</sup>

Janice's feeling of being torn in two represents her transition from innocence to experience, or 'the fall'. Her feelings of guilt may also be due to emphasis placed upon Janice being 'good'<sup>211</sup> throughout the novel, and in terms of both her behaviour and academic performance she lives up to Beth's expectations. However, to the reader, Janice also proves to be morally good.

In a particularly uncomfortable scene in the novel, where Cora has sex while Janice is in the room, banished to the window and left alone again, Janice feels 'bored and embarrassed. Something wasn't right, but what it was escaped me.'<sup>212</sup> However, Cora further punishes her, violently 'hauling me from the window to the zed-bed with her fist tangled in my hair.'<sup>213</sup> Cora plays language games with Janice by pretending her bleeding

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<sup>206</sup> *NAM*, p. 49.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.* p. 162.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.* p. 112.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>211</sup> In *The Trick* being good is also central to Joy Stone, 'her goodness is based on a desire to please and that every failure would lead to more guilt.' (See: Horst Prillinger, *Family and the Working-Class Novel 1984-1994* (Germany: Peter Lang, 2000) p. 182).

<sup>212</sup> *NAM*, p. 95.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.* p. 96.

nose was an accident; that she merely slipped, ‘Did you bump yourself?’ she said. Her voice was gentle, almost sad’.<sup>214</sup> Her ability to shift in tone and register is particularly sinister. Galloway’s own ability to reveal the bottomlessness of language demonstrates how language usage does not necessarily correlate with reality and the complexities of human relationships, often concealing rather than revealing. Cora leaves Janice with one final threat; ‘You tell her the truth, now. You fell down’,<sup>215</sup> leaving Janice feeling confused and alone: ‘My face still hurt. My chest hurt. It was stuffed with lies.’<sup>216</sup> The way Janice feels as a result of the behaviour and lies of others also reveals how her self can be compromised or repressed by events she cannot control. There is almost a sense of jealousy as Cora has ‘gone off quite the thing, chirpy’,<sup>217</sup> while Janice is left alone and she knows that is wrong, ‘she should have been with *me*’,<sup>218</sup> echoing the ‘me’ in the novel’s title.

Cora is a complex character and her unstable mind is revealed throughout the novel as Janice continues to be verbally and physically abused by her, and like Joy in *The Trick*, there are strong hints that Janice’s ‘problems in forming healthy relationships are rooted in an abusive childhood.’<sup>219</sup> Janice’s experience of trauma at the hands of Cora contributes to her lack of voice as often ‘one cannot communicate [the trauma] to others.’<sup>220</sup> In one particularly violent episode the reader is told:

Cora tanked up the hallway and belted me hard enough to set me sprawling against the bathroom door, where I ricocheted, fell, and cracked my face against the enamel lip of the bath. My nose bled like a tap.<sup>221</sup>

This proves to be the first occasion where her mother actually acknowledges and apologises for Cora’s behaviour. The reader is told, with Cora, ‘You had to be braced [...] what I learned was a lifelong suspicion of treats, promises, the expectation of pleasure’.<sup>222</sup> The suspicion of pleasure links back to Janice’s ‘blankest of faces’ which implies a fear of pleasure, but also emphasises her notion of life as a trick or a game due to a complete lack of certainty in her relationships with those around her. When something good happens in Janice’s life, it is often followed by punishment in the form of physical abuse from Cora.

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<sup>214</sup> *NAM*, p. 97.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.* p. 99.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.* p. 98.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.* p. 99.

<sup>219</sup> Thomson, Alex. ‘Alienation and Community in Contemporary Scottish Fiction: The Case of Janice Galloway’s *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*’ in (ed.) Scott Lyall, *Community in Modern Scottish Literature* (Leiden/Boston: Rodopi, 2016) pp. 160-178, (p. 171).

<sup>220</sup> Van der Wiel, p. 7.

<sup>221</sup> *NAM*, p. 235.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.* p. 102.



Like many victims of domestic violence, 'I had bruises and bumps and grazes and scuffs and could make up stories about how they had got there without even realising I was doing it.'<sup>223</sup> For example, Janice impresses the school with her singing, however, the next day, Cora sets fire to her hair, which is passed off as another 'accident'<sup>224</sup> and leads Janice to believe that 'Good things were followed by bad [...] to remind you the ground you stood on was not, would never be, stable.'<sup>225</sup> However, the climax of Cora's violent, uncontrollable and controlling nature takes place in a horrifying scene where she forces Janice to eat an ice cream; 'I felt her tongue push and the cold mess slither from her mouth to mine, swilling to the back of my throat before I registered what was happening.'<sup>226</sup> As a result, Janice phones the Samaritans, but 'The words wouldn't come. They wouldn't even start. So I hung up.'<sup>227</sup> Her inability to speak suggests Janice's lack of voice, but also reveals the effect of trauma on the self, that some experiences are simply too horrific to describe. Linda Jackson writes on selves in Galloway's fiction:

When reading her writing, one is aware of a penetrating and relentless search for ways of understanding human interaction, for new and experimental ways of tracing the layers of complexity that inform our attempts to enact, or, at least occasionally, touch upon the truth of feeling. In a response perhaps to the perceived failure of attempts to communicate these feelings adequately, we find characters retreat from the fray, close down into an intense and driven interiority.<sup>228</sup>

Jackson highlights the ways in which Galloway reveals the complexity of characters' interactions with each other and how at times they struggle to understand themselves and one another, and this is mutually reinforcing. It is clear at this point in the novel that Janice is unable, even via telephone, to communicate her feelings, however, crucially she is able to keep moving forward and to return home.

Jenny Diski notes that despite their fractured relationships, Galloway displays 'an enormous amount of love, not just for Cora but also for [her] mother and it comes across quite powerfully',<sup>229</sup> to the extent where Diski suggests that both Beth and Cora become 'extraordinarily loveable'<sup>230</sup> in spite of their flaws. While it may be hard to agree with Diski's view that they are 'lovable', it is certainly possible to view these women as admirable in their ability to endure. Galloway has suggested her sister Nora was 'probably

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<sup>223</sup> *NAM*, p. 190.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.* p. 179.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.* p. 180.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.* p. 335.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 336-337.

<sup>228</sup> Linda Jackson, 'There Is No One At The Other Side? Protecting Selves in Galloway's Writing' in (ed.) Linda Jackson, *Exchanges: Reading Galloway's Fictions* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004) pp. 1-6, (p. 2).

<sup>229</sup> Diski.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*

ill’,<sup>231</sup> however, she continues to praise her tenacity, ‘she was always completely a survivor and there’s something admirable about that.’<sup>232</sup> McMillan notes that ‘the women are in different ways trying to find a way to live, a way to *be* in more or less adverse circumstances.’<sup>233</sup> In some senses, Cora can be read as the little sister, due to ‘an edge of uncontrolled craziness underneath.’<sup>234</sup> However, Cora is almost lovely at times, taking Janice to the fair for example and treating her to ice cream. Greenlaw argues *NAM* demonstrates ‘the kind of love a child goes on offering regardless of what comes their way’,<sup>235</sup> and both Cora and Beth inspire Janice’s affection in spite of their flaws. Galloway is surprisingly forgiving as she notes, ‘I can recognise that situation is rubbish without blaming somebody for it.’<sup>236</sup> In the end, Janice comes to the realisation: ‘My mother needed me [...] you don’t get everything in this life and you don’t just leave people. It mattered to think about that and go home’.<sup>237</sup> Greenlaw notes that although ‘Beth can be blunt and remote’, she is ‘unsentimentally devoted’<sup>238</sup> to her family and it is clear their relationships, however fractured they may be, are key to this family’s survival.

*The Sound of My Voice* (1987) deals with another character’s struggle for self in a fragmented domestic setting, this time from an adult male’s perspective. In the novella Ron Butlin ‘gives an intricate and intimate portrayal of Morris Magellan, a biscuit company executive whose life is not as clear and calm as it might seem’<sup>239</sup> and the reader witnesses his ‘inability to cope’.<sup>240</sup> Butlin employs second-person narration, which makes depictions of Magellan’s life seem at the same time ‘accusatory and accusing, and certainly stark.’<sup>241</sup> For example, the novella abruptly opens, ‘You were at a party when your father died’,<sup>242</sup> which immediately makes the reader sympathetic towards Magellan; however, this sympathy is soon undermined when he sexually assaults Sandra, a girl he meets at the party. Braidwood argues the second-person narration, providing the reader with a three-dimensional view, serves to make Morris’ despicable and cruel actions ‘seem, if not

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<sup>231</sup> Diski.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> McMillan, p. 155.

<sup>234</sup> *NAM*, p. 308.

<sup>235</sup> Greenlaw.

<sup>236</sup> Diski.

<sup>237</sup> *NAM*, p. 337.

<sup>238</sup> Greenlaw.

<sup>239</sup> John Self, ‘Ron Butlin: *The Sound of My Voice*’, *Asylum*

<<https://theasylum.wordpress.com/2007/09/30/ron-butlin-the-sound-of-my-voice/>> [Accessed Jan 2016].

<sup>240</sup> Jules Riley, ‘Ron Butlin, ‘The Sound of My Voice’’, *Scottish Literary Journal*, Supplement No. 42, Spring 1995, pp. 32-33 (p. 32).

<sup>241</sup> Self.

<sup>242</sup> Ron Butlin, *The Sound of My Voice* (Edinburgh: Canongate Publishing Ltd, 1987; reprinted London: Serpent’s Tail, 2002), p. 1. (This and subsequent references are to the Serpent’s Tail edition).

reasonable, then perhaps understandable.<sup>243</sup> However, while Morris' behaviour towards Mary and his children, 'the accusations', may be excused due to his alcoholism and the death of his father, it remains impossible to justify his treatment of Sandra and this event highlights that it is necessary for Morris to change in order to forgive himself. Butlin's decision to write in the second-person has implications in terms of the narrative concept of self, where the self is constructed through first-person narration and David Velleman argues that it is 'ascribing an autobiographical narrator to the self [...] that brings selfhood to life'.<sup>244</sup> Therefore, the second-person narration acts as a way of revealing Morris' lack of voice and self due to his lack of first-person self-narrative. Irvine Welsh claims the second-person narrative allows Morris' 'inner voice to maintain clarity as his life increasingly disintegrates',<sup>245</sup> but it also serves to 'disorientate'<sup>246</sup> the reader and neither reader, nor narrator, nor speaker seems to be in touch with the self. That is, until the final line of the novella where Morris' car screeches to a halt and he begins to cry 'Your tears – and mine'<sup>247</sup> in a reclamation of self. Like Welsh, Stevenson argues the second-person narrative allows Morris' 'voice of sanity' to 'address his disturbed, everyday self',<sup>248</sup> alluding to Morris' mental instability, which is partly due to his heavy drinking, but it could also be argued drink becomes a form of release from his 'everyday self'. The conflicting selves in *SMV* reveal Morris' fragmented self and the moral dilemmas he faces as a result of his lack of willingness to face and question his actions. Welsh continues to state that by adopting this device, 'Butlin forces us to empathise with Morris, insinuating the reader into the core of his life, yet simultaneously, and strangely producing a sense of distance.'<sup>249</sup> Thus the reader almost becomes the central character, or at least part of the narrative, yet remains an outsider, experiencing a sense of unease at the lack of control over Magellan's actions.<sup>250</sup> In this relationship between reader and protagonist, the reader is forced to experience life through Magellan's eyes and in feeling like an outsider, gains insight into Magellan's peripheral position in his relationships with his family and

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<sup>243</sup> Alistair Braidwood, 'Indelible Ink: Ron Butlin's 'The Sound of My Voice'', *Dear Scotland* <<http://dearscotland.com/2011/02/07/indelible-ink-ron-butlins-the-sound-of-my-voice/>> [Accessed January 2016].

<sup>244</sup> Meyers, p. 213.

<sup>245</sup> Irvine Welsh, 'Foreword' to Ron Butlin, *The Sound of My Voice* (Edinburgh: Serpent's Tail, 2002) pp. 7-9 (p. 8).

<sup>246</sup> Braidwood, 'Indelible Ink'.

<sup>247</sup> *SMV*, p. 114.

<sup>248</sup> Randall Stevenson, 'Introduction' to Ron Butlin, *The Sound of My Voice* (Scotland: Black Ace Books, 1994) pp. 5-8 (p. 6).

<sup>249</sup> Welsh, 'Foreword', pp. 8-9.

<sup>250</sup> Katy McAulay, 'Ron Butlin – *The Sound of My Voice*', *The List*, 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005 <[www.list.co.uk/article/2812-ron-butlin-the-sound-of-my-voice-1987/](http://www.list.co.uk/article/2812-ron-butlin-the-sound-of-my-voice-1987/)> [Accessed January 2016].

colleagues. Wallace echoes Welsh's view, arguing the second-person narrative serves to implicate the reader:

The narrating voice, by turns manic and monotone, becomes a suitably protean identity: not merely Morris Magellan's inner self or conscience providing commentary critical and protective on his life, but a network of transactions embracing an implied author-surrogate, character and reader who revolve around each other.<sup>251</sup>

Therefore, reader, narrator and character become one, yet remain disjointed, like Morris himself, who is a fragmented self, and is both the central character and narrator. McAulay suggests the reader's uneasiness 'mirrors Morris' own experience as he engages in a battle for supremacy over his drinking, his actions and his shame.'<sup>252</sup> However, as Welsh argues, the control 'rests with the drug'.<sup>253</sup> It becomes increasingly clear throughout the novella that alcohol is Magellan's drug of choice as it 'slows things down and smoothes out the rough edges.'<sup>254</sup> Despite his comfortable and seemingly successful 'Thatcherite' life, Morris is deeply unhappy; prompting Welsh's feeling that 'we sense that the guy is doomed.'<sup>255</sup> For example, the narrator tells Morris (and the reader), 'At home your wife and children [...] love you and need you. You know all this, and know that it is not enough',<sup>256</sup> in fact he often feels 'suffocated by his wife's love and devotion'.<sup>257</sup> On the surface Morris Magellan seems to have everything, but the banalities of modern life are not enough. The suggestion is that Morris is looking for deeper meaning and humanity, but first he must achieve a sense of self.

It is clear Morris' relationships with his colleagues, his intimate relationship with his wife, and his role as a father to their two children are deeply affected by alcoholism. Wallace claims Butlin painstakingly creates an 'innovative technical framework through which the clinical and psychological realities of alcoholism and its patterns of euphoria, withdrawal and delirium can be contained, examined and expressed, and also formally enacted.'<sup>258</sup> Donald Goodwin describes alcoholism as a 'compulsion to drink that leads to

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<sup>251</sup> Gavin Wallace, 'Voices in Empty Houses: The Novel of Damaged Identity' in *The Scottish Novel Since the Seventies: New Visions, Old Dreams* ed. by Gavin Wallace and Randall Stevenson (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993) pp. 217-231 (p. 229).

<sup>252</sup> McAulay.

<sup>253</sup> Welsh, 'Foreword', p. 9.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid. p. 8.

<sup>256</sup> *SMV*, p. 20.

<sup>257</sup> Riley, p. 32.

<sup>258</sup> Gavin Wallace, 'Voices in Empty Houses: The Novel of Damaged Identity' in (eds.) Gavin Wallace and Randall Stevenson, *The Scottish Novel Since the Seventies: New Visions, Old Dreams* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993) pp. 217-231, p. 228.

a breakdown in the victim's ability to function'.<sup>259</sup> He continues to state: 'alcohol produces a classical amnesia called 'blackout', which occurs most frequently in alcoholics'.<sup>260</sup> Morris suffers from such blackouts in *SMV*, where the reader is told 'no memories mean no surprises',<sup>261</sup> providing a link to his traumatic childhood that is reminiscent of Janice's desire to suppress certain memories and emotions. For victims of childhood trauma, these memories often become detached or repressed, 'freefloating in time'.<sup>262</sup> Morris must confront the traumas of his past in order to move forward in the present, as these repressed memories interfere with 'the normal course of life',<sup>263</sup> according to Van der Wiel, therefore preventing him from thinking about the future 'by disallowing the traumatic event to be given a place in the past'.<sup>264</sup> When Morris wakes from a particularly heavy period of drinking with a basin beside him, matter-of-fact language is used to describe the after-effects of his drinking, 'At least you hadn't been sick: it was still clean'.<sup>265</sup> The basin represents Magellan's physical and emotional emptiness, and the suggestion is that alcohol affords him a method of self-preservation. However, although *SMV* may be factually correct in terms of portraying the symptoms of alcoholism, the novella is ultimately more complex. Butlin is interested in revealing the way alcohol both contributes to and is a result of Morris' fragmented self, but also the effect it has on his relationships with those around him and in turn, the effect that has on Magellan's ability to feel he belongs.

Morris begins each day with good intentions, choosing new clothes for a 'new morning', 'Something fresh, clean and crisp',<sup>266</sup> and there is the use of humour when the reader is told, 'you didn't want to waken Mary – and so, nothing too crisp',<sup>267</sup> as though she may hear the metaphorical crispness of the clothes. Due to his 'blackout' Morris has forgotten his behaviour the previous night, in actual fact Mary retrieved the basin 'for the carpet, not for you',<sup>268</sup> revealing the ways in which alcohol can alter memory and self. To Morris, everything seems 'Perfect, perfect'<sup>269</sup> and he is filled with positivity at the prospect of the new day. The sun is shining and he beckons his family: 'hurry to hear the birds – hurry to breathe and live.'<sup>270</sup> However, Mary is angry with him and Morris comes to the

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<sup>259</sup> Donald W. Goodwin, *Alcoholism: The Facts*, Third Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) p. 34.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.* p. 15.

<sup>261</sup> *SMV*, p. 79.

<sup>262</sup> Van der Wiel, p. 7.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>265</sup> *SMV*, p. 79.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.* p. 80.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.* p. 78.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.* p. 80.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*

realisation; ‘In a moment the house would be empty apart from you standing there, isolated.’<sup>271</sup> His sense of utter isolation and loneliness within a busy household reveals the extent of the breakdown of relationships with those around him and forces him to realise ‘the more you drank, the harder, the more painful it became.’<sup>272</sup> Reminiscent of *The Trick*, where Galloway employs typography such as speech bubbles, magazine cuttings and play-scripts, ‘Like an actor learning his lines,’<sup>273</sup> Morris must learn to ‘play the part of ‘Morris Magellan’ convincingly [...] In time you hope to convince even yourself’,<sup>274</sup> exposing Morris’ current expression of self as artificial. Jules Riley notes that Morris is ‘a man confused by his past’,<sup>275</sup> which reveals his need to make sense of the past in order to form an honest relationship with his self before he can do so with others.

Also reminiscent of Galloway’s writing, and of *This is Not About Me* in particular, is an emphasis on the construct of relationships and an awareness of the dishonest nature of human interactions at times, and according to the narrative concept of self, it is not possible to determine the truthfulness of others’ self-narratives. Further advocating the narrative concept of self, where a sense of self ‘is constructed by and through narrative: the stories we all tell ourselves and each other about our lives’,<sup>276</sup> Morris’ relationship with Mary is described like a book: ‘each page has two or three lines of actual text at the top, your contribution; the remaining nine-tenths of the page is her commentary and footnotes’,<sup>277</sup> suggesting he has little control over his life and perhaps little care, only contributing ten per cent. Furthermore, his wife Mary plays the part of ‘leading lady’,<sup>278</sup> reinforcing the idea of his life as a ‘conventional script’,<sup>279</sup> while the reference to ‘stage names’<sup>280</sup> suggests it is a fictional, idealised representation and not one of his true self. For example, he selects clothes to ‘mediate between the day outside you and the day inside you’,<sup>281</sup> revealing the conflict between his inner self and the persona he portrays to the outside world. In a scene where Mary is applying make-up, there are further connotations of the false, exterior self and of Morris as an outsider. He watches her from a distance as she applies her make-up, a voyeur, ‘you felt excluded and even jealous, perhaps, of this

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<sup>271</sup> *SMV*, p. 82.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.* p. 74.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.* p. 20.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>275</sup> Riley, p. 32.

<sup>276</sup> King, p. 2.

<sup>277</sup> *SMV*, p. 25.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.* p. 21.

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.* p. 80.

intimacy she had with her appearance'.<sup>282</sup> The word 'intimacy' suggests Mary knows herself, yet her superficial exterior suggests she too is lying by only forming a relationship with her outer appearance and not with her inner self. Furthermore, 'as she spoke you could see her face already strained with the effort of making that smile and its reassurance',<sup>283</sup> emphasising the tension and disconnection in their relationship as they lie to each other and themselves. Morris's conversations with Mary and the 'accusations' reveal his lack of voice and as Self notes, they are more like 'shattered monologues',<sup>284</sup> further suggesting Morris' inability to communicate and his lack of voice. He often uses different voices and personas in an attempt to diffuse tension between Mary and him. For example, one morning Morris suggests '*Petit déjeuner sur l'herbe?*' in a charming manner, continuing his act under the guise of a gentleman:

'I hope you can do me the honour of breakfasting with me, ma'am?' you declared in a gentlemanly tone. [...] 'I have done what I could to arrange it to your comfort', you continued as you led her through the kitchen. 'For the sky I have chosen a sea-blue with a few light clouds to relieve its –' You paused theatrically for a moment as though searching for the *mot juste*, 'it's rather too overwhelming grandeur.'<sup>285</sup>

The use of different accents and languages further emphasises Morris' idea of his life as a play where he is the leading role, using characterisation in order to try and communicate with Mary. The 'light clouds' are reminiscent of the recurring snow imagery throughout the novella, but they also serve as pathetic fallacy to suggest there is tension bubbling under the surface. Like the sky, the morning cannot be as perfect as Morris makes it seem at surface level and he is soon singing 'The Mud Song'; 'Mud, mud, glorious mud, / Nothing quite like it for cooling the blood...' <sup>286</sup> while the light clouds become heavier. Furthermore, the phrase '*Petit déjeuner sur l'herbe?*' conjures an image of Édouard Manet's painting *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1863), which also reveals the conflicting nature of relationships between men and women. In the painting the men are clothed while the women are naked and Manet's use of chiaroscuro emphasises the differences between the sexes by juxtaposing the feminine and masculine forms. There is also a distinct lack of interaction between the three main subjects in the foreground and the female bather in the background, much like Mary and Morris' inability to converse.

The use of the French '*mot juste*' is ironic, as it would seem the French language further removes Morris from the 'exact word'. Similarly, as a young child Morris is

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<sup>282</sup> *SMV*, p. 27.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>284</sup> *Self*.

<sup>285</sup> *SMV*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.* p. 35.

rendered ‘too distressed to speak’,<sup>287</sup> due to fear of his father. Occasionally he ‘hopefully’ asks questions, ‘You were three years old and still believed he would respond to you’,<sup>288</sup> before falling silent due to a lack of acknowledgement and love from his father. Therefore Morris’ inability to communicate in adulthood could be linked to his lack of voice in childhood, and Caruth notes that the individual cannot explain or understand traumatic events due to not fully experiencing them in the first instance, so they are ‘never fully integrated into understanding’,<sup>289</sup> rendering such experiences as repressed and unresolved. Magellan’s memories of his younger self reveal his lack of self early on, as a result of his overbearing father, in a way that is reminiscent of Janice and Cora’s relationship in *NAM* and also of Mike Pendreich and David Eddelstane’s indifferent fathers in *LLS*. For Morris, this develops into a ‘persistent attempt at silence’<sup>290</sup> in adulthood, where he is often ‘Unable to finish the sentence’,<sup>291</sup> which further signifies his lack of voice. Throughout *SMV* there are examples of the self-suppression of Morris’ voice and laughter, where he catches himself ‘almost laughing aloud’<sup>292</sup> for example, and there is an emphasis on the sound of his voice when he does speak out loud, often accidentally, ‘you said aloud’,<sup>293</sup> as he tries to silence his inner voice. Morris is cautious of speech and is acutely aware of the effect it may have on others, like searching for the ‘*mot juste*’, he realises ‘An inattentive gesture or remark could have brought down the whole building, or, at the very least, cracked the walls from side to side’,<sup>294</sup> suggesting the wrong word might have catastrophic effects. Furthermore, the music that provides a soundtrack to Morris’ life increases in volume in order to fill his silence, also reminiscent of Janice in *NAM* who expresses herself through singing, Morris ‘turn[s] up Bach to sing along.’<sup>295</sup> Anderson notes the way in which music can enable people to feel emotion, where the ‘lyrics and tone’ of music can momentarily disrupt ‘the circulation of despair through the ingression of the tragedy of another’,<sup>296</sup> therefore allowing the self to relate to other selves and to feel hopeful.

In addition, the use of second-person narration highlights Morris’ fragmented self and Braidwood notes, ‘Magellan’s narrative voice is separate not only from the reader, but apparently from himself.’<sup>297</sup> Meanwhile, Wallace claims Morris’s inner voice is

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<sup>287</sup> *SMV*, p. 5.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2.

<sup>289</sup> Caruth, p. 153.

<sup>290</sup> *SMV*, p. 99.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.* p. 91.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.* p. 74, p. 86.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.* p. 74.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 74-75.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.* p. 94.

<sup>296</sup> Anderson, p. 743.

<sup>297</sup> Braidwood, ‘Indelible Ink’.



‘simultaneously self-delusory and self-accusatory; it does not know whether to love or hate him.’<sup>298</sup> The disconnection between Morris’ selves is further emphasised when the narrator states: ‘Every day, every moment almost, you must begin the struggle over again – the struggle to be yourself.’<sup>299</sup> The ‘struggle to be yourself’ is partly due to the fact Morris is ‘playing’ at being himself, he does not know who he is and is pretending in his stereotypical roles of father, husband and businessman, while also trying to conceal his ‘other’ self, the alcoholic. This can be seen in the lines:

Over the years you have become very skilful at sensing what is expected of you, irrespective of your own needs or wishes. [...] Instead you have known only the anxieties of performance.<sup>300</sup>

Like an actor before a performance Morris experiences the fear of forgetting his rehearsed lines, but this also reveals that in treating his life as a performance, Morris is not self-aware, but instead focuses on how he thinks he should portray himself to others, meaning his relationships lack authenticity. This idea is reiterated in the words: ‘two histories of your life: one that belongs to other people [...] and another that is yours alone’,<sup>301</sup> emphasising how Morris tries to please others by fulfilling his conventional roles, while hiding his inner turmoil. For the purposes of this thesis ‘authenticity’ can be defined as something that is ‘genuine’ or ‘true’, that to be ‘authentic’ is to be true to oneself and to be in possession of one’s own voice and emotions. Miller identifies the self as one who is ‘genuinely alive, with free access to the true self and his authentic feelings.’<sup>302</sup> Therefore, the authentic self, and authentic relationships, can be defined as those where one is open to feeling and to showing emotion in order to reveal their genuine or true self to both oneself and others.

However, Morris hurts those around him and remains unable to form any emotional connection with others due to his repression of his emotions. The fragmented nature of his self forces him to ‘carry the burden of two lives at least’,<sup>303</sup> and prevents him from knowing or accepting both past and present selves. Morris’ multiple ‘lives’ may refer to his complex childhood and its effect on him as an adult and alcoholic. Reminiscent of the fractured familial relationships in Galloway’s *NAM*, Butlin suggests ‘family dilemma’ is central to most of his fiction,<sup>304</sup> perhaps due to his own family dilemmas growing up.

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<sup>298</sup> Wallace, ‘Voices in Empty Houses’, p. 230.

<sup>299</sup> *SMV*, p. 20.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>301</sup> *Ibid.* p. 20.

<sup>302</sup> Miller, p. 15.

<sup>303</sup> *SMV*, p. 20.

<sup>304</sup> Alistair Braidwood, ‘Ron Butlin’, *Scots Whay Hae!* Podcast 19, 21<sup>st</sup> November 2014 <<https://itunes.apple.com/gb/podcast/scots-whay-hae!/id454320478?mt=2>> [Accessed January 2016].

Randall Stevenson describes *SMV* as a ‘painful’ novel but argues it could hardly be otherwise ‘given the dark legacies of childhood which shape the novel’s hero, Morris Magellan, and his readiness to pass these influences on to his own long-suffering family’,<sup>305</sup> where his own father’s excessive criticism is internalised and replicated in adulthood. In all of the texts this thesis considers it is clear that characters’ relationships with others can be harmed by their inability to disconnect with the ‘dark legacies of childhood’. This can be seen in Morris’ fractured relationship with his own family as a result of his childhood, and in Mike and Janice’s struggle to move beyond their own early childhood relationships to form meaningful relationships in the present. This further relates to the importance of truth and lies in *SMV*, as Morris struggles to ‘make everything appear real and true at all times’.<sup>306</sup> This is also reminiscent of *NAM*, where Janice’s childhood is likewise full of tricks and confusion. Similarly, for Morris, life is deemed a game revolving round a points system:

Twenty points when you were born – and in no time at all they marked you down to next to nothing. [...] you remember what it was like to have full marks, and to lose them.<sup>307</sup>

The suggestion is that Morris has undergone a transition from innocence to experience, from childhood to adulthood and to the pressure of feelings of guilt, as he fails to live up to the expectations of others. The older Morris gets, the greater his ‘sense of loss’,<sup>308</sup> until, ‘you had reached minus twenty, [and] only the minus sign was keeping you from full marks’,<sup>309</sup> suggesting the arbitrariness of his life. The notion of an existence represented by positive and negative numbers further contributes to Morris’ idea of life as an act, but also signifies how instantly the balance of events can shift. Ultimately it is Morris’ self-deception and denial that prevents him from finding his ‘self’. Goodwin describes an alcoholic’s repudiation, ‘as he lies to himself, he lies to others, and concealment becomes a game like the one children play when they raid the biscuit tin and hope their mother won’t notice.’<sup>310</sup> Thus alcohol not only alters Morris’ inner self so that his life becomes a game where he tries not to reveal his alcoholic self, it also makes Morris regress, in terms of the self-obsession and performance of his addiction. Butlin claims he is trying to show Morris’ inner world as opposed to his actual behaviour in *SMV*, which is central to his search for self. Furthermore, Butlin also reveals the differences between one’s self-awareness and the

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<sup>305</sup> Stevenson, ‘Introduction’, p. 5.

<sup>306</sup> *SMV*, p. 21.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.* p. 73.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.* p. 75.

<sup>310</sup> Goodwin, p. 36.

extent to which other people pay the price for Morris' lack of self-awareness,<sup>311</sup> emphasising that in order to develop meaningful relationships it is vital to become more honest and self-aware.

In *And the Land Lay Still*, Peter Bond's inability to interact with others is the result of, and compounds, his alcoholism. It is clear that he rejects, yet longs for, the company of others, to the extent where he imagines figures and hears voices in his head, which may also be a result of alcohol-induced psychosis. The loneliness, alcoholism and in turn, psychosis, further suggest Peter's 'lack of insight and self-awareness',<sup>312</sup> thus signalling the way the self can be affected by loneliness and alcohol abuse. Velleman claims individuality alone 'is not sufficient for selfhood',<sup>313</sup> therefore highlighting the need for relationships with other selves.<sup>314</sup> The opening of Bond's novel-within-the-novel shows his isolation and fragmented self:

All these fucking conversations in your head. Single-sided, a lot of them. One-versations. Nobody talking back, or you to yourself. Years, decades of dialogue, monologue. Thousands, tens of thousands of words. Millions. And who gives a fuck? You don't yourself but that doesn't stop the words battering round the inner wall of your skull.

Aye you do.

It would be good to have someone to talk to.<sup>315</sup>

The single-sided conversations highlight his loneliness, emphasised by the word 'monologue', which suggests his long conversations with himself and sometimes not even 'to yourself'. 'Monologue' also has connotations of an actor in a play, further highlighting the nature of his life as a game removed from reality in a way that is reminiscent of both Morris and Janice. Bond's inner voice is ever-present and intrusive; 'battering round the inner wall of your skull' suggests violence and death, yet he too remains unable to connect with his inner voice, or his inner self. Furthermore, his inability to interact with others has rendered him invisible; 'People see you but they don't speak to you, and you can't speak to them.'<sup>316</sup> His alcoholism provides another barrier between selves and voices, to the extent where 'I couldn't speak I was so drunk. [...] And I knew I was doomed.'<sup>317</sup> The suggestion here is that to lose one's voice is to be 'doomed', as voice is a means of self-expression,

<sup>311</sup> Jennie Renton, 'Sense of Belonging, interview with Ron Butlin', *Textualities* <<http://textualities.net/tag/ron-butlin>> [Accessed January 2016].

<sup>312</sup> NHS Choices Information, 'Psychosis - Symptoms', <<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Psychosis/Pages/Symptoms.aspx>> [Accessed April 2016].

<sup>313</sup> Meyers, p. 209.

<sup>314</sup> Meyers also argues 'it is by no means evident why we should concede that you can have/be a self without being capable of mundane forms of human bonding and interchange'. (p. 211).

<sup>315</sup> *LLS*, p. 231.

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.* p. 231.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.* p. 337.

intrinsically linked to the self. Bond's self, however, remains fragmented and disharmonious. For example, 'You kind of step outside yourself, watch yourself', is repeated throughout to reveal his disconnected or multiple selves and Pittin-Hedon suggests Bond 'inhabit[s] a zone which is properly speaking borderline.'<sup>318</sup> The phrase 'watch yourself' has wider connotations in Scots, as in, 'watch out', or 'take care of oneself',<sup>319</sup> further implying Bond's need for self-preservation. However, 'watch yourself' can also relate to watching one's behaviour in certain situations, or to 'choose one's words carefully'. Thus, like Morris' fear of saying the wrong thing, Bond is also wary of being careful of what he says, resulting in his silence. Bond's ability to step outside of himself is also reminiscent of Morris and 'brakes on or brakes off it didn't matter, you were heading for a crash anyway and you saw the whole thing and somehow there was nothing you could do to avoid it.'<sup>320</sup> Thus it seems despite being able to see his self objectively, and 'watching himself', Peter is unable to change the outcome of events or his lonely situation.

Furthermore, in Peter Bond's job as a private investigator, where 'he felt like he was acting in a film, playing the spy he never really had been',<sup>321</sup> he examines other people's relationships and families: 'worried parents, vengeful wives, controlling husbands, men who knew their business partners were ripping them off'.<sup>322</sup> However, despite this line of work, or perhaps because of it, he fails to form any human relationships of his own and 'Whenever he has company he likes, he ends up alone.'<sup>323</sup> In addition, Bond's idea of life as an act, a film or a play, further adds to the image of the arbitrariness of his life and reveals his lack of control. He finds a small sense of comfort in the continuity his landlord, Mr Fodrek, offers, 'a kind of reassurance in the fact that [he] calls round for rent [...] It's old-fashioned',<sup>324</sup> suggesting his desire to hold on to the past as it offers him comfort. However, the lack of relationship with Mr Fodrek as an individual further highlights Bond's inability to form relationships with others. In another scene, it becomes clear how unnatural Bond feels as a host in his own domestic sphere. When making tea for Croick, he opens a packet of digestives and thinks, 'It was absurdly domestic, one man making tea for another man, two men drinking tea together but not in a canteen or on a building site or in a café'.<sup>325</sup> His thoughts reveal an underlying connotation

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<sup>318</sup> Pittin-Hedon, p. 75.

<sup>319</sup> Dictionary of the Scots Language, <<http://www.dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/watch>> [Accessed September 2016].

<sup>320</sup> *LLS*, p. 338.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.* p. 354.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.* p. 341.

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.* p. 344.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.* p. 245.

<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.* p. 303.

of homosexuality, as Croick notes, ‘We could be a couple of queens, eh?’<sup>326</sup> However, their suggestion is it is not ‘masculine’ to make tea, or to share tea with another man unless it is in a public setting, which ultimately reveals Bond’s stunted view of human relationships and interaction.

To return to *The Sound of My Voice*, Morris repeatedly attempts to disguise his alcoholism and tries to show his family he cares by making them breakfast. However, on one occasion when he repeatedly burns the toast, Mary begins to offer a suggestion, ‘Maybe if you –?’<sup>327</sup> However, Morris interrupts: ‘You knew you couldn’t let her make suggestions. Not any more. That was all you had left: the right to state your own needs.’<sup>328</sup> All he has left of his self is his ability to make decisions, even though they may be poor decisions and often dictated by alcohol. He tries to convince himself that he is in control, ‘You know when to stop. No slurring and falling over for you.’<sup>329</sup> However, at a party Morris states: ‘I’m anybody’s now!’<sup>330</sup> ultimately revealing his lack of self-respect and self-control. Ultimately it is Morris’ inability to respect himself that prevents him from loving others and being loved. The lines: ‘*You* have never been accepted [...] *You* have never loved, hated or been angry’,<sup>331</sup> reveal his desire to suppress emotion, emphasised typographically by the use of italics. It is necessary for him to ‘let the poison out, the self-disgust’,<sup>332</sup> and to allow Mary to ‘Take me as I am’,<sup>333</sup> before he can feel again. Yule and Manderson advocate ‘wholeheartedness’ at the end of *The Glass Half Full*, which demands that ‘feelings of guilt, shame, envy, jealousy and anger are not repressed, are not allowed to fester, but are forced into the open where they can be considered, understood and so forgiven.’<sup>334</sup> Thus, in order for Morris to form meaningful relationships, it is essential that he does not repress his feelings, but in order to do so he must forgive himself first. Throughout the novel Morris’ inability to express his pain is revealed to the reader when, for example, he ‘wanted to cry, but couldn’t’<sup>335</sup> and when he longs for Mary to scratch him with her nails, drawing blood to release his pain: ‘If only she could have clawed her way into you, reached to the suffering deep inside, to touch it, to accept.’<sup>336</sup> Not only does he want her to scratch him so that he can feel something, but to etch away his façade until she

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<sup>326</sup> *LLS*, p. 303.

<sup>327</sup> *SMV*, p. 46.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.* p. 58.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.* p. 9.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.* p. 20.

<sup>332</sup> *SMV*, p. 77.

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>334</sup> Yule and Manderson, p. 94.

<sup>335</sup> *SMV*, p. 78.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.* p. 58.

reaches his inner self. He longs for the acceptance and approval of others, telling himself, 'You're looked up to. Respected',<sup>337</sup> but it becomes increasingly clear that Morris must learn to accept and respect himself before others can do so.

Morris' inability to feel even in the most intimate of moments can also be seen in characters such as David and Lucy Eddelstane and Peter Bond in *LLS*. David Eddelstane experiences conflict in his personal life due to his perverse sexual desires. As a young boy he reads *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928), but 'It wasn't what he wanted. It wasn't *exactly* what he wanted.'<sup>338</sup> The reader is told, 'He was an ordinary young man with prospects. And a twist',<sup>339</sup> and like Mike Pendreich, sexual desire poses a problem for David; however, it comes in the form of a shoe fetish, for which he feels the utmost shame:

There were times when he wished he wasn't who he was [...] The malevolent gremlin sitting in the depths of him, waiting to pop its grinning features out into the world when it was likely to cause maximum damage [...] He'd been carrying the little bastard around for decades, caressing, feeding, pacifying, indulging it, and it still wasn't tamed, still was both part of him and apart from him.<sup>340</sup>

David's self-disgust is clear, and is even more pronounced than that of Janice, Morris and Mike, perhaps due to his public role as an MP. His fetish becomes characterised as a 'gremlin', 'a little bastard', which is in some way separate from David's self, or the self he wishes to portray to the outside world. There are religious connotations of washing his sins away when the reader is told, 'Every so often he'd drain himself so thoroughly of his strange desire that he'd think he really had got it out of his system. He was cleansed, healthy, normal.'<sup>341</sup> However, his fetish also offers him some sense of control: 'it was wrong, or a secret, something that could trip him up but something that was his, his own'.<sup>342</sup> Like Morris, David is able to put on 'a good show',<sup>343</sup> but his lack of meaningful relationships and ability to express emotion is ultimately revealed in the sentence, 'On the surface he could communicate very well with people but he didn't *connect* with them'.<sup>344</sup> There is the idea again of conflict between surface, exterior appearances and relationships and the inner self, which is reinforced when Eddelstane states: 'Nobody knew what lay beneath the surface. He hardly knew himself',<sup>345</sup> which further suggests the need for self-knowledge and acceptance before loving others. This reveals not only David's lack of self-

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<sup>337</sup> *SMV*, p. 77.

<sup>338</sup> *LLS*, p. 412.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.* p. 470.

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.* p. 605.

<sup>341</sup> *Ibid.* p. 470.

<sup>342</sup> *Ibid.* p. 462.

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.* p. 463.

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>345</sup> *Ibid.* p. 459.

awareness, but his fragmented and disconnected sense of self, which is torn between interior desires and the exterior ‘normality’ he desperately tries to portray to those around him. In later years, David experiences an unhappy marriage as a result of his ‘abnormal’ desires and displays a similar pattern of rejection of responsibility to other men in the novels, ‘Whatever he was lacking it wasn’t to be found at home. He didn’t want to go home. He wanted to be out, unrecognized, without responsibility.’<sup>346</sup> David shares Peter Bond and the ‘wanderer’ Jack Gordon’s desire for anonymity, which could represent their rejection of their selves and their yearning to be someone else, which can also be seen in Liz Lennie’s escapism as she unnecessarily cleans her neighbour’s home. In the end however, David Eddelstane finally claims and accepts his self in a conversation with Bond in the concluding pages of *LLS* where he reveals his humanity. When Bond takes his revenge on his patronising superiors by bringing down the disgraced MP, which Pittin-Hedon describes as ‘a scathingly funny portrayal of the rise and fall of a Tory MP’,<sup>347</sup> Welsh however, notes that ‘rather than revel in the sleaze of his demise, Robertson brilliantly wrong-foots us by letting Eddelstane emerge as one of the novel’s most sympathetic characters, with a marvellous, dignified telephone confrontation’.<sup>348</sup> Eddelstane asks Bond to show a shred of human compassion, ‘a little mercy. No, not even that. A little kindness.’<sup>349</sup> Despite his sexual deviancy, Eddelstane demonstrates in the end great dignity and Bond is left wondering if it was worth it, ‘Betrayal of others, betrayal of self’,<sup>350</sup> ultimately signalling the importance of an honest relationship with one’s self. To know one’s self is to be able to form key relationships with others and that these relationships with self and other are central to the self.

Peter Bond is also unable to form meaningful sexual relationships, however, he seeks comfort from Lucy Eddelstane, only to be met with rejection from her too. When they sleep together, Bond describes the act: ‘they’d done sex’,<sup>351</sup> which is deliberately ambiguous grammatically. Unlike ‘they’d had sex’, which has connotations of self-acceptance, ‘done’ is impersonal and separates both Peter and Lucy from the situation and each other. This lack of human connection is reminiscent of Kennedy’s *So I Am Glad* (1995), where for the protagonist Jennifer, the language of sex is stripped of emotion and reduced to a list which acquires ‘joyless functionality’<sup>352</sup>: ‘THERE / NOW / LATER / and

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<sup>346</sup> *LLS*, p. 582.

<sup>347</sup> Pittin-Hedon, p. 56.

<sup>348</sup> Irvine Welsh, ‘And the Land Lay Still by James Robertson’, *The Guardian*, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2010 <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2010/jul/24/land-lay-still-james-robertson>> [Accessed February 2016].

<sup>349</sup> *LLS*, p. 611.

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>351</sup> *Ibid.* p. 608.

<sup>352</sup> Kaye Mitchell, *New British Fiction A. L. Kennedy* (New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2008) p. 83.

NOT (THERE, NOW, LATER) / YES and NO / DID and YOU / and / HAPPY? /

YET?’<sup>353</sup> This is also reminiscent of Janice’s description in *NAM*, where she notes that in future she would ‘effect the blankest of faces’<sup>354</sup> during sex. It is intriguing that these descriptions consider the characters’ lack of connection in moments of intimacy, when people should arguably be most able to relate to one another. The lack of connection suggests their inherent inability to form bonds with others, as a result of their inability to have a relationship with their selves. However, Peter does try to form some sort of connection with Lucy, or a ‘bond’, adding further irony to his name; ‘The two of us on one life-raft. I think we might just about keep one another alive’.<sup>355</sup> The ‘life-raft’ returns to the image of survival that exists throughout these texts, but also reveals Peter’s desire for the love and companionship of another human being and in all of these texts there is the suggestion that one needs the companionship of others in order to survive. Ricoeur advocates the possibility of incorporating the narratives of others into one’s own, in order to ‘open up new – and real – potentialities for the subject’s being in the world,’<sup>356</sup> thus demonstrating the potential of human relationships for the self.

Unlike the challenges surrounding homosexuality and hidden desires that characters face in *LLS*, in *SMV*, Morris’ is revealed as a sexual predator and his relationship with Mary centres around control, grief and his feeling of inadequacy. On one occasion, when Morris tries to have sex with Mary ‘despite the desire that filled you, it was quite soft’,<sup>357</sup> and ‘excitement began to give way to panic’.<sup>358</sup> His feeling of panic suggests Morris is afraid of feeling and is unable to relinquish control, which is necessary for him to be able to connect with Mary. Instead, Morris tries to form another sexual relationship with his assistant at the biscuit factory, at first describing his role as ‘Paternal almost’,<sup>359</sup> before abusing his position of power. Morris sexually assaults Katherine, conjuring memories of a younger Morris’ treatment of Sandra in the opening scene of the novel. It is significant that Morris cannot connect emotionally or physically with his wife, yet is able to force himself on others. The assault of these women seems to offer Morris a feeling of control, which he lacks in both of these stages of his life; he is unable to control his father’s death and has become increasingly less respected by his peers at the biscuit factory where he works and

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<sup>353</sup> A. L. Kennedy, *So I Am Glad*, (London: Vintage, 2004) p. 3.

<sup>354</sup> *NAM*, p. 247.

<sup>355</sup> *LLS*, p. 609.

<sup>356</sup> Rhodes, p. 2.

<sup>357</sup> *SMV*, p. 76.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>359</sup> *Ibid.* p. 52.



by Mary at home. Prior to putting his hand up her skirt, Morris decides to try and seduce Katherine:

That was when you decided: the next time Katherine gave you some letters, you would let your fingers touch hers as they had last time, and then – just the slightest pressure. [...] She's a really good girl – understands you much better than Mary, much better.<sup>360</sup>

His belief that Katherine understands him better than Mary further reveals his tumultuous relationship with his wife, but also has further implications in Morris' search for self-understanding and his denial of responsibility as he suggests the problem lies with Mary and not him. This search for understanding and human intimacy is emphasised when Morris notes, 'it's not sex, but affection. Real affection. That's what you feel for her – and it's returned',<sup>361</sup> which not only reveals Morris' complete inability to understand others, as Katherine does not return his affection, but also highlights that ultimately what he desires is to be loved. It is clear Morris desperately wants to be able to connect with others. However, at first it is only sexually and self-obsessively, without real feeling or regard for the women he manipulates and abuses.

The idea of former and present selves, and the effect of former dysfunctional relationships on a character's ability to form meaningful relationships in the present, is also evident in *SMV*. In the opening chapter the reader is introduced to Morris' father, who sits in his armchair while the young Morris is 'terrified to enter the room he was in – and yet quite unable to go away.'<sup>362</sup> In some ways Mary almost becomes a replacement father figure for Morris, instilling in him the same sense of fear and inadequacy as his father once did, although usually in a sexual sense where Mary is concerned:

You cannot go after her, nor go away. Every moment you have ever lived... As though, even now, you are still standing outside the lounge door, terrified to enter the room your father is in, and yet unable to tear yourself away.'<sup>363</sup>

However, the name 'Mary' has religious connotations of Marian, with particular Catholic resonances of everyday human obedience of faith, in the same way Mary demonstrates unwavering faith in Morris. Furthermore, in this way Mary could also be read as a mother figure for Morris and it is her who offers him the love his father could not, and through her human love, the chance of redemption. It is up to Morris to accept her love but first he must forgive his father and himself, because ultimately it is Morris who must save himself.

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<sup>360</sup> *SMV*, p. 58.

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.* p. 59.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.* p. 7.

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.* p. 102.

Morris also recalls his younger self in an anecdote about distance and the size of the world and he considers how he has changed:

During the thirty years since then you have learned to reason much better; these days, in fact, you rarely feel sadness or even the slightest disappointment. Soon you will be able to reason well enough to feel nothing at all.<sup>364</sup>

Morris' excessive alcohol consumption is partly responsible for his numbness and lack of feeling, and his alcoholism can also be read as the result of his difficult relationship with his father, who evoked only one thing: 'Fear.'<sup>365</sup> The young Morris seeks warmth and love from a father who cannot provide love, nor allow his son to express it: 'Any love you expressed, he crushed utterly.'<sup>366</sup> In the past, Morris would repeatedly fall in love with someone else, 'New energy would be released, and for a time you and your world would be safe once more. By now, however, you have exhausted that',<sup>367</sup> concluding that alcohol is his only love; 'if you had discovered alcohol earlier it might have saved a few broken hearts.'<sup>368</sup> Morris is also able to alter himself through drinking, which allows him to forget reality. This suggests his relationship with alcohol is a result of his father's cruelty and rejection, which left Morris feeling worthless and with the desire to reject his self. Thus, several of the 'broken hearts' may be Morris' own, with the implication that had he discovered alcohol sooner, he could have altered himself earlier in order to protect his inner self. However, this method of self-preservation is artificial as drinking only temporarily numbs his pain so he does not feel, preventing Morris from forming meaningful relationships with others or with his self. Therefore, Morris must learn to love and accept his former and present selves before he can feel anything for other people. For Ricoeur, the narrative concept of self enable selves to 'draw together disparate past events into a meaningful whole', allowing the future to be seen as 'a set of potential narratives'.<sup>369</sup> This idea of past, present and future narratives can be read in terms of the enduring selves these texts depict, and the characters' need for self-understanding.

Like Janice, Morris continues to seek 'One moment of certainty that for all the years to come would have been yours to recall at will, saying to yourself: that was *me*.'<sup>370</sup> However, 'Instead you spent your entire childhood in the corridor',<sup>371</sup> which suggests Janice and Morris' childhood selves were formed by the recognition, or lack of, given by

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<sup>364</sup> *SMV*, p. 7.

<sup>365</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.* p. 8.

<sup>367</sup> *Ibid.* p. 24.

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>369</sup> Rhodes, p. 2.

<sup>370</sup> *SMV*, p. 7.

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.*

others of their existence. Morris is portrayed as a silent outsider, on the periphery of societal and family life both as a child and an adult. When his father dies Morris is at a party, where he has flash-backs to his father sitting in his armchair, 'A squeeze from Andy and you're back again being frogmarched down the lane towards your father',<sup>372</sup> revealing the ways in which emotional response can trigger memories, where the traumatic event is experienced as a 'delay that carries the individual beyond the shock of the first moment'<sup>373</sup> and is only fully realised in later life. Although Morris experiences a lack of feeling in the face of his father's death, it does force him to confront his own mortality, 'You cannot bear to look at him for long – sensing the measure of your own life in the distance between this dead man and yourself.'<sup>374</sup> The phrase 'this dead man' is impersonal and further reveals the fractured relationship between father and son. Morris explains his father's death, 'he had a bad heart',<sup>375</sup> but notes the 'ambiguity'<sup>376</sup> of his remark, allowing the reader to gain insight into his inner thoughts. Thus, 'bad heart' literally suggests a medical condition, but in the metaphorical sense, it implies his father was unable to love and be loved, something Morris now shares, in spite of having been a loving child before his father's rejection. Horst Prillinger notes 'the only way to return into a normal life is to be 'loved back into existence'',<sup>377</sup> and this begins with self-love. However, it is hard for the reader to feel sympathy towards Morris due to his actions after the party, when he sexually assaults and attempts to rape Sandra, 'You had made her the visitor in her own room',<sup>378</sup> leaving the reader feeling somehow implicated through Butlin's use of the second-person 'you'. Magellan is drawn to Sandra's 'warmth',<sup>379</sup> something he so desperately craves. She is afraid, but Morris ignores 'The sound of her voice',<sup>380</sup> and attempts to physically project his childhood frustration onto Sandra: 'You were gathering into one moment all the years of his hatred and cruelty; you longed to push them so far into Sandra that –'<sup>381</sup> There is the suggestion Morris seeks to control Sandra, and to ignore her voice, in order to suppress his own emotions. Similar to his treatment of Katherine, ultimately Morris just wants to feel the warmth and love of another human being, disregarding whether Sandra is willing or not. Here, it is the sound of Sandra's voice that lingers and proves to be stronger than

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<sup>372</sup> *SMV*, p. 12.

<sup>373</sup> Caruth, p. 10.

<sup>374</sup> *SMV*, p. 12.

<sup>375</sup> *Ibid.* p. 13.

<sup>376</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>377</sup> Horst Prillinger, *Family and the Scottish Working-Class Novel 1984-1994* (Germany: Peter Lang, 2000), p. 185.

<sup>378</sup> *SMV*, p. 13.

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.* p. 15.

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid.* p. 16.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.*

Magellan's own, 'Each moment has become the sound of Sandra's voice pitched between anger and compassion.'<sup>382</sup> When he leaves Sandra's flat, Morris wants to cry, to feel something, but 'By yourself, however, you could do nothing.'<sup>383</sup> Since then, 'you have felt demons inside you [...] You have tried to keep pace with them, learning that Time is a straight line only to those needing to prove themselves sober.'<sup>384</sup> It is ambiguous whether the demons are an expression of his guilt surrounding his sexual abuse of Sandra, or if they are in response to his father's death. However, ultimately Morris' primary concern at this point is 'the fear of immortality in the pause between drinks.'<sup>385</sup> Like his father, Morris is unable to feel compassion and alcohol is able to provide him with freedom from being so he does not have to face his feelings.

Robertson's *LLS* also features shattered male relationships, and in particular that of a father and his son. For example, Don Lennie believes in nurture and in 'improving people's lives and improving the people as you did that'.<sup>386</sup> However, he watches his sons grow up to be complete opposites, which challenges his theory that a person's development is primarily influenced by their environment and upbringing. When Don meets his estranged son, he asks, 'who the fuck are you, Charlie? Who the fuck are you?',<sup>387</sup> revealing the alien relationship between father and son. Their physical and verbal violence leaves Don feeling like 'an old man whose son had just died.'<sup>388</sup> The metaphorical 'death' of his son suggests Don's acceptance that his son is unrecognisable to him and is the climactic breakdown of their relationship.

The importance of Morris' father to his sense of self is reminiscent of Janice's relationship with her mother, father and Cora, and of Mike's desire to live up to his father's expectations. Chapter three of *SMV* opens: 'You are thirty-four years old and already two-thirds destroyed.'<sup>389</sup> In this line the narrator may be referring to Morris' life expectancy or to his parents, if Morris is considered two-thirds his parents who are both dead. The language Morris' father employs is especially matter-of-fact; he repeatedly poses the question, 'What could you possibly know about love?'<sup>390</sup> In the face of his father's cruelty, Morris recalls that he wanted to 'pull all the world's darkness into yourself

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<sup>382</sup> *SMV*, p. 19.

<sup>383</sup> *Ibid.* p. 17.

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid.* p. 19.

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>386</sup> *LLS*, p. 418.

<sup>387</sup> *Ibid.* p. 449.

<sup>388</sup> *Ibid.* p. 451.

<sup>389</sup> *SMV*, p. 20.

<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.* p. 103.

to hide the unbearable shame he had thrust there.’<sup>391</sup> Like Cora, Morris’ father makes love a shameful thing. Even though that was many years ago ‘– now, as you stand alone at the window, you sense that same darkness, like mud, spreading everywhere around and inside you.’<sup>392</sup> The image of mud and darkness has connotations of being buried alive as it suggests Morris’ inner self, buried inside, is consumed by mud. The suggestion is the darkness he felt as a child is still there and has grown with Morris so that he is an empty void, which cannot be filled or fulfilled by alcohol. Like Van der Wiel’s assertion that ‘childhood experience moulds the adult’,<sup>393</sup> in an interview with Butlin, the interviewer Ryan van Winkle describes parents as ‘totemic and unassailable icons’, emphasising the difficulties an individual faces in looking at a parent in a critical way, in recognising their ‘fallibilities, even just their three-dimensionality, their humanness’.<sup>394</sup> All of these novels emphasise the difficulties, complexities and uncertainties of human relationships, but strongly promote the importance of human connections for the survival of the self. The suggestion is that Peter will have the opportunity for redemption, and arguably, he reaches a point of understanding of others, where he resolves that ‘next time around, you’ll live a better life.’<sup>395</sup> Despite Morris’ father, and Morris’ cruel treatment of Sandra and Katherine, the possibility of love still persists throughout *SMV*. Butlin writes with such ‘reassuring compassion’<sup>396</sup> that even though Morris has exhausted his own supply of hope, he is never entirely hopeless. Meanwhile Janice’s love for her mother and sister reveals the potential of human relationships and shared humanity, in spite of or because of everything.

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<sup>391</sup> *SMV*, p. 103.

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>393</sup> Van der Wiel, p. 3.

<sup>394</sup> Ryan van Winkle and Sasha de Buyl, ‘Ron Butlin, Donal McLaughlin and Eimear McBride Interviews: Family and Place’, *Scottish Book Trust* <[www.scottishbooktrust.com/book-talk/ron-butlin-donal-mclaughlin-and-eimear-mcbride-interviews](http://www.scottishbooktrust.com/book-talk/ron-butlin-donal-mclaughlin-and-eimear-mcbride-interviews)> [Accessed January 2016].

<sup>395</sup> *LLS*, p. 668.

<sup>396</sup> Nicholas Royle, *Time Out*, in *The Sound of My Voice* (London: Serpent’s Tail, 2002).

## Chapter Two: Belonging and Unbelonging

Themes of home and belonging play an important role in all three texts this thesis discusses and McGonigal and Stirling also note a ‘central concern with truth, and with the complex relations of the individual to the community’<sup>397</sup> in contemporary Scottish writing. In *This is Not About Me*, domestic, family and community life are strongly linked to Janice’s sense of home and where she belongs and McGlynn notes Galloway elevates ‘the significance of community and family, of personal (rather than national) pasts’.<sup>398</sup> At the start of the novel the statement ‘We belonged’<sup>399</sup> suggests that whether they liked it or not, Eddie, Beth and Janice were a family unit, ‘There was mother, there was father. There was me.’<sup>400</sup> However, in separating Janice from her mother and father with the full stop, Galloway suggests Janice does not quite belong, further emphasised by Beth’s lament, ‘If I’d just bloody known’,<sup>401</sup> that she was pregnant, life would have been different. Furthermore, repetition of ‘there was’ indicates that things will inevitably change and there is a sense of the impermanence and upheaval in Janice’s childhood. Different photographs are referred to throughout *NAM* to signify changing relationships and although they will not be the focus of this thesis, there is the implication that these photographs contribute to piecing together Janice’s development of self and sense of home. Subject matter includes:

Friends and long-since nameless acquaintances, children in groups and duets, pictures of shorn, stocky men playing accordions and pictures of women with rouge-blossom cheeks, cheering them on. We had women with pinnies [...] elderly women in matching sets [...] women under washing lines and shopping, getting on buses and showing off their nicest clothes; pictures of girls with pigtails and school ties, ribbon-haired toddlers and small groups of men on corners with varying lengths of fags.<sup>402</sup>

However, while there are lots of photographs, there are none of anything specific, ‘few of them, beyond this accidental beauty, gave much away’,<sup>403</sup> but it is the ‘accidental beauty’ of these photographs which is key to *NAM* and reminiscent of the reason for Galloway’s love of Breughel’s paintings. In capturing real, ordinary people’s lives, both the paintings and the photographs Galloway describes make the ordinary extraordinary. Furthermore, the photographs contain ‘gaps and curious omissions, more hidden than revealed’,<sup>404</sup> which

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<sup>397</sup> James McGonigal and Kirsten Stirling (eds.), *Ethically Speaking: Voice and Values in Modern Scottish Writing* (Amsterdam/New York, Rodopi, 2006) p. 10.

<sup>398</sup> McGlynn, ‘Janice Galloway’s Mother Tongue’, p. 171.

<sup>399</sup> *NAM*, p. 22.

<sup>400</sup> *Ibid.* p. 24.

<sup>401</sup> *Ibid.* p. 19.

<sup>402</sup> *Ibid.* p. 9.

<sup>403</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid.*

links to both Galloway, the writer, and the fictional Janice's search for self, returning to Galloway's idea that 'once you know where you're standing, you're on firm enough ground to give something to everyone else.'<sup>405</sup> That is, to know oneself is to be able to know others. In some ways Galloway uses photographs to try and piece together a sense of self, or former self and Hirsch suggests that to recognise oneself in a photograph is an act of 'identity as familiarity'.<sup>406</sup> At the start of the novel, she notes, 'All I know for sure about this house, [...] rests in two snaps'<sup>407</sup> and goes on to describe the photographs, both of which show her as a baby with her father, 'sitting on a tartan rug as though it's sunny'.<sup>408</sup> However, like Hirsch, Galloway writes, 'So much for snaps. Whatever was special about this dwelling doesn't show here',<sup>409</sup> which emphasises the lack of certainty in her life and that photographs cannot show the whole picture.

The feeling of distrust Janice experiences is connected with her belief that life is a game, she is playing the cards she has been dealt and for her, 'nothing feels solid. Nothing feels safe.'<sup>410</sup> At school, 'Sums were just tricks: the same old numbers forced through different obstacle courses. After the initial excitement, sums were just the same games, over and over.'<sup>411</sup> Janice develops an obsession with 'lies, lies, lies'<sup>412</sup> due to her realisation of the games people play in life, in the literal sense where 'noisy and unpredictable'<sup>413</sup> children are concerned. Janice fears her fellow classmates for their erratic behaviour unlike Beth, who by contrast likes children, 'You always know where you are with children.'<sup>414</sup> However, arguably the adults in Janice's life are equally capricious, and they play different kinds of complex games but 'Adults being inexplicable was just part of the drill'.<sup>415</sup> Janice is referred to as 'it' by her Auntie Kitty, 'It can play with our Alma',<sup>416</sup> which reveals the way those around her contribute to Janice's feeling that she does not belong and her lack of self-worth. As a child, Janice feels she only belongs around her mother and other adults:

I did not belong with children, even older ones like Alma. I belonged with middle-aged couples in Bowling Clubs [...] I belonged in the social rooms of bars with my uncles playing accordions while my mother sang.<sup>417</sup>

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<sup>405</sup> 'All About My Mother'

<sup>406</sup> Hirsch, p. 2.

<sup>407</sup> *NAM*, p. 6.

<sup>408</sup> *Ibid.* p. 7.

<sup>409</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>410</sup> *Ibid.* p. 49.

<sup>411</sup> *Ibid.* p. 138.

<sup>412</sup> *Ibid.* p. 69.

<sup>413</sup> *Ibid.* p. 101.

<sup>414</sup> *Ibid.* p. 144.

<sup>415</sup> *Ibid.* p. 32.

<sup>416</sup> *Ibid.* p. 30.

<sup>417</sup> *Ibid.* p. 31.

Although repetition of the word 'belong' suggests an element of belonging, the word 'it' has connotations of something inhuman and unwanted, in the same way Eddie shouts, 'Now sit',<sup>418</sup> as though she is a dog. It is hard to imagine how Janice forms any sense of belonging as Beth repeatedly tells her, 'I wish I'd never had you',<sup>419</sup> throughout the novel, while Cora takes great delight in cruelly telling Janice, 'We don't need *you*.'<sup>420</sup> In reality however, '*She's staying put*',<sup>421</sup> and Beth actually fights to keep Janice in a custodial battle. Thus, like the photographs, in the family's behaviour there is a contrast between appearances and reality, or how they truly feel about each other.

Another way in which Galloway suggests deception is through the outward appearance of Cora and the façade she creates with make-up. Described as 'the business of transformation',<sup>422</sup> at night, 'she'd reverse the process, return to her human shape, swabbing off layers of pan-stick and thick eyebrow pencil. Behind her back I watched her melt and change.'<sup>423</sup> One of the first things Cora does both in the box room where they live and when they return to the old house, is put up a mirror, with the radio 'shifted aside to make way for a mirror; bigger, higher up than the pocket affair my mother had made do with.'<sup>424</sup> Cora's make-up application is almost ritualistic, 'Powder on the sides of her nose, then 4711 behind the ears and on each wrist [...] Frock *first*, lipstick *after*.'<sup>425</sup> The word 'make-up' has connotations not only of Cora's desired glamour, but also of genetic make-up, and what comprises their family unit. Furthermore, it signals Galloway's sequel to *NAM, All Made Up* (2011). There are repeated references to material belongings, or in some cases the lack of them, throughout the novel, such as the washing machine and television. The reader is told unlike many, Beth 'didn't smoke, didn't drink, didn't gamble. [...] didn't gossip, do coffee mornings, overeat or fill the house with knick-knacks'.<sup>426</sup> Her secret pleasure was clothes: 'She had antique bags, polish-rich shoes, jackets with belts, brooches [...], contrast-trim suits, and at least three coats, detachable collars, scarves, head-squares, wild-coloured gloves.'<sup>427</sup> The long list of items reveals Beth's one release in life. Cora's obsession with her own superficial reflection is clear, 'stepping firmly in front

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<sup>418</sup> *NAM*, p. 48.

<sup>419</sup> *Ibid.* p. 63.

<sup>420</sup> *Ibid.* p. 160.

<sup>421</sup> *Ibid.* p. 162.

<sup>422</sup> *Ibid.* p. 81.

<sup>423</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>424</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>425</sup> *Ibid.* p. 201.

<sup>426</sup> *Ibid.* p. 131.

<sup>427</sup> *Ibid.*



of anyone else at the mirror [...] as though they had no substance at all',<sup>428</sup> yet Janice thinks, 'She could have no idea how wonderful she looked, I thought, how wholly free.'<sup>429</sup> The word 'substance' has connotations of physical presence, a tangible, solid self and the way in which Cora is able to erase Janice's entire existence in the act of ignoring her, as though if others do not see Janice she may disappear altogether. However, despite appearances, the suggestion is that Cora is not as confident and 'free' as she may seem and Janice sometimes catches her 'staring, eyes rimmed with flaking liner, mind off the hook. Her eyes without company had something frightening and sad about them, like the eyes of a drunk'.<sup>430</sup> 'Mind off the hook' has connotations of the phrase 'phone off the hook' suggesting Cora is unreachable or unattainable. Her 'mind off the hook' and sad eyes also show that although Cora 'was, apparently, self-contained',<sup>431</sup> it becomes increasingly clear she is 'an uncontainable package'.<sup>432</sup> Jenny Turner notes the complexity of the characters<sup>433</sup> and Galloway reveals that Cora is in fact as lonely and unsure of life and of her self as Janice. Therefore, make-up allows Cora to be someone else, more glamorous and more akin to the way she hopes to be. In the same way that clothes are Beth's vice, make-up and dancing offer Cora an escape from the monotony of their everyday lives. Meanwhile, for Janice, the shop-window and music offer some sense of release. Much of Janice's early childhood is spent sitting in the window of 'The Cabinette' looking out at the world; 'I had friends, a place in the window, something to do; through the narrow display glass, a view of the outside world.'<sup>434</sup> This highlights Janice's position as both outsider and insider, her 'friends' are the local customers, but she is content to have a role in the family.

Galloway lists the places from Janice's formative years: 'There was Granny McBride's freezing kitchen, Auntie Kitty's electric fire and walks to Dockhead Street [...] These things were the world, what counted.'<sup>435</sup> However, her use of the past tense indicates that although these 'things' used to matter, it will change with time. In Janice's early years her real sense of home and belonging is with her mother:

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<sup>428</sup> *NAM*, p. 83.

<sup>429</sup> *Ibid.* p. 202.

<sup>430</sup> *Ibid.* p. 102.

<sup>431</sup> *Ibid.* p. 83.

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid.* p. 84.

<sup>433</sup> Jenny Turner, 'I Wish I'd Never Had You', *London Review of Books*, Vol. 30, No. 19, October 2008, <<http://www.lrb.co.uk/v30/n19/jenny-turner/i-wish-id-never-had-you>> [Accessed November 2015] pp. 15-18, (p. 17).

<sup>434</sup> *NAM*, p. 38.

<sup>435</sup> *Ibid.* p. 24.

I belonged behind the skirts of her coat at the butcher's, the telly rentals shop, the Co and the doctor's [...] I belonged with her and felt keenly out of place anywhere else.<sup>436</sup>

Janice's strong attachment to Beth is further revealed at Rosebuds nursery where, 'Top Rosebud complained I was short on comprehension. [...] I did not, she explained, *fit in*'<sup>437</sup> and later when she goes to school, she is labelled with '*separation anxiety*'.<sup>438</sup> McMillan notes that 'Galloway is throughout [her corpus] concerned with women's relationships with their mothers'<sup>439</sup> and it is clear Janice heavily depends on Beth, her biggest fear is that her mother may leave her, 'I wondered if she really had left me this time, or called the Home'.<sup>440</sup> Throughout the novel Janice experiences a sense of fear of being taken to a children's home for bad behaviour, which again reveals the lack of safety and security in her life, but also demonstrates Galloway's precision of language, in the difference in images conjured by the words 'home' and 'the Home'.

Similarly, Saltcoats, the town Janice grew up in, is a seaside town with little sense of permanence: 'People came and went all the time.'<sup>441</sup> However, the list of shops and people within the wider community, such as, 'Mr Dixon, an elderly chap who came in every day, as though cigarettes were vegetables and best bought fresh',<sup>442</sup> does evoke a sense of her feeling of belonging in Saltcoats. Janice enjoys the excitement of the wider world The Cabinette brings to her life, where she is nicknamed 'Miss Fags' by the locals, which gives her a feeling of purpose. She is also safe in the shop, whereas at home with her father Eddie there is a feeling of unease, 'You knew he was in because of the way the air sat in the house. [...] In the right mood, I could feel him through the walls.'<sup>443</sup> This is contrasted with Aunty Rose and Angus' house, which had a lightness 'that was soothing, almost soporific. The crackle and charge of home, of nerves on stalks, was missing entirely.'<sup>444</sup> There is a positive change in tone when Beth and Janice leave Eddie for the safety of the box-room above the doctor's, and Janice seeks solace in the peace and quiet her new home offers alone with her mother. There is a real sense of her truly belonging in the domestic setting the box-room provides, 'The fire on, two soup pots on the ring, boiling up water, this was home.'<sup>445</sup> Greenlaw notes the way that many of Janice's

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<sup>436</sup> *NAM*, p. 31.

<sup>437</sup> *Ibid.* p. 32.

<sup>438</sup> *Ibid.* p. 114.

<sup>439</sup> McMillan, p. 162.

<sup>440</sup> *NAM*, p. 73.

<sup>441</sup> *Ibid.* p. 106.

<sup>442</sup> *Ibid.* p. 19.

<sup>443</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 38-39.

<sup>444</sup> *Ibid.* p. 218.

<sup>445</sup> *Ibid.* p. 74.

memories of home ‘take the form of inventories, as if her surroundings are the only thing she could make sense of.’<sup>446</sup> For example, she lists the contents of their new home: ‘We had one sofa bed, one telly, one comfy chair, one fireplace, one fireside rug, one sink, one mantelpiece complete with ornaments.’<sup>447</sup> Other domestic items included: ‘Plates, mugs and saucers, towels, soap, washing powder, Dettol, Vim, washing-up liquid, the tea caddy and sugar tin’,<sup>448</sup> and they are grateful for the few things they have: ‘What have we got? my mother would say, and look at me, expectant. We’ve got – she’d clap her hands together, say it loud – plenty!’<sup>449</sup> Cora, however, asserts ‘*I don’t do domestic*’,<sup>450</sup> meanwhile Janice thinks, ‘The word DOMESTIC was probably surfacing in red ink on my forehead’,<sup>451</sup> but ‘This was where I belonged: indoors, the washing machine chuntering, the necks of dishrags wrung in whispers and chamois cloth squealing.’<sup>452</sup> For Janice, housework is comforting and it offers her a sense of purpose and belonging, ‘It was an ordered and vital and necessary thing and I loved my mother for shoring it round me [...] I knew what love was.’<sup>453</sup> In *Modernism, Labour and Selfhood* Morag Shiach provides an argument for a relationship between work and selfhood, assuming the view that ‘we are the jobs we do’.<sup>454</sup> The implication is that in doing, ‘ordered and vital and necessary’ work, Janice too feels vital and necessary. Cleaning offers her the structure and sense of purpose, or self, her life otherwise lacks. Therefore, in order to feel she belongs, Janice must become aware of her self-worth and these things are mutually reinforcing.

Beth also takes pride in domestic chores and expresses her love for her daughters through cleaning, cooking and making Cora’s coffee; in the house there is often the sound of ‘her feet padding off to find the Nescafe jar’.<sup>455</sup> Back in the old house after her father’s death Janice notes, ‘It struck me more than once and in every room, that my former life here must have been enchanted.’<sup>456</sup> Even at the age of six she is aware of her former self, which suggests she has learned a lot since the death of her father and as a result of the violence she has witnessed and experienced. The old house also has notably better equipment; ‘We had an oven, hooks for kitchen knives, a counter, a drainer, a cupboard for

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<sup>446</sup> Greenlaw.

<sup>447</sup> *NAM*, p. 57.

<sup>448</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 57-58

<sup>449</sup> *Ibid.* p. 57.

<sup>450</sup> *Ibid.* p. 155.

<sup>451</sup> *Ibid.* p. 156.

<sup>452</sup> *Ibid.* p. 198.

<sup>453</sup> *Ibid.* p. 199.

<sup>454</sup> Shiach, p. 21.

<sup>455</sup> *NAM*, p. 209.

<sup>456</sup> *Ibid.* p. 128.

cups’;<sup>457</sup> ‘We had an indoor bathroom, two gardens, the station at the end of the road that led to the outside world. This was living. This was *life*.’<sup>458</sup> These domestic items represent everything Janice can be certain of in her life and McGlynn claims ‘the notion of home is intertwined with ideas of female domesticity.’<sup>459</sup> It is clear she gains further independence and a newfound sense of confidence when she meets Colin from Paisley and the encounter leaves her feeling ‘ready for the wider world’.<sup>460</sup> As Greenlaw notes, ‘Galloway has captured what it means to start to become yourself’,<sup>461</sup> and in the line, ‘I wanted my place in the scheme of things’,<sup>462</sup> it is apparent Janice is growing in strength and is becoming aware of her own self-worth in both her family unit and the wider community.

In *The Sound of My Voice*, for the adult Morris ‘home’ does not seem to refer to a physical place, but rather, the sense of belonging he gains from being in a state of drunkenness. In an interview with Neil Cooper, Butlin recalls a friend in London who was an alcoholic:

He would go off to work in the civil service in the morning looking absolutely immaculate. Then at night we’d meet, and he’d get mega-bloated then go home and continue drinking and end up in a really bad state. [...] There was this huge contrast between what was going on outside and what was going on inside.<sup>463</sup>

Such a contrast between ‘outside’ and ‘inside’ suggests the way in which alcohol is able to alter and fragment the self, resulting in multiple versions of the ‘self’. Although versions of selves are key to the makeup and evolution of the self, Butlin suggests the alcoholic self bears an element of falsity and façade as alcohol merely serves to mask and numb Morris’ feelings in the novella. However, Butlin emphasises *SMV* is not his friend’s story, but rather, ‘it is about men in their mid-thirties, who’ve achieved various things, but [...] begin to wonder who they are and what on earth they’re doing.’<sup>464</sup> Alcoholism and addiction are portrayed in recent Scottish fiction from Alasdair Gray’s *1982*, *Janine* (1984), Ian Rankin’s *Knots and Crosses* (1987) and James Kelman’s *A Disaffection* (1989) in the 1980s, to Irvine Welsh’s *Trainspotting* (1993), Laura Hird’s *Born Free* (1999) and A. L. Kennedy’s *Paradise* (2004). These texts reveal that such existential questions as ‘who am

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<sup>457</sup> *NAM*, p. 128.

<sup>458</sup> *Ibid.* p. 135.

<sup>459</sup> Mary McGlynn, ‘Janice Galloway’s Alienated Spaces’ in *Scottish Studies Review*, ASLS (eds.) Robert Crawford and Murray G. H. Pittock) Autumn 2003, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 82-97, (p. 84).

<sup>460</sup> *NAM*, p. 106.

<sup>461</sup> Greenlaw.

<sup>462</sup> *NAM*, p. 106.

<sup>463</sup> Ron Butlin in interview with Neil Cooper, ‘Ron Butlin – The Sound of My Voice’, *Coffee-Table Notes*, 20<sup>th</sup> April 2011 <<http://coffeetablenotes.blogspot.co.uk/2011/04/ron-butlin-sound-of-my-voice.html>> [Accessed January 2016].

<sup>464</sup> *Ibid.*

I?’ and ‘what am I doing?’ affect both men and women at some stage in life, as can be seen in the characters this thesis discusses. Indeed, Butlin continues to say, ‘the book’s not really about an alcoholic. It’s about all of us finding out who we are’,<sup>465</sup> and in turn, where we belong. Cooper also makes reference to a print of Edward Hopper’s *Nighthawks* (1942), which hangs on the wall of the restaurant where the interview takes place. *Nighthawks* depicts an all-night restaurant in which three customers have congregated, all lost in their own thoughts. Hopper reveals their alienation and isolation and according to *The Art Institute of Chicago*, the ‘anonymous and uncommunicative night owls seem as separate and remote from the viewer as they are from one another’.<sup>466</sup> Cooper suggests ‘Nighthawks’ is a ‘classic study of after-hours loneliness’,<sup>467</sup> and a fitting image for a discussion surrounding *SMV*. However, Cooper notes that while Butlin’s novella is ‘equally as desolate’,<sup>468</sup> Morris never enters a bar in the course of the novella, which possibly further emphasises his alcoholism, but also his loneliness and solitude. In terms of belonging, it seems Morris even feels alienated from the one place it would be presumed he is welcome and could even call ‘home’.

Nicholas Royle notes that although the novella presents ‘an utterly convincing picture of alcohol addiction, Butlin argues this is not the novel’s true subject’.<sup>469</sup> Ultimately, Butlin claims *SMV* is about someone experiencing the onset of midlife crisis:

At that age you have a crisis, you’ve painted yourself into a corner with a job and various other things. In Magellan’s case the drinking is just an added layer of paint. [...] All around there is a closing and opening, and you just wonder who you are.’<sup>470</sup>

Magellan’s alcoholism aids his repression of feeling, thus adding another layer or barrier that prevents his true emotions from emerging in a concealment of his self from both himself and others. The idea of ‘closing and opening’ has connotations of uncertainty, further contributing to Morris’ lack of self-awareness. It is this search for self, or ‘who you are’ that is central to *SMV* as Morris struggles to feel he belongs. In an interview with Braidwood Butlin notes: ‘Magellan has got, to the outside world, a good job, family, house, kids, all that stuff, yet he feels he doesn’t belong, he feels alienated from all of

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<sup>465</sup> Ron Butlin, *Coffee-Table Notes*.

<sup>466</sup> *The Art Institute of Chicago*, ‘Nighthawks’ <<http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/artwork/111628>> [Accessed January 2016].

<sup>467</sup> Ron Butlin, *Coffee-Table Notes*.

<sup>468</sup> Ibid.

<sup>469</sup> Nicholas Royle, ‘Ron Butlin; ‘In your mid-thirties, you’ve painted yourself into a corner. Drink is another layer of paint’, *The Independent* <<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/ron-butlin-in-your-mid-thirties-youve-painted-yourself-into-a-corner-drink-is-another-layer-of-paint-172742.html>> [Accessed January 2016]

<sup>470</sup> Ibid.

this.<sup>471</sup> In *SMV*, Butlin demonstrates that the material belongings and idealised picture of domesticity that is representative of ‘Thatcherite’ values and epitomises 1980s success are not enough to provide Morris with a sense of home or belonging. The suggestion is that to truly feel he belongs Morris has to be part of more than just a stereotypical, consumerist family household, which is in sharp contrast with *NAM*’s version of consumerism, where domestic items offer comfort. Morris’ disillusion with domestic life can be seen in the ritual and performance involved in making breakfast for his family:

Cups and plates, spoons and bowls. [...] The table looked good, the tea was perfect (and there was extra water on in case). There was marmalade, honey, butter, jam and Shreddies. A feast. [...] You welcomed them: Good morning, a chair for Elise; a chair for Tom; a chair for Mary, your good wife.<sup>472</sup>

The reference to the brand name ‘Shreddies’ represents consumerist culture, while the phrase, ‘The table was set and you were set to call them down’,<sup>473</sup> emphasises the act Morris continues to perform as he welcomes his family as though he were an usher in a theatre, not their father and husband. Morris’ behaviour reveals his uneasiness in his own home and suggests domestic life is unnatural to him. However, Morris does sense Mary’s frustration and anger towards him and tries to please her with domestic and consumerist goods. For example, he proposes plans for a patio in the garden: ‘an all-weather table with four chairs and an extra two, foldaway, in case of guests. What would be the best colour? you asked her. A martini-style umbrella in the middle?’<sup>474</sup> The list of practical items, ‘all-weather’ and ‘foldaway’, reveals Morris’ attempts to distract Mary from the truth and his idle conversation about outdoor furniture is meaningless and futile in his attempts to show Mary his true feelings and create a sense of home. Furthermore, the ‘martini-style umbrella’ has connotations of cocktails and alcohol, suggesting Morris’ true desire is encroaching upon his thoughts. Ultimately, like his relationships with those around him, Morris is only able to imagine how he thinks their domestic space should be according to stereotype and the opinions of others.

Throughout *SMV* Morris experiences flashbacks of his childhood home, traumatic memories of which having been repressed now interfere with his everyday thoughts; ‘For a split second you thought of the cottage you had lived in as a child, its white walls – then the train stopped abruptly.’<sup>475</sup> The recurrence of the colour ‘white’, which becomes associated with his childhood, has connotations of innocence and purity and provides a

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<sup>471</sup> Braidwood, *Scots Whay Hae!*

<sup>472</sup> *SMV*, p. 80.

<sup>473</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>474</sup> *Ibid.* p. 82.

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.* p. 83.

stark contrast with the alcohol-induced brown mud of adulthood. The novella opens with Magellan's memory of his anxiety as a young child of returning home after a day out with the fear the family home may no longer be there, 'you began to check off each familiar landmark leading to your house: the manse, then the horse-field, the wooden barn. 'It might not be there, it might not be there.'<sup>476</sup> This nervousness further emphasises Morris' need for reassurance and routine. The colour white is increasingly important in the novella as Morris recalls 'the joy that would come immediately you glimpsed the white colour once more: your cottage at the foot of the hill',<sup>477</sup> where his childhood home is portrayed as a safe and peaceful idyll but is in fact different in reality. King discusses 'the function of memory and the ways in which it is reconstructed in narrative and implicated in notions of self-identity',<sup>478</sup> suggesting the role of memory in one's self-narrative. However, memories can be misremembered and this is highlighted by the word 'reconstructed'. It is clear that like Janice, Morris' sense of home and domestic life is tainted by fear and uncertainty even at this early age. Young Magellan describes their return as a 'miracle', 'you had left and had now returned to the very same place. Everything you knew about yourself was once more affirmed.'<sup>479</sup> Such affirmation suggests the security a child seeks in repetition, and the connection between self, home and belonging, 'In returning you home, your father had again restored you to yourself.'<sup>480</sup> However, it is not long before Morris' father shatters his sense of self by ignoring him and calling him 'stupid',<sup>481</sup> suggesting his opinions are worthless. Butlin recalls why as a child he chose to read books; they provided a 'predictable world', in the same way the box room does for Janice, whereas, 'our world was utterly unpredictable.'<sup>482</sup> A child's search for predictability and certainty features heavily in both *SMV* and *NAM* and for Morris, it continues into adulthood. He continues to seek familiarity, 'you check off each familiar detail: the car park, the loading bay, the trolleys, the large wooden doors, the slate roof, the colour of the sky, the white clouds',<sup>483</sup> but 'when you reach the colour white you stop and have to begin all over again.'<sup>484</sup> As an adult, the colour white assumes negative connotations as Morris now associates it with his unhappy childhood.

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<sup>476</sup> *SMV*, p. 1.

<sup>477</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2.

<sup>478</sup> King, p. 1.

<sup>479</sup> *SMV*, p. 2.

<sup>480</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>481</sup> *Ibid.* p. 3.

<sup>482</sup> Royle, 'Ron Butlin; In your mid-thirties, you've painted yourself into a corner.'

<sup>483</sup> *SMV*, p. 90.

<sup>484</sup> *Ibid.*

One particular memory Morris has of himself as a young child further reveals the inquisitive mind of a child, as Morris continues to try to understand his relationship with his surroundings:

You were playing on the floor of the living room when someone passed outside.  
You looked up.

‘Is that me there?’ you asked your mother

‘What a silly question!’ she replied, laughing. [...]

‘Silly, silly boy’, she was saying as you kept trying to ask: ‘Is that me?’ but couldn’t because of laughing. When the figure vanished, presumably to continue his walk along the street, you felt as if a part had been torn from inside you.<sup>485</sup>

It is clear that even at a young age Morris has an interest in perspective and belonging, with an emphasis on his place in the family and where he fits within the wider world. When he asks, ‘Is that me out there?’ he reveals a child’s lack of self-knowledge or self-awareness that continues into Morris’ search for self in adulthood. His mother’s inability to answer his question, merely laughing at its incredulity, leaves him with a sense of loss, ‘as if a part had been torn’ from him, and the suggestion is his lack of self-awareness led him to believe the man outside was himself. The description of Morris’ father’s ominous silence is Morris’ lasting memory of his childhood home, and is reminiscent of Janice’s father in *NAM*, whose presence she can sense immediately, she can ‘feel him through the walls.’<sup>486</sup> In *SMV* Butlin describes Morris’ fear of his father, ‘trying desperately to make out the tone of his voice or the quality of his silence’<sup>487</sup>:

Listening outside the lounge door [...] as though your life depended on it. [...] You wanted to approach him where he sat in his armchair – just to say ‘Hello’ and perhaps touch the back of his hand lying on the armrest. [...] Had he glanced at you, smiled and replied to your greeting [...] even once, it would have been the miracle to change your life.<sup>488</sup>

As a child, Morris seeks any form of recognition from a father who shows him no love and fills their house with an eerie, silent presence. The use of the word ‘miracle’ here provides religious undertones, and there is the suggestion Morris needs to be ‘saved’. However, before he can change his domestic life, it is clear Morris must first forgive his father and himself.

*And the Land Lay Still* ‘engages with the political and social history of twentieth-century Scotland’,<sup>489</sup> but in this epic novel there is still a focus on the individual self within smaller communities, and Robertson makes the reader aware of ‘generic issues far

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<sup>485</sup> *SMV*, p. 103.

<sup>486</sup> *NAM*, p. 39.

<sup>487</sup> *SMV*, p. 7.

<sup>488</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>489</sup> Pittin-Hedon, p. 56.



removed from the typical state-of-the-nation narrative'.<sup>490</sup> In 'Becoming a Writer' Robertson describes the importance of the community where he grew up with scenes from his own childhood, including figures such as: 'Mr Scobie the ironmonger', 'the old-fashioned grocer's' and 'M&K's', 'the newsagent where I used to buy comics and my first long playing records.'<sup>491</sup> The list of everyday people and shops conjures images of community and the relationship between community and self, which is also reflected in scenes throughout *LLS*. In the novel some characters are an active part of their community, such as Saleem and Don, who fears he may be 'getting too distant now he stayed up in the village',<sup>492</sup> suggesting his desire to be part of the wider town and community. However, for many of the characters, there is a certain withdrawal from community and others, often by choice, and the suggestion is that for some of these characters it is essential for them to be away from others in order to find their selves. As Prillinger notes in Galloway's writing, there are characters that 'wish to escape from the family in order to come to terms with themselves.'<sup>493</sup> For example, Peter Bond, Mike Pendreich, Jean Barbour and Jack Gordon all choose to live alone, or in remote places. Mike lives in 'Angus's old hideaway',<sup>494</sup> and when he visits Edinburgh, he misses the Highlands, 'the sense of space, the mountains, the water, the absence of people. What is it, this desire in him for retreat?'<sup>495</sup> Like Jack, Mike demonstrates an affinity with the land, and experiences the urge to withdraw from other people. Reflecting on 'his kind of solitude – call it independence if you like',<sup>496</sup> Mike asks: 'By becoming more private do we become less of a community? Probably. Less Scottish? He doubts it. We just become different versions of ourselves.'<sup>497</sup> In relation to the question of 'Scottishness', Robertson is undeniably playing with the ambiguous connotations of the word 'independence', which may refer to an individual's autonomy, away from the community, but also to Scotland's independence from the United Kingdom. However, Mike's statement implies there is a direct correlation between solitude and a lack of feeling of belonging within a community. McGlynn notes 'the division of space into public and private spheres'<sup>498</sup> and Mike also suggests people can have different versions of selves in that the self displayed or portrayed to the outside world can be entirely different to the self

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<sup>490</sup> Pittin-Hedon, p. 56.

<sup>491</sup> James Robertson, 'Becoming a Writer' in (ed.) Paul Henderson Scott, *Spirits of the Age: Scottish Self Portraits* (Edinburgh: The Saltire Society, 2005), pp. 339-352 (p. 341).

<sup>492</sup> *LLS*, p. 189.

<sup>493</sup> Prillinger, p. 125.

<sup>494</sup> *LLS*, p. 35.

<sup>495</sup> *Ibid.* p. 37.

<sup>496</sup> *Ibid.* p. 36.

<sup>497</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>498</sup> McGlynn, 'Janice Galloway's Alienated Spaces', p. 92.

in private or solitary moments. In the same way, Mike and Murdo's relationship predominantly takes place in privacy, but they are content with both versions of themselves. By the end of the novel, Mike is with his partner Murdo, and although their relationship is cautious and slightly tentative at first, they form a bond and rely on each other both within their own small community, and the community at large. Therefore, in order for some characters to feel they belong, and to gain a sense of self, it is necessary for them to remove themselves from the wider community. Jack Gordon removes himself from the presence of others completely to return to the land, and will be discussed further below. At first Jack's reasons for isolation are unclear to the reader, possible reasons proffered include post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of his wartime experiences. According to Van der Wiel PTSD can be characterised 'by a persistent re-experiencing of the traumatic event alongside symptoms of unremitting hyperarousal and, paradoxically, numbing of general responsiveness',<sup>499</sup> which can be seen in Jack's desire to avoid all human interaction. Peter Bond however, is simply described as 'a loner, he didn't make connections with other people'.<sup>500</sup> When Bond leaves his small Scottish hometown of Slaemill for London, each time he returns it seems smaller and more stifling to him: 'He didn't want closeness. That was what he'd wanted to get away from.'<sup>501</sup> However, there is also the suggestion Bond loses a sense of community in the bustling city of London, resulting in the feeling of anonymity that he desires at first, but later regrets.

In all of the novels, alcoholics are shown to have no place in the community and, like Magellan in *SMV*, Peter does not even belong in the pub with fellow drinkers, where he is given the unaffectionate nickname 'Dufflecoat Dick'. Although Jean Barbour chooses to live alone, her Edinburgh flat becomes the meeting point for many of the novel's characters to drink and come together in story and song, where Jean takes on the role of 'storyteller', with the belief that 'it's important [...] not to leave things unsaid.'<sup>502</sup> However, even here Bond remains excluded from society, 'in a state of limbo, inside and yet still an outsider. He was part of it and yet alienated.'<sup>503</sup> The image of him as both insider and outsider is reminiscent of the image of Janice sitting at the window in *NAM*; 'I had [...] a place in the window, [...] a view of the outside world',<sup>504</sup> where she is on the inside looking out at others, but part of neither the interior nor exterior world. Bond's life on the peripheries of society is also reflected in his role as spy, and later, private

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<sup>499</sup> Van der Wiel, p. 9.

<sup>500</sup> Harris.

<sup>501</sup> *LLS*, p. 253.

<sup>502</sup> *Ibid.* p. 127.

<sup>503</sup> *Ibid.* p. 316.

<sup>504</sup> *NAM*, p. 38.

investigator. In his work for the British Intelligence, Bond is reposted to Scotland to gain an insider's view of political feeling. However, he remains an outsider and an outcast here too, as he has been rejected from England, sent back 'Like faulty goods'.<sup>505</sup> The phrase 'faulty goods' has connotations not only of rejection, but also of something that is damaged or fractured, which has further implications for Bond's fragmented self. Furthermore, he remains unsure of his own political beliefs, torn between loyalties to both the Union and Scottish Independence cause, therefore occupying 'this special place we have for people like you, on the outside of the inside. No man's land. Ghost territory.'<sup>506</sup> The phrases 'No man's land' and 'Ghost territory' have connotations of an unoccupied and barren landscape, revealing Peter's solitude, while 'No man's land' further highlights his position between the two opposing parties. The word 'land' provides an additional link to the novel's title, and suggests that Bond does not even feel he belongs to the land. He does not share Mike and Jack's particular affinity with the landscape, and although other characters demonstrate a lesser connection with the landscape, they are able to form relationships with others; meanwhile Bond remains incapable of either.

There are also numerous other references to ghosts throughout the novel. For example, Bond describes himself: 'Ex-spook becomes ghost',<sup>507</sup> which acts as a play on words as he is the ghost of a spook in the sense of being an ex-spy, and is also the ghost of his former self, Jimmy Bond. However, Bond has also become a ghost in that he is invisible to society and does not belong in the community. Jack Gordon is another ghost in the community, described as, 'Mad Uncle Jack, a ghost now for more than fifty years',<sup>508</sup> and here the word 'ghost' suggests a part of the self has receded. As Peter is Jack's nephew, it is possible to draw parallels between the two men. Jack is the only person Jimmy can relate to, despite the warnings of their increasing similarities from his family who describe Jack as '*odd, strange, cracked, damaged. And mad.*'<sup>509</sup> The word 'cracked' in particular has connotations of fragmentation of self and insanity, revealing the family's rejection of Jack, reminiscent of the description of Peter Bond as 'faulty goods'. In terms of trauma theory, Jack's 'cracked' self is a result of his unsettling experiences in the war, where he has subsequently been deeply affected by what he didn't know, or process emotionally at the time of the event.<sup>510</sup>

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<sup>505</sup> *LLS*, p. 280.

<sup>506</sup> *Ibid.* p. 283.

<sup>507</sup> *Ibid.* p. 236.

<sup>508</sup> *Ibid.* p. 237.

<sup>509</sup> *Ibid.* p. 255.

<sup>510</sup> King, p. 1.

In terms of the question of self in relation to the notion of home, community and belonging, Jack Gordon is the most intriguing character in *LLS*. Although there are variations in the ways in which different characters feel that they belong, or need to belong, for Jack, '*To be apart, to be separate, was to be complete.*'<sup>511</sup> Therefore, it is necessary for Jack to remove himself from the community and to go back to the land in search of self and in order to feel he belongs. In the word 'separate', there are also connotations of Jack's acceptance of a multiplicity of selves, as well as to be separate from others. Jack's narrative is present throughout the novel in the second-person, short, lyrical, italicised narratives at the opening of each section. Thus, although Jack is apart from the community, he is central to human experience as expressed in this novel, as, interwoven between the various characters' stories, 'is the parable of a homeless man walking the land, passing stones on to people',<sup>512</sup> with Jack handing out the first stone to his nephew Jimmy shortly before 'The Disappearance'. *The Scotsman* describes these second-person narratives and the stone motif, which Robertson employs throughout the novel in order to symbolise Jack's affinity with the land, as Robertson's 'ingenious way of connecting characters and generations but it's also a metaphor for storytelling itself, an act that links the land with the culture, myth with history'.<sup>513</sup> Furthermore, the action of handing out stones echoes the oral tradition surrounding Jean Barbour who passes down stories to new generations. Meanwhile, Welsh comments on the way that 'Wandering Jack flits in and out of the story over the years like a ghost',<sup>514</sup> while Jamieson also notes Jack's ethereal nature, commenting that he 'haunts the whole book', and that the passages written in the second person, reveal 'the thoughts of the wanderer'.<sup>515</sup> The reader is introduced to the 'wanderer' in the opening pages of the novel, but does not realise it is Jack until later in the text when a number of strands come together. Despite these critics' view of Jack's presence as ephemeral, he is in fact more concrete and important than these phantasmic associations suggest. In the act of giving the stones to children, both Jack and Robertson are signalling something to the next generation; the future of Scotland and the land literally lies in their hands. The stone motif also provides a further link between Jack and Jimmy Bond, whose later change in name to 'Peter' has further meaning in terms of Biblical connotations, as Peter was one of Jesus' twelve disciples. Having originally been called

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<sup>511</sup> *LLS*, p. 521.

<sup>512</sup> *The Scotsman*, 'Interview: James Robertson, author', Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2010 <<http://www.scotsman.com/lifestyle/interview-james-robertson-author-1-477284>> [Accessed February 2016].

<sup>513</sup> *The Scotsman*, 'Interview: James Robertson, author'.

<sup>514</sup> Irvine Welsh, 'And the Land Lay Still by James Robertson'.

<sup>515</sup> Jamieson, p. 2.

Simon, like Jimmy, Peter the disciple was also renamed, with ‘Peter’ deriving from the Greek word ‘petros’, meaning ‘stone’ or ‘rock’, a deliberate and symbolically loaded choice on Robertson’s part. Pittin-Hedon suggests that like Jack, Bond represents ‘the possibility to connect the present with the past and the future, the imaginary and the real, the fictional and the historical’,<sup>516</sup> providing a physical link between myth and reality and personal and national concerns.

Jack also represents Scotland’s past, present and future, and the stones he hands out from the land have a sense of permanence, reminiscent of Hugh MacDiarmid’s rendering of stones in ‘On a Raised Beach’ (1967). MacDiarmid describes stones as ‘inerrable’ and encourages the reader to trust stones, for they pre-exist mankind, and the speaker believes, are the closest thing to a God. In the poem MacDiarmid argues humanity cannot reject stones, even if it wanted to, for they are permanent: ‘the world cannot dispense with the stones. / They alone are not redundant. Nothing can replace them / Except a new creation of God.’<sup>517</sup> The idea of the stones’ permanence is further emphasised in stanza seven:

What happens to us  
Is irrelevant to the world’s geology  
But what happens to the world’s geology  
Is not irrelevant to us.  
We must reconcile ourselves to the stones,  
Not the stones to us. (p. 151, ll. 215 – 220)

Like *LLS*, in the above lines MacDiarmid considers the importance of the relationship between the land, stones and people, but also emphasises that the stones will always remain and it is humankind that must learn to live harmoniously with the land.

MacDiarmid’s poem is also reminiscent of themes in Morgan’s *Sonnets from Scotland* (‘The Summons’ is discussed briefly in Chapter One). Morgan’s collection of poems consider, ‘the strange, the unfamiliar, the forgotten and the yet-to-happen in the Scottish experience.’<sup>518</sup> MacDiarmid’s poem begins with a depiction of ‘the poet utterly alone but it ends with the understanding that life is an act of participation in a way the lonely observer could not comprehend’,<sup>519</sup> a description that would seem fitting of both Jack and Peter Bond in *LLS*. It is clear neither character is able to truly connect with others. However, Jack is content to be alone and only by removing himself from the community is he able to find a self. A further link to MacDiarmid in *LLS* can be seen when Bond, as part of his

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<sup>516</sup> Pittin-Hedon, p. 75.

<sup>517</sup> Hugh MacDiarmid, ‘On a Raised Beach’ in *Selected Poetry*, (eds.) Alan Riach and Michael Grieve, (Oxford, Carcanet: 1992) p. 149, (ll. 145 – 147).

<sup>518</sup> *Scottish Poetry Library*, ‘Edwin Morgan (1920-2010)’.

<sup>519</sup> *Ibid.* ‘Hugh MacDiarmid (1892-1978)’ <<http://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poetry/poets/hugh-macdiarmid>> [Accessed March 2016].

work with British Intelligence, meets the fictional Hugh MacDiarmid in the novel. In an interview with Isobel Murray, Robertson notes the influence of the real MacDiarmid on his own work and life: 'When I'd read his poems, he opened up for me a whole view of Scotland, literature, writing and politics: he revolutionised my ways of thinking.'<sup>520</sup> MacDiarmid's poetry has an effect on Peter Bond too, suggesting he is able to engage with the 'other' at some level, he felt 'that they put him in touch with some kind of throbbing undercurrent of life, something simultaneously ancient and modern, tiny and huge, parochial yet soaring into space.'<sup>521</sup> Key to the fictional meeting is MacDiarmid's advice for Bond, 'The only thing you need to do, Grieve said, is to be yourself',<sup>522</sup> further suggesting that the key to life and happiness is finding, accepting and being true to oneself.

In terms of the relationship between self and belonging, like Janice and Morris, in the passage before 'Part Five: Questions of Loyalties', Jack Gordon asks the question, '*Who were you and what the hell were you doing and why had you done it?*'<sup>523</sup> The word 'loyalties' has connotations of the characters' loyalty to Scotland; to political parties; to their partners; to the land and stones and to one's self. Jack's self-questioning is notably in the past tense, which prompts further questions surrounding the issues of self and past selves and leaves the reader questioning whether one can only find coherence as part of the community, or away from it, or whether it is possible to exist as part of both. Ricoeur's concept of the narrative self refers to the way humans experience time, 'in terms of the way we understand our future potentialities, as well as the way we organize our sense of the past',<sup>524</sup> which can be applied to the notion of former, present and possible future selves this thesis discusses. This further highlights an argument for a fluid, unfixed self, where 'potentialities' suggests one can alter and improve the self and Meyers notes that it is possible to 'dismantle' the self and 'rebuild'<sup>525</sup> it. Mike and Murdo's relationship seems to suggest the ideal combination of an ability to be both part of the community and an acceptance of an existence that can also be separate to it. Jack however, chooses to remove himself from society and to be alone, only asking for help when his situation is desperate, before returning to the land again. The suggestion Jack's condition may be due to his experiences as a Japanese prisoner-of-war may reflect his need to reject the horrors afflicted by his fellow man. This can be seen in the lines, '*You yourself were released. You'd escaped and you weren't going back. That was the sum total of everything you were*

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<sup>520</sup> James Robertson, *Scottish Writers Talking 4*, p. 138.

<sup>521</sup> *LLS*, p. 269.

<sup>522</sup> *Ibid.* p. 330.

<sup>523</sup> *Ibid.* p. 521.

<sup>524</sup> Rhodes, p. 1.

<sup>525</sup> Meyers, p. 205.

*and did*',<sup>526</sup> which relates not only to his release from the community, but also to his survival during the war. However, when Jack and Don discuss Jack's past, Don notes how Jack manages to exclude himself from his own analysis, prompting Don to question, 'Was he a loner then? Before? Maybe it wasn't the Japs that had done the damage. Maybe he'd always been like this'.<sup>527</sup> Ultimately the cause of Jack's desire to be free of dependence on community and others remains ambiguous for both Don and the reader but trauma theory can provide a possible explanation for his rejection of other selves.

In the transition from Part One to Two in *LLS*, the reader is given an insight into Jack's thoughts: '*You might not have anything to eat on you, you might be hungry or wet or cold or tired or all of these things, but they were states of being, they weren't responsibilities.*'<sup>528</sup> It is difficult for the reader to sympathise with Jack's rejection of responsibility as he leaves his family and community behind in search of self and is eventually presumed dead by many, who assume Jack has committed suicide. Although he does not commit suicide, he does remove himself from his community, family, friends and work, thus Jack as people knew him is effectively dead. The suggestion here is that if one becomes invisible to others, it can result in the annihilation of the self, even if that self exists outside the boundaries of others. This idea of perspective and of the conflict between the private and the public self can be seen throughout *And the Land Lay Still*, in David Eddelestane's battle of selves and sexuality due to his position as an MP, and in Mike and Murdo's relationship, which remains private throughout the novel. In *NAM*, Janice's seat in the shop window also relates to perspective, whereby sitting in the window offers a juxtaposition of interior and exterior worlds. Similarly, in *SMV* Morris must mediate between his 'inside' and 'outside' selves, further revealing a tension between what these characters allow others to see and how they behave in private.

It becomes clear that for Jack, rejection of the public self in the community in favour of his private self is in fact his method of survival. The only way Jack is able to move forward is through his relationship with the land, to the extent where, '*like the snow, you melted into the landscape.*'<sup>529</sup> The image of 'melting' has connotations of death, or the fading of his former self but it also suggests Jack has become one of the elements, so that he becomes part of the land, which reinforces MacDiarmid's idea of the need for a human reconciliation with stones and the land. There is also the idea of Jack's journey in the search for self, and as he leaves his wife and daughter behind, '*there was some kind of*

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<sup>526</sup> *LLS*, p. 145.

<sup>527</sup> *Ibid.* p. 173.

<sup>528</sup> *Ibid.* p. 145.

<sup>529</sup> *Ibid.* p. 377.

*journey in your head, though you didn't know the shape of it*',<sup>530</sup> which reveals his trust in the land to lead him to his destination. When Jack sets off, although he may not know where he is going, he knows the direction, '*North, always north*'.<sup>531</sup> This has connotations of Scotland and its position in the North of Britain, but also of travelling onwards and upwards in a way that is reminiscent of Lanark in Alasdair Gray's *Lanark* (1981). At the end of Gray's novel the protagonist is described as 'a slightly worried, ordinary old man but glad to see the light in the sky',<sup>532</sup> a literal and symbolic reference to 'seeing the light' in the novel, in terms of Lanark's new understanding of self. Here, the search for sunlight, and self, is linked with the symbol of ascent, as Lanark watches his son climb Ben Rua in sunlight at the end of the novel. The symbol of ascent can also be seen throughout *Lanark* via images of Ben Rua and the Glasgow Necropolis. In *LLS*, the words, '*You went out into the world to leave the world behind [...] to find places where you could be invisible and silent*',<sup>533</sup> further emphasises the idea of Jack's need to be alone in order to find a self. However, perhaps it is not fully attainable as he is merely experiencing feelings, 'states of being', rather than living, and 'fully participating' in life, like the speaker in MacDiarmid's poem. Although in the lines, '*Some of the other men on the road were so dirty you got the stench of them even before you saw them. They'd lost all sense of themselves, they'd no dignity left*',<sup>534</sup> there is also the suggestion of Jack's self-awareness in his realisation that the other men had 'lost all sense of themselves.' Thus, in returning to the land, Jack feels he has chosen his own, dignified path through life and has therefore retained his self. For Jack, dignity becomes inseparable from a good sense of one's self, which highlights the importance of appearances and of everyday heroism, similar to the need for Janice, Beth and Cora to always appear as though they are 'getting by'.

When Jack returns from one of his expeditions, before the final 'Disappearance', Don instructs Jack's wife, 'Ye'll need to find oot where he's been, what's been going on in his heid.'<sup>535</sup> However, Jack's response prompts the question of what it means to be 'missing':

'A man requires space', Jack said. 'Space to breathe, time to think. You know that.'  
 'You went *missing*,' Don protested.  
 'No, I absented myself. *I* knew where I was.' [...] 'My mind was gloriously empty.'<sup>536</sup>

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<sup>530</sup> *LLS*, p. 228.

<sup>531</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>532</sup> Alasdair Gray, *Lanark: A Life in Four Books* (Britain: Canongate Books Ltd, 2007) p. 560.

<sup>533</sup> *LLS*, p. 146.

<sup>534</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>535</sup> *Ibid.* p. 202.

<sup>536</sup> *Ibid.* p. 203.



The difference in opinion between Jack and the rest of the community is clear, as seen in the words, '*I knew where I was*', emphasised by Robertson's use of italics. This further reveals Jack's heightened awareness of self in his absence from the community, as knowing 'where I was' implies that in this moment he also knew who he was. In addition, his 'empty' mind has connotations of being free, and also links to freedom from the domestic in terms of suggesting something uninhabited. However, there are also negative associations of emptiness or uselessness, and there is the suggestion of a disconnection between Jack's mind and body, revealing his fragmented self. In Jack's character Robertson does not seek to create the 'ideal hero' and he reveals Jack's flaws. Although it may be necessary for Jack to leave his family behind in search of self, it is questionable whether his decision to live on the peripheries of society is estimable. Robertson, Galloway and Butlin argue the need for human relationships and interaction, albeit they emphasise the difficulty of establishing and maintaining such relationships, but as Schoene argues, as does affect theory, one 'become[s] a person by relating to another'.<sup>537</sup> Thus, Schoene suggests in order to belong, and to gain self-knowledge, it is necessary to interact with and feel compassion for others, even if that interaction takes place apart from the community. Robert Morace notes that 'even in the extremity of their isolation, Robertson's characters are [...] deeply connected to the local'<sup>538</sup> and although Jack chooses to exist supra-community, he continues to communicate with others in a more transcendental way via the stones he gives to people on his journey.

Although Don is a willing part of both community and domestic life, he admits he would sometimes 'walk for a mile or two out of town before catching the next bus, for the pleasure of being alone and in silence'.<sup>539</sup> On another occasion, Don goes for a walk with his older son Billy, 'The more they walked, the more spring asserted itself, the further he felt from the weight of responsibility, the oppression of the house',<sup>540</sup> which is reminiscent of the freedom Jack experiences. In many ways Don envies Jack's seeming freedom of self, he thought of Jack, 'heading for somewhere. Some promise of release, of a life beyond mere survival, of a life that wasn't destroyed at its core',<sup>541</sup> yet it would seem to the reader that 'mere survival' is in actual fact all that Jack seeks. Don and Jack

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<sup>537</sup> Berthold Schoene, 'Going Cosmopolitan' in (ed.) Berthold Schoene, *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh, 2007), pp. 7-16, (p. 15).

<sup>538</sup> Robert Morace, 'James Robertson and contemporary Scottish Gothic', *Gothic Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 2011, pp. 22-30, (p. 22).

<sup>539</sup> *LLS*, p. 206.

<sup>540</sup> *Ibid* p. 210.

<sup>541</sup> *Ibid*. p. 198.

demonstrate the same desire to reject responsibility, and in particular, the responsibilities of being a father, much like Morris Magellan in *SMV* and Eddie Galloway in *NAM*. This is shown in *LLS* through use of the word ‘*abandon*’,<sup>542</sup> which can even be read as a pun on *aban-don* in the choice of Don’s name. However, unlike Jack, the other fathers are not willing to completely relinquish responsibility and Don is generally a positive and active participant in his private, domestic life, and in his public life as part of the community.

The self in the domestic sphere is another aspect of these texts relating to the wider theme of home and belonging. In *LLS* it is clear that Jack rejects traditional domestic life in favour of the wild and a return to man’s basic needs for survival:

*Nothing was more comfortable to you than the hard roughness of the ground beneath you, nothing more comforting than darkness and utter silence or the cry of owls hunting in the moonlight [...] They did not frighten you, they reassured you. [...] You were safe then, you could breathe easy, and you did.*<sup>543</sup>

However, this description still provides an alternative definition of domesticity in terms of items such as a bed, and the comfort one’s domestic space can provide. For Jack, the ‘rough ground’ and ‘utter silence’ reassure him, highlighted by the word ‘safe’. In the phrase ‘breathe easy’ there is a return to the idea of survival, with an emphasis on breathing that is reminiscent of Galloway’s protagonist Joy Stone where the title instructs her that, *The Trick is to Keep Breathing*. Thus, at surface level Jack seems to reject domesticity, however, he still seeks the same reassurance and comfort as the other characters in the novel, albeit they display a more conventional ideal of domestic life.

For Peter Bond, much like the rest of his life, his domestic situation is portrayed as undesirable and offers him little comfort. Bond’s flat is described as a ‘midden’,<sup>544</sup> thus his domestic situation reflects the complexity of his mind:

The kitchen trails dirty plates and coffee mugs and biscuit crumbs into the living room which spills newspapers and books and pens and folders into the tiny passage and along it in one direction to the front door where the junk mail lies and in the other to the bathroom and the bedroom.<sup>545</sup>

Bond’s fragmented self is represented through his dirty, dysfunctional flat, emphasised through the repeated use of ‘and’ to link objects, which suggests the flat is out of control, with every room and object merging into the next. The words ‘one direction’ suggest Bond is trapped, as in the other direction things are the same, leaving him no escape from his own clutter, a stark contrast to Jack’s new domestic surroundings. The lack of clarity in

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<sup>542</sup> *LLS*, p. 228.

<sup>543</sup> *Ibid.* p. 2.

<sup>544</sup> *Ibid.* p. 231.

<sup>545</sup> *Ibid.* p. 235.

Bond's flat becomes representative of his psyche, 'a fitting monument to his own wrecked life',<sup>546</sup> in a way that is again reminiscent of *The Trick*. Joy's house is crumbling around her, covered in mould and mushrooms, 'being eaten from the inside by this thing',<sup>547</sup> much like Joy's own mind and body, which is ravaged by anorexia. However, for Joy, like Janice in *NAM*, Andrew Hock Soon Ng notes that 'Through [material] things, Joy gains a modicum of control over her otherwise fragmenting subjectivity'.<sup>548</sup> However, Bond does not experience the same relief from domestic objects in his home and the implication in the words, 'The stuff that unnerves him is right there with him in the flat',<sup>549</sup> is that not only is Bond trapped in his own flat, he cannot escape his troublesome thoughts, so that his surroundings reflect the fragmentation of his self. In a way that is reminiscent of Morris Magellan, Bond can hear a voice from the past, 'sounds like his father: 'Ye've let yersel doon, son. That's it, he let himself down and this is him not letting himself get back up again',<sup>550</sup> which reveals that Bond must forgive himself before he can move forward.

The idea of the former self is also portrayed here, as Bond does not clean his house, for 'That would mean clearing out his entire adult life.'<sup>551</sup> Here, his mind, body and self are further connected with the interiors of his domestic life, which have come to represent 'his entire adult life', further separating his former and present selves. Bond imagines his mind and memory as the filing cabinets and corridors of a library, 'A dome like the old British Library's and round the walls shelves and shelves of reference books, and corridors leading off',<sup>552</sup> suggesting the way he has divided and stored information and further relating his thoughts to interior spaces. However, it is key that these books are non-fiction, as it further reveals Bond's inability to interact with others and to invest in the emotions of both fictional and real-life others. Moreover, the non-fiction texts can be further linked to Bond's desire for truth and facts, but also reveal his lack of self in terms of the narrative concept of self, where one constructs oneself through stories about one's life. However, Meyers also notes the importance of an honest awareness of 'who you in fact are, not [just] who you represent yourself to be'<sup>553</sup> in the stories that one tells about themselves to others and therefore suggesting the tension between public and private realms. One public and

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<sup>546</sup> *LLS*, p. 235.

<sup>547</sup> *The Trick*, p. 65.

<sup>548</sup> Andrew Hock Soon Ng, 'Coping with Reality: The Solace of Objects and Language in Janice Galloway's *The Trick Is to Keep Breathing*', *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, Vol. 53, No. 3, 2012, pp. 238-250, (p. 241).

<sup>549</sup> *LLS*, p. 236.

<sup>550</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>551</sup> *Ibid.* p. 235.

<sup>552</sup> *Ibid.* p. 231.

<sup>553</sup> Diana Tietjens Meyers, 'Who's There? Selfhood, Self-Regard, and Social Relations', *Hypatia*, Vol. 20, No. 4, *Analytic Feminism* (Autumn, 2005), pp. 200-215, p. 207.

domestic space where Bond does seek comfort is the dry-cleaners, 'he felt safe in their domain of churning machines, humidity, tangled clothes and washing-powder scents, safe and comforted.'<sup>554</sup> The safety sought in this ordered environment and the smell of washing powder is particularly reminiscent of Janice, who finds solace in domesticity, for her, a clean house 'is like being held',<sup>555</sup> and provides a 'sense of purpose and usefulness.'<sup>556</sup> It is key that it is a public place where Bond finds comfort, as he is able to briefly interact with others, 'A friendly word or smile was never distant from their lips.'<sup>557</sup> However, this also further highlights Bond's hatred of his own domestic space and he is able to remain to some extent at a safe distance from the people at the dry-cleaners, never fully interacting with others.

In *LLS*, Don suggests there are gendered domestic territories for some characters when he states: 'The garden's been my territory for years. My zone of influence. Liz's zone was indoors, the house.'<sup>558</sup> The word 'zone' has connotations of warfare and restricted access and reveals their separate lives. Furthermore, their son Charlie is 'remoulded' by the army, who 'supply whatever it is that's missing. A sense of self-worth, duty, comradeship, a sense of family.'<sup>559</sup> Ultimately, the army offers Charlie a sense of purpose and belonging. Charlie joins as, like Jack and Peter, he does not fit with the wider community and so rejects it and leaves. Although the army is not typically domestic, for Charlie, it represents a regimented routine through military organisation and an alternative family to his own. Despite a very equal relationship, Liz and Don's other son Billy separates from his girlfriend Barbara in another rejection of domesticity: 'I feel like I'm on sufferance in my ain hame. Dinna put your feet up there, when are ye gonnae fix this, clean that up, put that stuff away'.<sup>560</sup> These images of fractured domestic life reveal the ways in which these characters struggle to interact with and understand one another.

In Liz's job of cleaning a large local house, Robertson depicts another domestic scene, but also touches on class relations. The comfort of the house and the domestic tasks offer her a sense of peace and she describes 'needlessly dusting immaculate surfaces'<sup>561</sup> and watering the plants. In these images of domesticity, Robertson also reveals the way that visiting and cleaning the house enables Liz to knowingly select a different 'self' from a range of her selves in order to temporarily forget her illness. For Liz, like Janice,

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<sup>554</sup> *LLS*, p. 237-238.

<sup>555</sup> *NAM*, p. 199.

<sup>556</sup> Hock Soon Ng, p. 243.

<sup>557</sup> *LLS*, p. 237.

<sup>558</sup> *Ibid.* p. 628.

<sup>559</sup> *Ibid.* p. 631.

<sup>560</sup> *Ibid.* p. 496.

<sup>561</sup> *Ibid.* p. 555.

cleaning provides the distraction that makes life bearable, ‘if she couldn’t come to the house then whatever was wrong with her wouldn’t go away even for those few hours.’<sup>562</sup> In the climax of this domestic scene Liz has a shower, which is almost ritualistic. She describes the ‘white fluffy towels that she’d always wanted to wrap herself in’,<sup>563</sup> adjusts the temperature so it is perfectly warm, before undressing and ‘folding her clothes and placing them on the upholstered chair where Elaine sometimes left her own clothes,’ but ‘this wasn’t about Elaine Cotter, it was about Liz Lennie’.<sup>564</sup> Here, Robertson signals the complexities of the relationship between an employer and employee, which has wider implications for the effect of class on community. This is emphasised through Liz’s deteriorating health, meanwhile Elaine is on holiday. However, this scene also further reveals Liz’s desire to alter her self. If only for a few hours, she can be somebody else or take on Elaine’s persona, at least in terms of her social role, by echoing her bathroom ritual and indulging in the luxuries of her home. Liz is in fact afraid of the shower, as she fears the unknown and envisions the shower scene from Alfred Hitchcock’s horror film *Psycho* (1960). However, when the water engulfs her ‘she let it, let it, let it run all over her’,<sup>565</sup> revealing her enjoyment and in the repetition of the words ‘let it’ there is the suggestion that Liz has succumbed not only to the shower, but has a new acceptance of her body and her self. The idea of Liz’s transformation of self is further emphasised in the words, ‘it was about Liz Lennie’ and in the words ‘The gushing water welcomed her’,<sup>566</sup> and there are also connotations of biblical cleansing and of washing away her past self and fear.

Ellen Renton displays a more positive relationship with domesticity in *LLS*. The description of her childhood further portrays the female-centred nature of Ellen’s domestic past as, like *NAM*, ‘The women of Borlanslogie cooked meals for their hungry men [...] They washed clothes and cleaned their houses and minded the bairns.’<sup>567</sup> However, Ellen, her mother and Jean Barbour are all strong female characters in Robertson’s novel and they defy expectations. Ellen’s mother in fact does all of the above, but she determinedly keeps her job too, going against what is expected of her in the local community. In a way that is reminiscent of Beth Galloway in *NAM*, Ellen’s mother Mary ‘persuaded herself that what she was giving them was the best thing they could ever possess – the ability to survive. [...] they were coping’,<sup>568</sup> which further emphasises the importance of everyday

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<sup>562</sup> *LLS*, p. 539.

<sup>563</sup> *Ibid.* p. 555.

<sup>564</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>565</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>566</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>567</sup> *Ibid.* p. 381.

<sup>568</sup> *Ibid.* p. 390.

survival in the texts. Hock Soon Ng notes the importance of the ‘acceptance of the mundane everydayness that constitutes [...] life and its meaning.’<sup>569</sup> For Ellen, like Janice, the domestic spaces of her childhood are: ‘cosy and friendly’, ‘a secret, safe den of a place,’<sup>570</sup> offering safety and comfort, filled with the memory of the smell of tea and toast with jam.<sup>571</sup> However, it is important to note the tension and trauma Janice also experiences in her childhood home as a result of Cora and Eddie.

In *LLS* David Eddelstane’s domestic upbringing reveals an unhappy, loveless childhood at Ochiltree House. Eddelstane describes the house:

The whole place was in utter turmoil, a kind of playground littered with discarded books, newspapers, cups, glasses, cigarette stubs, shoes, boots, carpet slippers, fishing tackle, shotguns, cartridges, hats, coats, underwear, dog hair, dog bowls, handkerchiefs, socks and unfinished snacks.<sup>572</sup>

The long list of items is reminiscent of Bond’s flat, and also conjures images of Magellan’s unhappy childhood, further revealing the effect the trauma of the past self has on the present. Furthermore, the chaotic nature of both Bond and Eddelstane’s homes suggests domestic spaces reflect the order, or disorder, of the self. For some of these characters, and notably mostly the female characters, the domestic environment can provide momentary control over their lives through the ordering of domestic objects and tasks. However, for others, their domestic lives prove to be as dysfunctional and unfulfilling as their relationships. Through the persistence of unhappy memories of childhood homes, it is clear for David, Peter and Morris, their present domestic situation has become an extension of the past.

When Jack disappears for the final time and does not return, Don ‘was convinced that Jack had killed himself’,<sup>573</sup> but begins to wonder if ‘maybe he’d not actually killed himself but had killed the person he’d been and was starting afresh’.<sup>574</sup> There is the idea of former and present selves again here, that Jack could ‘kill’ the person he used to be, in order to transform or self-evolve to move forward in the present. Meyers notes that ‘one’s past and future selves are those past and future persons that one can pick out’<sup>575</sup> across time in a narrative of the self, allowing for the potential to learn from past mistakes in order to develop as the self ‘is not static’.<sup>576</sup> Similarly, McMillan argues ‘We must be able

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<sup>569</sup> Hock Soon Ng, p. 248.

<sup>570</sup> *LLS*, p. 391.

<sup>571</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>572</sup> *Ibid.* p. 408.

<sup>573</sup> *Ibid.* p. 199.

<sup>574</sup> *Ibid.* p. 215.

<sup>575</sup> Meyers, p. 202.

<sup>576</sup> *Ibid.* p. 203.

to access the past if we are to understand ourselves', <sup>577</sup> further highlighting the importance of an acceptance of former selves for self-knowledge, which will also be considered in chapter three. In some ways, all of the characters in *LLS* are seeking a moment of peace and tranquility. For example, Liz cleans in order to spend two hours alone, while David Eddelstane only feels at peace in the silence of the night when he can escape from the 'low, constant rumble'<sup>578</sup> in his head, a sound he likens to his father on his deathbed. By the end of the novel, Mike has come full circle, in that he is back in Edinburgh at the Gallery for the exhibition's Private View. There is the sense that it was necessary for Mike, Peter and Jack to remove themselves from family and community in order to find their selves. However, perhaps Mike has been more successful in his search as he is able to engage with others, both privately and publically and now also feels he belongs with Murdo. Therefore, in *LLS* it may seem that in order to find acceptance of self, home and to fully belong, both an appreciation of the land and a relationship between those who share the land is required. However, whether it is through isolation or community engagement, Robertson, Butlin and Galloway's characters prove that acceptance of selves, both past and present, is the first necessary step towards self-forgiveness and a sense of home and belonging.

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<sup>577</sup> McMillan p. 163.

<sup>578</sup> *LLS*, p. 549.

### Chapter 3: Coming Home

In all of these examples of contemporary Scottish fiction by Robertson, Galloway and Butlin there is an emphasis on former selves and the evolution of the self. In an interview with Janice Galloway, we are told, 'In one hand she [Galloway] holds a coffee, in another her former self'.<sup>579</sup> There is the idea of her 'holding' her self as though it were a material item and the 'former self' here refers to a photograph Galloway holds of her younger self. Hirsch notes 'photography's connection to the family, its inscription in family life and its perpetuation of familial ideology'<sup>580</sup> and in *NAM* the photographs Galloway refers to reveal the relationship between one's present and former self and are connected to her childhood memories and construct of self. In these texts, the development of selves can be traced, revealing that one's self is not fixed, but rather formed by experience and, moreover, evolves over time. Janice is also aware of her mother's former self and she describes her mother's youth, referring to a photograph taken at a time 'before much of her life had happened to her',<sup>581</sup> which also has connotations of a life decided by fate. Janice is aware of her mother's former self prior to marriage and motherhood, and Galloway refers to another photograph where she describes her mother as looking 'competent, confident, good.'<sup>582</sup> In an interview with Jenny Diski, Galloway admits 'People didn't have cameras in those days, nobody dressed like that in Saltcoats in the 1960s, you dressed up'<sup>583</sup> for photographs, in order to appear as though you were 'getting by'. Galloway continues to place emphasis on the differences between reality and what is portrayed to the outside world, 'so all of these photographs are fictions [...] That doesn't tell you anything about how we lived',<sup>584</sup> but rather, a brief and staged moment in time. Janice's mother believes children will forget what they have seen, that a 'child's memory bears no more relationship to reality than a cartoon', whereas an adult is 'in possession of the whole picture.'<sup>585</sup> However, it is clear in these three texts that former selves and memory, and particularly childhood memories do have an effect on adult or future selves, and that despite Beth's claim, adult life continues to be uncertain at times. Although things may be misremembered, their effect on the self is undeniable. Furthermore, Beth's idea of an adult possessing 'the whole picture' is disputable if one's self is believed to be evolving.

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<sup>579</sup> 'All About My Mother'.

<sup>580</sup> Hirsch, p. 6.

<sup>581</sup> *NAM*, p. 11.

<sup>582</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>583</sup> Diski.

<sup>584</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>585</sup> *NAM*, pp. 28-9.



Galloway comments that this belief in adult superiority ‘throws us all sooner or later’, warning that, ‘Unquestioned, it will throw you entirely away.’<sup>586</sup> Galloway seems to instruct the reader to question what is perceived to be fact in the search for self, so that one can understand and accept the sometimes fragmented self in favour of embracing an evolving, fluid self or selves.

Janice’s namesake also bears significance in relation to her sense of self and self-worth:

It was my father, she said, who fetched up my name. [...] Godknows where he got *that* from. [...] That’s the kind of father I had – a father who didn’t care enough to choose something nice.<sup>587</sup>

Beth, her mother, ‘had more names than anyone I knew. Friends, acquaintances and colleagues called her, variously, Bess, Bette, Beattie, Liza, Eliza, Ella, Lili, Liesel, Lulu, Blossom and Pearl’,<sup>588</sup> suggesting that her mother had different selves depending on the situation and company she was in. ‘I’ve had Jan, Janet, Jinty, Jeanny and on rare occasion, my name in cod French [...] *Jan-neice*.’<sup>589</sup> However, ‘My mother’s alternatives sounded fashioned, affectionate, chosen; mine, much fewer in number, sounded like mistakes. It was a dull name, plain as a bucket.’<sup>590</sup> In the same way her mother seemingly did not plan for her pregnancy, ‘No one, apparently chose’<sup>591</sup> *Janice*. However, it was in fact Beth who chose her name, and on reflection Janice realises, ‘It meant that what I’d been told, what I’d moreover believed, the legend of my naming in the history of our family and its dereliction of care wasn’t true.’<sup>592</sup> Janice’s unwantedness and her mother’s denial have wider implications for Janice’s sense of self worth, or lack of, and it is a cruel burden for a child to bear, ‘the sensation of stuckness rose in my chest till I thought I’d burst. Like swallowing a mountain. [...] My lips seemed stuck together, a dry flat line.’<sup>593</sup> Janice notes that ‘In future years she’d say the same thing and say it a lot, and I got used to it, after a fashion. I could see her point of view.’<sup>594</sup> As ever, Janice is understanding and never places any blame on her mother: ‘It would, I thought, seep away. It didn’t of course. Not for either of us. It seeped in.’<sup>595</sup> The word ‘seep’ has connotations of liquid slowly pouring through holes or pores, which suggests the fragmented self, but there is also the idea of the

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<sup>586</sup> *NAM*, pp. 28-9.

<sup>587</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 20-21.

<sup>588</sup> *Ibid.* p. 18.

<sup>589</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 20-21.

<sup>590</sup> *Ibid.* p. 21.

<sup>591</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>592</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>593</sup> *Ibid.* p. 63.

<sup>594</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>595</sup> *Ibid.*

conflict between internal and external selves in the notion that Janice's feelings could seep in or out. In the novel it is clear Beth is in denial, thinking, or hoping, that the symptoms of her pregnancy are the menopause, 'But it wasn't the Change. Maybe she knew damn well what it was, just couldn't bring herself to admit it.'<sup>596</sup> This is reminiscent of the 'change' referred to at the start of the novel when life's changes are imminent. However, the birth of Janice will prove to bring far greater transformation to their lives than any biological changes.

Later in the novel, there are descriptions of two other photos of Janice; Galloway the writer describes the girl in the photograph, her younger self, distancing herself from both Janice in the novel and her past self by describing her as, 'the child'<sup>597</sup>:

Her treads are too short and the scooter, perched up on a purpose built stand, is too big for her feet to reach the rests. Her face is white, the hair wavy, the baby coxcomb turned into a curl. The mouth, like a rabbit's, does not smile, probably because the surroundings are so queer. The sky is painted, the rocks are card and the doves are stuffed. This is a studio, a set-up, a deliberate fabrication, but the game is to pretend it's not.<sup>598</sup>

This description further emphasises Janice's awareness of lies or misconception. In another photograph, one year on, 'nearly four, [...] healthy as a pug and smiling for Scotland',<sup>599</sup> Janice's feet are on the ground, 'showing all the appearance of firmness, of being centred, of growing.'<sup>600</sup> The second picture therefore suggests she is now healthy and grounded, both literally and metaphorically, 'things are coming into focus'<sup>601</sup> in both the photographic sense and in terms of Janice's self. Galloway writes, 'Between these two pictures, the world turned',<sup>602</sup> which is confirmed in the opening sentence of chapter three: 'Things never stay the same. They get worse, they get better or they get different.'<sup>603</sup> (Shortly after this statement, Beth makes the brave decision to leave Eddie, which is soon followed by Cora's 'Great Return'.<sup>604</sup>) Throughout the novel there are continuous references to the lies the family tells, 'Our heads were just above water and full of things we did not say',<sup>605</sup> which also suggests that concealing their true feelings becomes another method of survival, where 'The miracle was that you stayed on at all',<sup>606</sup> linking back to

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<sup>596</sup> *NAM*, p. 18.

<sup>597</sup> *Ibid.* p. 34.

<sup>598</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>599</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>600</sup> *Ibid.* p. 35.

<sup>601</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>602</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>603</sup> *Ibid.* p. 36.

<sup>604</sup> *Ibid.* p. 79.

<sup>605</sup> *Ibid.* p. 142.

<sup>606</sup> *Ibid.* p. 116.

the idea of Beth, Cora and Janice ‘getting by’. The phrase ‘getting by’ therefore has dual connotations, as previously, for the purpose of the photo, ‘getting by’ is meant in terms of success and material comfort, but here it refers to surviving emotionally. *NAM* demonstrates female persistence in particular, even though these women’s voices are often marginalised or silenced. For example, Janice’s neighbour is called ‘Mrs Tough’,<sup>607</sup> which is not coincidental on Galloway’s part. The reader is told Mrs Tough’s husband beats her, leaving her whispering ‘*shhhh*’,<sup>608</sup> in a way that is reminiscent of Beth Galloway telling Janice to ‘*shhhh*’ throughout the text. There is the suggestion that to remain silent can offer a form of protection, but for Janice’s sense of self it is essential for her to learn to use her voice. The themes of self-articulation and self-realisation have particular gendered associations in Galloway’s writing in terms of revealing the marginalised female voice and self, although this is often the result of another female in the case of Janice and Cora’s relationship. Jones notes ‘in her novels, then, Galloway minutely dissects the discourses of women’s oppression’,<sup>609</sup> further suggesting ‘Galloway’s project is to recover the lives and voices of women’,<sup>610</sup> and notably, ‘unexceptional, conventional women’.<sup>611</sup> Furthermore, Janice’s position as a child also has implications in terms of her search for voice and King notes that ‘“infant” derives from “infans”, or “without speech”’.<sup>612</sup> As she approaches puberty Janice must overcome the overbearing presence of Cora in order to find her own voice. While Galloway’s writing focuses primarily on the female search for voice and self, it is important to note her interest in humanity, in the ‘mundane detail of everyday life’<sup>613</sup> and the difficulties people face in their ordinary daily lives. The texts considered in this thesis demonstrate that the search for self in contemporary Scottish literature is not gender specific.

However, it is also evident there are times when words are simply not adequate and Janice therefore says nothing as a mode of self-preservation. For example, when Beth warns her not to get married or have children because, ‘It ties you. It ruins your life’.<sup>614</sup> The only way to deal with the pain her mother’s words inflict is to remain silent and guarded, ‘I said what I always said. Nothing. *Nothing nothing nothing*. [...] The only way to keep my head above water at these times was to remember *she wasn’t talking to me*.’<sup>615</sup>

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<sup>607</sup> *NAM*, p. 214.

<sup>608</sup> *Ibid.* p. 215.

<sup>609</sup> Jones, p. 65.

<sup>610</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>611</sup> *Ibid.* p. 67.

<sup>612</sup> King, p. 18.

<sup>613</sup> Jones, p. 67.

<sup>614</sup> *NAM*, p. 152.

<sup>615</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 152-153.

This drowning imagery is echoed throughout the novel, with repeated references to water and the sea, which notably also feature throughout *SMV* and *LLS* and will be returned to later in this chapter. In *NAM* the use of water imagery signals Janice's undying resilience in the face of adversity. Voice is centrally important in Galloway's corpus and she argues, 'all writers must be obsessed with voice; it's what you're dealing with. [...] Everything is in the details.'<sup>616</sup> In *NAM*, it is important for Janice to find her voice as it correlates with her sense of self and expression of emotion. When Cora returns to Saltcoats not only does she disturb Beth and Janice's routine, she increases their marginality as 'Voices she chose not to hear did not exist.'<sup>617</sup> Janice's lack of voice is clear throughout the novel and she partly remains silent out of fear of Cora and partly due to confusion: 'I drew no attention to the contradictions, just watched. It's the only thing to do when you're not sure what you're learning. I shut up and watched.'<sup>618</sup> In order to avoid the wrath of Cora Janice tries to 'be good', and being quiet is part of this, 'I was good at being quiet. It was something at which I excelled.'<sup>619</sup> Throughout the novel Janice repeats the word 'fine' and even when things are not, she claims 'Everything was *fine*',<sup>620</sup> 'I was fine.'<sup>621</sup> In fact, 'Everything, always, was fine. [Because] Opening your mouth unwarily could cause all sorts. It was always better if things were A-OK and hunky-dory sure-thing perfectly fine.'<sup>622</sup> Janice's fear of opening her mouth unwarily is reminiscent of Morris' fear of something catastrophic happening as a result of something he says. For Morris this extends to his physical surroundings, where he fears the walls crumbling around him.<sup>623</sup> Thus, Morris and Janice's suppression or regulation of their voices can also be read as a suppression or regulation of their selves. It is clear that remaining quiet becomes a method of survival for Janice. At school she is also quiet and particularly hates drill as she is instructed to make noise, to '*abandon all caution. Just let go.*'<sup>624</sup> Because Janice is quiet, 'it made me *special*. [...] suspect in some way',<sup>625</sup> as though her assumed reticence has connotations of dubiousness and disconcerting secrecy.

Janice's first realisation of the sound of her own voice comes when she speaks out when Eddie is drunk and abusive towards Beth:

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<sup>616</sup> Janice Galloway, 'Janice Galloway' in (ed.) Isobel Murray, *Scottish Writers Talking 3* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2006) pp. 1-58, (p. 51).

<sup>617</sup> *NAM*, p. 83.

<sup>618</sup> *Ibid.* p. 8.

<sup>619</sup> *Ibid.* p. 52.

<sup>620</sup> *Ibid.* p. 191.

<sup>621</sup> *Ibid.* p. 192.

<sup>622</sup> *Ibid.* p. 219.

<sup>623</sup> *SMV*, pp. 74-75.

<sup>624</sup> *NAM*, p. 141.

<sup>625</sup> *Ibid.* p. 168.

If her voice had not cracked, if he had not roared back, I might have done nothing at all. Beyond all sense, I ran towards the kitchen light and my father inside it, filling the space. Not knowing what to do, I did something anyway. I spoke. Mum. One word, clean, like a triangle. My voice. Not his name, hers. *Mum*.<sup>626</sup>

Beth's lack of voice in the face of Eddie's rage is revealed through typography in a way that is reminiscent of *The Trick*; Beth cannot speak, letting out only an 'O of surprise.'<sup>627</sup> Eddie throws Beth's stew into the garden, in a rejection of Janice and Beth's closeness, 'that was for us, she said. *Us*.'<sup>628</sup> At this point Janice realises her father's violence is not due to his '*butterfingers*' or being in '*No fit state*' due to alcohol, 'He had known full well.'<sup>629</sup> Janice's realisation of Eddie's need to take responsibility for his actions demonstrates her transition from a position of naivety to understanding and is reinforced by her mother singing '*A Garden of Eden just made for two*'.<sup>630</sup> The word 'Eden' has connotations of the fall of man in relation to Eddie, and the failure of Eddie and Beth's relationship as she now plans to leave him, with Beth and Janice representing the '*two*'. However, despite a newfound awareness of voice, which she only finds when her father is removed from the domestic scene, a sense of disconnect between Janice's self and her voice still remains.

For Janice, singing is the only real way to break her silence. In their new flat she hides under the table, pretending to be a radio and singing Elvis songs, which is reminiscent of the protagonist Jennifer in *So I Am Glad*, whose job as a radio announcer renders her voice disembodied. However, Jennifer 'takes pleasure', according to Mitchell, 'in a clearly defined role, and the separation of voice from body that her work permits.'<sup>631</sup> Janice does eventually claim ownership of her voice by revealing:

It's me! I yell, bursting out from under the table, hopping, demented with excitement. She does a stage look of astonishment, so good I tell her the same thing again, again. It's me I roar. A full confession. *Me*.<sup>632</sup>

The confession 'It's me' suggests an awareness, if not acceptance, of self, yet Janice is only able to use her voice under the guise of a radio transmission, rendering her self fragmented. Singing seems to offer Janice's speaking voice more confidence, and the differences between, or her range of voices, suggest a multiplicity of selves as well as the evolution of the self. Furthermore, she is only willing to claim her identity here because

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<sup>626</sup> *NAM*, p. 44.

<sup>627</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>628</sup> *Ibid*. p. 45.

<sup>629</sup> *Ibid*. p. 46.

<sup>630</sup> *Ibid*. p. 47.

<sup>631</sup> Mitchell, p. 88.

<sup>632</sup> *NAM*, p. 55.

she seeks praise and wants to be acknowledged by Beth for her talent as a singer. Later, in hospital visiting Eddie, Janice sings in her 'best radio voice' but notes, 'my voice sounded thin without the table for an echo chamber, not like Elvis at all',<sup>633</sup> further highlighting that even though she is singing, she is merely impersonating Elvis and using a radio persona, not her own. For both Beth and Janice, it is clear singing becomes a form of escape. Janice notes that 'Singing makes things better'<sup>634</sup> while Beth sings '*Lonely rivers flow to the sea, to the sea.*'<sup>635</sup> The sea imagery Galloway employs here echoes Beth's waters breaking at the start of the text, as she stands in the pool forming at her feet and realises, 'This water, this flood. It's her',<sup>636</sup> thus connecting water with birth and life. The use of water imagery continues with the words, 'Whatever plans she had before her waters broke were off with the tide',<sup>637</sup> where the movement of water mirrors the rise and fall of stability in Beth's life. The sudden change of plans is representative of the luck and chance Janice believes governs their lives throughout the novel. While in some ways the tide represents regularity, it is also governed by the alignment of the sun and moon, external forces, reminiscent of the way that Janice and Beth feel they lack control over their lives. Water continues to be associated with uncertainty in *NAM*; 'Every day was different, every day the same. Changes, shifts, dissolving sands',<sup>638</sup> and although there is the idea that nothing is certain, at least Janice can be certain of that uncertainty. The image of dissolving sands is intriguing, as sand does not dissolve, which provides further ambivalence. A further link to the sea can be seen when Beth whispers '*shhhh* like the sea. *Shhhhhh. Shhhhhh*',<sup>639</sup> so that '*shhhh*' comes to represent not only Janice's silence but also the sound of the sea and the waves lapping Saltcoats' shores. The references to the sea also link people and place, 'Saltcoats meant seaside. The air its residents breathed was thick and saline.'<sup>640</sup> However, the sea comes with its own warning as it carries people away, 'The odd clueless Glasgow boy who doesn't know that tides come in'.<sup>641</sup> However in Saltcoats, 'We are friends with the waves, our town named after the bay they have cut out on the sand.'<sup>642</sup> The sounds of her mother's '*shhhh*' are repeated when Janice's father dies. His death is further associated

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<sup>633</sup> *NAM*, p. 121.

<sup>634</sup> *Ibid.* p. 17.

<sup>635</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>636</sup> *Ibid.* p. 18.

<sup>637</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 18-19.

<sup>638</sup> *Ibid.* p. 29.

<sup>639</sup> *Ibid.* p. 25.

<sup>640</sup> *Ibid.* p. 22.

<sup>641</sup> *Ibid.* p. 14.

<sup>642</sup> *Ibid.*

with water and the drowning and breathing imagery that Galloway also employs in *The Trick*:

There was only the noise of waves from the shore wall, keeping going, crumbling the rocks and shells first to powder, then to nothing. [...] *Shhh*. It was comforting, this evidence of breathing.<sup>643</sup>

Like Robertson's *LLS*, Galloway emphasises the permanence of nature despite human demise. It is as though Beth also lacks the words to be able to comfort Janice, who begins to cry, but it was 'a whine, a dreary, childish complaint'<sup>644</sup> and again, she is left with 'Nothing to say at all'.<sup>645</sup> Like Beth, Janice is unable to express herself emotionally, partly due to maintaining the appearance of 'getting by' and being 'good', and partly due to lack of self, resulting in her inability to express the way she feels.

Later in the novel, Janice is given a key for the house; as she lets herself in there is something eerie about her voice breaking the silence; 'It was my house and not my house, foreign and unlived-in [...] My own voice, when I found it, was frightening. Hello, I said. *Hello*.'<sup>646</sup> The reason for the lack of response is her mother's attempted suicide, the ultimate form of self-destruction and the pinnacle of her breakdown of self. In an interview with Isobel Murray, Galloway claims she is interested in suicide and argues there is always some form of 'ritual' involved, finding it fascinating that in a species designed for survival, some human beings choose to commit suicide.<sup>647</sup> Here, Galloway employs water imagery again, with Janice describing the discovery of her mother's overdose 'Like helicopter blades veering closer, like water, rushing, like drowning',<sup>648</sup> further associating water with both life and death. Galloway expresses a particular interest in mental health and the ways in which mental illnesses 'morph' and change according to the individual: 'what it brings out in you, is going to depend on what is there to bring out in you in the first place',<sup>649</sup> which has further connotations of the evolution of self, or of a multiplicity of selves. Furthermore, she considers the difficulties in separating the illness from the person, suggesting it is even harder for the sufferer to have a sense of a self that is not defined by, or dictated to by illness, 'to know what's you, and what's something you don't really want to do, but seem impelled to do on the outside. Because it's working in the inside of your head.'<sup>650</sup> This suggests a lack of self-control or self-awareness as central to the breakdown

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<sup>643</sup> *NAM*, p. 123.

<sup>644</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>645</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>646</sup> *Ibid.* p. 284.

<sup>647</sup> Galloway, *Scottish Writers Talking* 3, p. 27.

<sup>648</sup> *NAM*, p. 286.

<sup>649</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>650</sup> *Ibid.*

of the self. Galloway suggests this conflict between the mental illness and the 'real' person impinges on the sufferer's sense of self, asking, 'How can you ever separate that from your feeling of you-ness?',<sup>651</sup> which suggests fragmentation of the self, where one attempts to seek 'you-ness', or coherence of self. However, as the narrative concept of self suggests, perhaps it is necessary to accept a self that is not whole, allowing the sufferer to forgive the self by accepting an unfixed, fluid self and the possibility for change. Janice's mother's self-harm can be read as a silent cry for help and she must become self-aware and forgive herself in order to reach a point of self-acceptance. In the case of Joy Stone, Hock Soon Ng notes that 'In forgiving herself, she learns to reconcile her present with the past so as to effect healing in order to move forward.'<sup>652</sup> Janice describes her mother's self-harm:

She hurt herself, my mother. I noticed it like it was the first time. Her hands had rough skin on the knuckles, a snail-tracery of healed wounds. I made a point of sharpening four HBs with a razor blade and not hurting myself once, a demonstration for anyone in any doubt. I was, and would be, perfectly fine.<sup>653</sup>

This extract reveals Janice's own need to establish some form of control over her chaotic life and in not hurting herself, she is proving to herself that she is 'perfectly fine' and self-reliant when the person she most relies on is in crisis.

Galloway employs further water imagery when Beth utters sighs 'deep enough to swim in',<sup>654</sup> which is again reminiscent of the language employed in *The Trick* and in both texts swimming becomes analogous with survival. When Beth returns home from hospital she simply says, 'I wasn't well',<sup>655</sup> remaining dignified, and working through her problems in order to return to normality. Beth finally stands up to Cora's bullying in an assertion of self surrounding the issue of the family's piano: '*we're getting it, whether you like it or not and the words stuck*'.<sup>656</sup> Janice notes, 'what mattered was that she wanted *something*. That she said so with her voice strong and clear embraced me.'<sup>657</sup> The word 'embrace' has connotations of physical affection and suggests that in Beth's assertion, she is also speaking on behalf of Janice to stand up to Cora. Beth's new sense of power seems to offer Janice a role model for change and through singing and the joy of music, Janice does begin to realise her own sense of self: 'This girl with a wicked streak trying to get out. Let me at the damn piano. My eyes were watering. *Me*.'<sup>658</sup> The word '*Me*' represents an

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<sup>651</sup> *NAM*, p. 286.

<sup>652</sup> Hock Soon Ng, p. 249.

<sup>653</sup> *NAM*, p. 241.

<sup>654</sup> *Ibid.* p. 280.

<sup>655</sup> *Ibid.* p. 289.

<sup>656</sup> *Ibid.* p. 290.

<sup>657</sup> *Ibid.* p. 290.

<sup>658</sup> *Ibid.* p. 253.



admission and new awareness of a self she is now willing to claim. However, as ever, Cora undermines her newfound sense of self when she tells her, 'You need to grow up, you',<sup>659</sup> resulting in Janice's own self-harm as she proceeds to poke a knitting needle into her wrist 'till it grazed and seeped blood in a beaded line'.<sup>660</sup> However, she does this while sitting in Cora's chair, so although Cora has won another verbal battle, Janice physically, albeit silently, usurps her by taking her seat.

Towards the end of the novel, there is a strong suggestion that Cora could in fact be Janice's mother, raising further questions surrounding the idea of self. There is already ambiguity surrounding Janice's birth but the implication is that she could easily have been Cora's daughter. This ambiguity is part of *NAM*'s fictitious element as Galloway states: 'My mother and sister were pregnant at the same time and I used to tell myself in moments of despair I could have been my sister's kid, be grateful.'<sup>661</sup> However, in the novel, in an outburst of rage towards Cora, Beth says, 'Some of us had lives of our own to deal with, not just [...] mopping up after other people's mistakes',<sup>662</sup> which is reminiscent of the mopping up of her waters at the start of the novel. However, the phrase, 'other people's mistakes' provides another layer of complex ambiguity. Furthermore, in the corner shop Janice overhears the shopkeeper's speculations; 'It's her granny all right, he said. It's the other lassie that's her mother. As though I wasn't there',<sup>663</sup> further emphasising Janice's marginalised self. This particular thread in the novel comes to a climax in one final scene of conflict between Cora and Beth, where she accusingly tells Cora, 'You've no respect for nothing, you, least of all your own weans',<sup>664</sup> to which Cora retorts, 'I've dealt with my troubles.' My mother snorted. 'I have!'<sup>665</sup> Until, Janice realises, 'This wasn't about me',<sup>666</sup> which provides a cyclical link back to the novel's title. However, her genealogy is left open to the reader's interpretation when Beth mutters 'Weans', 'as though there had been more than one baby Cora had left behind',<sup>667</sup> while the words 'LIAR',<sup>668</sup> and 'DESPAIR',<sup>669</sup> provide a culmination of Janice's uncertainty and the lies the family has told throughout the novel.<sup>670</sup>

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<sup>659</sup> *NAM*, p. 256.

<sup>660</sup> *Ibid.* p. 257.

<sup>661</sup> Diski.

<sup>662</sup> *NAM*, p. 280.

<sup>663</sup> *Ibid.* p. 288.

<sup>664</sup> *Ibid.* p. 328.

<sup>665</sup> *Ibid.* p. 328.

<sup>666</sup> *Ibid.* p. 330.

<sup>667</sup> *Ibid.* p. 331.

<sup>668</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>669</sup> *Ibid.* p. 336.

<sup>670</sup> Galloway has denied this reading of *NAM*. In interviews with Jenny Diski (London Review Podcasts, 24<sup>th</sup> September 2008) and Louise Welsh (Creative Conversations, University of Glasgow, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2016),

However, Lisa Gee notes, ‘every so often moments of fun break through the drudgery’,<sup>671</sup> in the form of singing games and butter and sugar sandwiches and Beth reminds the reader ‘*Things can always get worse.*’<sup>672</sup> As the novel progresses it is clear Janice begins to grow in strength and confidence. She describes her and her classmates in a school photograph: ‘the whole class, merely children and unsteady on our feet about something’, yet, ‘You can’t miss me. I am, almost smiling.’<sup>673</sup> Galloway’s use of the comma after ‘I am’ also suggests an acknowledgement of the self in the school photo, in contrast to the staged family photographs. This newfound acknowledgment could be a result of Janice’s independence from her family, and particularly Cora, suggesting that at school she is able to ‘be herself’ away from Cora’s overbearing presence and the fear of violence. The photograph reveals the persistence of the self; that despite the major setbacks she experiences in the novel, Janice is ultimately surviving. At the end of the novel the change Janice has undergone is also physically represented in her new haircut that is described as ‘modern’ and ‘boyish’.<sup>674</sup> Meanwhile her mother has new teeth, they look at each other, ‘our new faces to the world’,<sup>675</sup> the word ‘new’ emphasising the changes they have undergone. Galloway also employs humour when Beth comments on Janice’s new haircut, ‘It’ll grow on me.’<sup>676</sup> Ultimately, there is the sound of laughter as all three women are content to be who they are, having found a way to endure their own, as well as one another’s selves. Janice and Beth’s physical changes to their appearances can be seen as an assertion and acceptance of the evolution of the self. In the same way that Joy Stone is ultimately moving forward at the end of *The Trick*, represented in the lines, ‘The voice is still there. / I forgive you’,<sup>677</sup> in *This Is Not About Me*, Janice, Beth and Cora prove their enduring ability to survive. Galloway states:

I admire survival, and I admire people with life to live, the books are all about that in some ways, about this idea of endurance and keeping going, and even when you feel lousy you must find stuff to do, because damn it to hell, you *are* only here a short time, and you should do something – it’s a social duty, almost, to do something constructive with this.<sup>678</sup>

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Galloway emphasises that Cora (Nora) was not her mother, but in terms of her mother and sister being pregnant at the same time, Cora ‘*could* have’ been.

<sup>671</sup> Lisa Gee, ‘This is not about me, By Janice Galloway’, *Independent*, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2008 <<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/this-is-not-about-me-by-janice-galloway-5358437.html>> [Accessed November 2015].

<sup>672</sup> *NAM*, p. 13.

<sup>673</sup> *Ibid.* p. 194.

<sup>674</sup> *Ibid.* p. 293.

<sup>675</sup> *Ibid.* p. 295.

<sup>676</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>677</sup> Galloway, *The Trick*, p. 235.

<sup>678</sup> Galloway, *Scottish Writers Talking 3*, p. 32.

The persistence of self is clear in *NAM*, and against all odds, with an abusive father and sister and a mother who repeatedly reminds her if she had known about the pregnancy things would have been different, 'If I'd kent [...] If I'd just bloody known',<sup>679</sup> it becomes not only difficult for Janice to carry on surviving, but essential.

Galloway concludes *This Is Not About Me* by leaving the reader with a final description of a photograph, making sure to remind the reader that 'Photos aren't everything. They serve for when memory refuses; grey filler for the gaps. They don't prove much save that you were there, but it's something. You were there.'<sup>680</sup> The emphasis on human existence, and just being 'there' links back to Galloway's love of Breughel's paintings because he shows us 'we were at least there'. Humanity and the quality of being humane is key to Galloway's writing and she claims, 'we need to be more upfront about saying that how you treat other people signifies in this life.'<sup>681</sup> The final photograph of Janice is described for the reader:

It's a girl on the front step in tartan trews with stirrup straps, a home-knitted cardi with too-short sleeves and wild boy hair needing cut. [...] There are only six months more of Jack's Road School left to run. She knows that too. She has no idea what the future will be like, only that it's coming and there's no escape. [...] But what she knows, she knows for sure. She knows her name is Janice, that nobody chose it. She knows that some people die and that some people make mistakes and that there's no changing it, no appeal. She knows it's nobody's fault that she's got a memory like a packet of razor blades, but it's not hers either. You get what you get and that's your hand, the same for everyone. It's fixed. The cards would never change, not now, but with luck, they might be shuffled, cut, turned to the best advantage. Inventiveness counts for something. She's biding her time, waiting to play.<sup>682</sup>

These final lines return to the idea of life as a game of chance through the language of cards. Although it may not be possible to change her hand, her family or her relationships with them, both good and bad, it is possible to survive and to forgive others, in order to find a self and acceptance of that self. The sentence, 'She's biding her time, waiting to play', suggests both Galloway the writer and Janice the character have become distanced from their former selves, yet are also accepting of their past selves and are now able to look back with fondness. Most importantly, at the end of the novel Janice knows her own name and the implication is an acceptance of self. As Janice grows older, 'The varnish of being fine was getting thinner, less dependable. [...] I wouldn't trust me to behave at

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<sup>679</sup> *NAM*, p. 19.

<sup>680</sup> *Ibid.* p. 338.

<sup>681</sup> Galloway, *Scottish Writers Talking* 3, p. 54.

<sup>682</sup> *NAM*, pp. 338-9.

all.’<sup>683</sup> Lavinia Greenlaw claims the tone here is, ‘triumphant, as if this excessively careful child has understood that she has to allow herself to exist. There is clearly going to be trouble, but of the worthwhile kind.’<sup>684</sup> It is clear as Janice approaches adulthood that life will not be any easier but she has found her sense of self.

In *The Sound of My Voice*, Morris Magellan also experiences a feeling of uncertainty throughout the novella, until there is a moment of breakthrough at the end, and according to Wallace, the ‘disorientating’ effect of the second-person narrative also provides an ‘uncannily convincing recreation of the psychological disfigurement of alcoholism.’<sup>685</sup> The word ‘disfigurement’ highlights the damage alcohol does to the self, in terms of both physical and mental fragmentation, but also reveals the way alcohol can alter the self beyond recognition. For Magellan, ‘when one drink is too much the rest are never enough. Never’,<sup>686</sup> revealing his confused logic and addiction. Alcoholism features in all of these examples of contemporary Scottish fiction<sup>687</sup> and in *SMV* Butlin demonstrates how alcohol alters or transforms Morris’ self, revealing the survival of his self under external pressures. For Morris, drink is a form of escape; ‘alcohol is not the problem – it’s the solution: dissolving all the separate parts into one. A universal solvent. An ocean.’<sup>688</sup> The ‘separate parts’ dissolved by alcohol reveal Morris’ fragmented self and although there is the suggestion that alcohol can make these disconnected parts ‘one’, it can also ‘dissolve’, erasing him entirely. A ‘solution’ has connotations of not only a solution to Morris’ problems, but also a chemical solution; a liquid containing a solute, namely Morris, with alcohol as the solvent, further implying Morris’ erosion by alcohol. The water imagery Butlin employs here can be seen throughout *SMV* and is reminiscent of Galloway’s *NAM*, where she uses language to conjure the sound of the sea, which is also woven throughout her novel. For Morris, the water is in fact ‘the lulling tide of gin’<sup>689</sup> and he willingly lets himself, ‘be carried by the current.’<sup>690</sup> There are further water-related connotations in the

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<sup>683</sup> *NAM*, p. 314.

<sup>684</sup> Greenlaw.

<sup>685</sup> Wallace, ‘Voices in Empty Houses: The Novel of Damaged Identity’, p. 229.

<sup>686</sup> *SMV*, p. 73.

<sup>687</sup> See p. 58 for some examples of alcoholism and addiction in contemporary Scottish fiction. For a discussion on the phenomenon, see for example: Douglas Gifford, ‘Breaking Boundaries: From Modern to Contemporary in Scottish Fiction’ in (ed.) Ian Brown, *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature: Modern Transformations: New Identities (from 1918)* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2007) pp. 237-252; Kirsty Macdonald, ‘The Desolate and Appalling Landscape’: The Journey North in Contemporary Scottish Gothic’, *Gothic Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2, November 2011, pp. 37-48; Anikó Szilágyi, ‘Scotland is Fucked: Irvine Welsh, Andrew Drennan and the Deconstruction of Nationalism’, *Groundings*, Vol. 3, April 2010, pp. 55-70; Scott Stalcup, “‘Trainspotting, High Fidelity’, and the Diction of Addiction’, *Studies in Popular Culture*, Vol. 30, No. 2, Spring 2008, pp. 119-136.

<sup>688</sup> *SMV*, p. 24.

<sup>689</sup> *Ibid.* p. 40.

<sup>690</sup> *Ibid.*

‘sound-waves’ of his wife’s exclamations, ‘Oh, Morris, Morris’, and her voice becomes, ‘a full tide forcing you back against the shore’,<sup>691</sup> in her attempt to bring him back to ‘dry’ land. The safety in Mary’s voice and the tide bringing him back to the shore suggests that water represents life for Morris too. However, the water imagery proves to be increasingly ambiguous throughout the text and if alcohol is represented as cleansing water, water also poses a threat to Morris’ life or self. The representation of water in *SMV* is reminiscent of the sometimes ominous connotations surrounding water in Galloway’s writing as both Janice in *NAM* and Joy in *The Trick* associate water with breathing or drowning and death. Further allusions to water include Butlin’s choice of Morris’ surname, ‘Magellan’, which is not accidental in its associations with the maritime explorer Ferdinand Magellan, the first European to cross the Pacific Ocean, ‘explorer *extraordinaire*! First man round the world and back again.’<sup>692</sup> The association with the explorer suggests Morris’ own journey and discovery of self, while the voyage of global circumnavigation echoes the cyclical nature of the novella and of life itself.

According to Stevenson, *SMV* ‘shows Morris’ mind itself as a kind of inner ocean, one whose tides steadily wash painful actuality into shapes sea-changed by consoling imagination,’<sup>693</sup> although truly how ‘consoling’ these images are is debatable; as Morris drinks more, ‘all manner of horrors – both living and dead – were exposed. These creatures groped sightlessly towards you.’<sup>694</sup> The painful actuality can be seen as the traumatic events of his childhood reimagined and arguably Magellan creates such images in his mind in order to transport himself to an imaginary world of his own as he feels he does not belong in the real world he inhabits. King suggests ‘the rhythms of chronology disintegrate together with the anticipation of survival’, revealing the way in which the traumatic event is not fully experienced or understood at the time in order to survive. Morris has not confronted his childhood trauma, which is now ‘freefloating in time’<sup>695</sup> and therefore disrupts his adult mind for it has not been ‘given a place in the past.’<sup>696</sup> Butlin’s use of imagery serves to leave readers in a ‘strangely fluid Magellan-world’<sup>697</sup> where the reader experiences the same sense of disorientation. The novella is at times humorous and the sea imagery continues when Morris is left with ‘Sea-legs’, ‘like being on board a ship’,<sup>698</sup> due to his drunken state. Here, the domestic meets the extended seascape metaphor when

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<sup>691</sup> *SMV*, p. 100.

<sup>692</sup> *Ibid.* p. 59.

<sup>693</sup> Stevenson, p. 5.

<sup>694</sup> *SMV*, p. 24.

<sup>695</sup> Van der Wiel, p. 7.

<sup>696</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>697</sup> Stevenson, p. 6.

<sup>698</sup> *SMV*, p. 22.

Morris calls out across the landing, ‘bit stormy here’,<sup>699</sup> culminating in the words, ‘you live from moment to moment like a drowning man’,<sup>700</sup> until eventually he sinks to the bottom where he lies protected upon the sea-bed where ‘nothing can touch or hurt you’,<sup>701</sup> reinforcing the idea of water as life and here, protector of Morris.

However, there are also references to breathing and choking that conjure images more akin to Galloway’s fiction. For example, the reader is told ‘You drink to keep it down, to stop from choking. You drink to gain another breath’.<sup>702</sup> Therefore, alcohol becomes Morris’ method of survival: ‘gin tasted like liquid oxygen’,<sup>703</sup> like ‘drinking sunlight’,<sup>704</sup> which suggests alcohol gives him hope. Butlin’s use of language beautifully conveys the hold drink has over Magellan. He subverts well-known drink-related metaphors in phrases such as, ‘You *do* drink like a fish, for drink allows you to breathe underwater’,<sup>705</sup> while ‘A medicinal hair of the dog’<sup>706</sup> becomes literal:

A hair of the dog. In its kennel behind the wardrobe. But you weren’t up to whistling for it [...] Good dog. Nice dog. Didn’t need to sit or beg, not for you. Didn’t need to wag his tail either. You’d do that yourself. ‘Cheers’ to the dog. To man’s best friend. Then ‘Cheers’ to yourself.<sup>707</sup>

Stevenson states that this humour is part of ‘a much wider inventiveness, a real profligacy of imagination, which is ultimately far fuller of promise than pain.’<sup>708</sup> The humour Butlin employs provides moments of light relief but also serves to further expose Morris’ fragmented self as he says, ‘Cheers’ to himself, there is the suggestion his inner self is hidden beneath the humorous shield.

Throughout *SMV* the reader follows Morris’ breakdown, ‘How unhappy you must feel. Hardly news’,<sup>709</sup> as he, ‘attempts to hold back an apparently ever rising muddy tide of depression and anxiety with doses of brandy.’<sup>710</sup> Morris drinks in an attempt to wash away the choking mud he feels rising from within, ‘Mud-streets, mud-skies [...] choking in mud’<sup>711</sup> and he believes alcohol will ‘cleanse’<sup>712</sup> him. This mud can also be linked to the

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<sup>699</sup> *SMV*, p. 22.

<sup>700</sup> *Ibid.* p. 24.

<sup>701</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>702</sup> *Ibid.* p. 26.

<sup>703</sup> *Ibid.* p. 38.

<sup>704</sup> *Ibid.* p. 33.

<sup>705</sup> *Ibid.* p. 24.

<sup>706</sup> *Ibid.* p. 65.

<sup>707</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>708</sup> Stevenson, p. 5.

<sup>709</sup> *SMV*, p. 25.

<sup>710</sup> *British Council*, ‘Literature: Ron Butlin’ <<https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/ron-butlin>> [Accessed January 2016].

<sup>711</sup> *SMV*, p. 26.

<sup>712</sup> *Ibid.*

water imagery, as mud is combined of earth and water, and reflects Morris' previous position in limbo between the sea, or the water, and the shore, which is the earth, resulting in his muddy position. There is also a further suggestion of alcohol as cleansing, in a play on the meaning of the Scottish Gaelic for whisky, 'uisge-beatha', which translates as 'water of life'. The belief alcohol will cleanse him has Biblical connotations of purification and a rejection of sin. In Morris' case, alcohol ultimately frees him from guilt, which reinforces the idea of alcohol as altering or transforming the self as drink allows Morris to ignore his inner voice. His alcohol cravings come to a head on one particular train journey where his fellow passengers are also caked in mud: 'it's dried up in the corners of their mouths, [...] in the lines of their hands, under their nails, smeared under their clothes; the mud seeping out from their armpits and crotches.'<sup>713</sup> The list of body parts creates the sense of increased anxiety Morris feels when he believes he is 'breathing mud'.<sup>714</sup> His desire to drink is represented by the mud metaphors and becomes all-consuming to the extent where those around him are oozing mud from every crevice of their bodies. The mud seeping from his fellow passengers can be seen as a projection of Morris' eroding self as the people around him no longer appear solid and are also dissolving. Furthermore, his reaction to those around him emphasises Morris' inability to feel for or interact with others. Anderson argues that affect, or feeling emotion is 'capturable [as] life potential [...] becoming conscious of one's side-perceived sense of vitality'.<sup>715</sup> Therefore Morris must learn to affect and be affected in order to become self-aware and to have a sense of his own self-worth. Forming meaningful relationships with others will provide Morris with a sense of belonging and hope, where hopefulness is 'akin to a sort of will to live'<sup>716</sup> or persist.

As the title suggests, and as in *NAM*, voice is central to *The Sound of My Voice*, and Morris' fragmented self is shown throughout the novella via the use of second-person narration. The mud that appears throughout the narrative as an image of Morris' desire to drink to forget or conceal also has an effect on his voice. The mud-mouth can be seen as a metaphor for his traumatic memories, as trauma often cannot be communicated to others,<sup>717</sup> and as he loses control of his increasing alcohol cravings Morris' 'mud-mouth'<sup>718</sup> prevents him from speaking. On one occasion he is rendered voiceless: "‘Extraordinarily.’ In silence you enunciated these syllables into yourself without once faltering. But to speak

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<sup>713</sup> *SMV*, p. 106.

<sup>714</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>715</sup> Anderson, p. 739.

<sup>716</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>717</sup> Van der Wiel, p. 7.

<sup>718</sup> *SMV*, p. 61.

them aloud – ah, your mud-mouth!’<sup>719</sup> This reveals the inhibiting, choking effect of the alcohol-induced mud sensation that Morris experiences and his lack of voice as a result of the mud-mouth and the shame he feels. John Self emphasises Butlin’s ‘poet’s skills of observation and concision in every line’,<sup>720</sup> from Morris’ conversations in work and at home, to a casual afternoon’s drink-driving, where the extended metaphor of sea and water imagery that is woven throughout the narrative comes to a climax:

Anchors away, and, smoothly, faultlessly, sliding out of port despite an awkward kerb-nudge. Steady as she goes. Saluting the harbour master, then bearing hard to starboard into the main lane of a three-lane stretch, watching the centre lane marker buoys, the badly parked rocks and reefbanks.<sup>721</sup>

Butlin uses nautical language combined with the language of driving in order to conjure the feeling of nausea and disorientation Morris experiences as he is in limbo between a fictional world of alcohol-induced metaphor and one of reality, and a dangerous reality at that.

Like Janice in *NAM*, Magellan’s only other escape from life and depression is through his love of music, which tends to be linked with alcohol too. For example, Mozart’s music is associated with the same water imagery as brandy, as like drinking, music is also able to wash away the mud that chokes Morris:

You used to think of Mozart as eighteenth-century Muzak and you could never understand what all the fuss was about. He seemed charming: like a shallow stream bubbling prettily through a well-planned garden. Clear water, but only a few inches deep. Then one day you heard a modulation into G minor: clear water certainly, but so deep you sensed you would never touch the bottom. [...] You try to become weightless, to let the music support you as water would. As brandy does.<sup>722</sup>

The ‘shallow stream bubbling’ and the ‘well-planned garden’ create an idyllic image and corresponds to the composition of the ‘Muzak’, which later grows in intensity until it is no longer a ‘few inches deep’, but becomes a bottomless, unthreatening sea offering clarity and balance. Mozart’s ‘Symphony No. 40 in G minor K.550’ (1788) has ‘violence and sensuality’<sup>723</sup> at its centre and a dark, intense mood, which appeals to Morris’ emotions and depressive nature. Therefore, Mozart’s ‘Symphony’ not only provides another escape as an accompaniment to drink, but also enables Morris to begin to feel emotion. Anderson suggests music is ‘bound to the routine and rhythms of everyday life through changes in

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<sup>719</sup> *SMV*, p. 61.

<sup>720</sup> Self.

<sup>721</sup> *SMV*, p. 99.

<sup>722</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 98-99.

<sup>723</sup> Stephan Weiss, ‘The Music of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’ <[www.wolfgang-amadeus.at/en/music\\_of\\_Mozart.php](http://www.wolfgang-amadeus.at/en/music_of_Mozart.php)> [Accessed January 2016].



capacities to affect and be affected',<sup>724</sup> suggesting the ways in which music can elicit emotional response. Magellan's hallucinations come to a climax when he imagines a snowman is in the kitchen, 'He's looking at you. Smiling.'<sup>725</sup> Butlin continues to use humour when the weather report tells him it is going to be a lovely summer's day and the 'snowman scowls'<sup>726</sup> in response. The cool, white snow contrasts with the brown spatters of mud, which have connotations of dirt and shame, while the snow is pure, despite symbolising alcohol. The hallucinations further reveal Morris' fragmentation and according to Welsh, it becomes increasingly clear Morris is 'well on in the process of disintegration.'<sup>727</sup> The word 'disintegration' also suggests Morris' fragmented self: he has been utterly shattered, physically and mentally eroded by the alcohol he consumes. Yet for Morris, alcohol appears to provide clarity and 'The more you drink, the more easily you can distinguish between north, south, east and west. By five o' clock you have usually drunk enough to find your way home',<sup>728</sup> whereas for most people, alcohol blurs the picture and dulls the senses. There is also snow imagery at the end of the novella where Magellan imagines it is snowing in the house. At first, it is 'Just a few flakes',<sup>729</sup> but soon 'everywhere around you the colour white',<sup>730</sup> which has heavenly connotations and also comes to represent his 'deepening silence'<sup>731</sup> as he steps into the snow, letting it absorb him. Morris knows he must change: 'For you, there cannot be one drink – just *drink* itself. From now on every day is the first day, and the first drink will be the final one.'<sup>732</sup> Ultimately, it is clear that only when Morris Magellan reaches rock bottom and feels pain will he 'begin to have a chance to heal'.<sup>733</sup> It is necessary for Morris to acknowledge and feel such pain in order to accept himself and move forward, in a way that is reminiscent of Galloway's female protagonists.

In an interview with Colin Nicholson Butlin muses:

I like the idea of becoming in that Aristotelian sense of entelechy, gradually becoming a whole in a qualitative as well as a spatial sense. I am fascinated by that concept: every moment I am becoming the person that I am: I am the meaning of my own history at every moment.<sup>734</sup>

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<sup>724</sup> Anderson, p. 741.

<sup>725</sup> *SMV*, p. 41.

<sup>726</sup> *Ibid.* p. 42.

<sup>727</sup> Welsh, 'Foreword', p. 7.

<sup>728</sup> *SMV*, p. 23.

<sup>729</sup> *Ibid.* p. 93.

<sup>730</sup> *Ibid.* p. 95.

<sup>731</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>732</sup> *Ibid.* p. 108.

<sup>733</sup> Braidwood, *Scots Whay Hae!*

<sup>734</sup> Ron Butlin, 'Whiddershins This Life O Mine' in (ed.) Colin Nicholson, *Poem, Purpose and Place: Shaping Identity in Contemporary Scottish Verse* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1992) pp. 224-237, (p. 230).

Butlin's idea that 'every moment I am becoming the person that I am', can be seen in the opening page of *SMV* in the line, 'everything that has ever happened to you is still happening'.<sup>735</sup> This suggests one's past informs one's present self but also that a self is not limited to past experience, nor is it ever fully-formed due to the ever-changing nature of the 'present', thus the self is fluid and ever-evolving. It is clear that until Morris forgives his father and his selves he cannot move forward. His self-loathing prevents him from finding his self and Goodwin argues the, 'ultimate act of self aggression is suicide',<sup>736</sup> describing alcoholism as a form of 'slow suicide'. The opening memory of a traumatic childhood picnic is paralleled at the end of the novel when Morris is driving his own family back from a picnic, and drives back into the past to 'exorcise and forgive'<sup>737</sup> his father, almost fatally colliding with his apparition. The ghost of his father is the final illusion Morris suffers in *SMV*:

You can hear him: his voice calling you from over thirty years ago when you jumped up suddenly at the picnic [...] He is still coming after you to catch you, to hold you. [...] You sense his energy, his strength. His anger.<sup>738</sup>

His 'energy' is reminiscent of the way Eddie's presence changed the feel of the house in Galloway's *NAM*, and results in Morris 'driving full-speed' at his father, fuelled by his father's anger, which 'has almost caught up with you.'<sup>739</sup> When Morris releases the accelerator and slows down the car, it acts as a metaphor for his forgiveness of his father, which plays a vital role in his ability to forgive himself.

Wallace argues that not until Morris learns to love himself sufficiently to acknowledge his addiction, will the voice become 'self-consolatory',<sup>740</sup> and not until he listens to his inner self, will he 'reach the point of reconciliation and healing to which it has been gently leading him.'<sup>741</sup> Magellan's suppression of self reaches a climax when he experiences the sensation of falling 'into a silence that presses down harder and harder. That reaches into you: your eyes that can't stay open, your mouth's saliva',<sup>742</sup> as though he is falling so far into silence he is close to death. Morris does finally listen to the sound of his voice:

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<sup>735</sup> *SMV*, p. 1.

<sup>736</sup> Goodwin, p. 78.

<sup>737</sup> Wallace, 'Voices in Empty Houses: The Novel of Damaged Identity', p. 230.

<sup>738</sup> *SMV*, p. 113.

<sup>739</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>740</sup> Wallace, 'Voices in Empty Houses: The Novel of Damaged Identity', p. 230.

<sup>741</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>742</sup> *SMV*, p. 93.

You have reached a moment quiet enough to hear the sound of my voice: so now, as you stare out into the darkness, accept the comfort it can give you – and the love. The love.<sup>743</sup>

In the words ‘hear the sound of my voice’ Butlin references the novella’s title, revealing the cyclical nature of *SMV*. The suggestion is Morris has fallen into darkness and in order to receive the love and comfort his inner voice can offer him, he must confront and accept his childhood self, and reject his ‘crippling sense of shame and guilt’.<sup>744</sup> At the end of the novel however, as in these other examples of contemporary Scottish fiction, Morris does accept his self and is ultimately moving forward. In all of the novels there is an emphasis on the importance of the characters moving forward as part of their journey. Morris’ inner self instructs him: ‘you must keep going. One step [...] hold instead onto the sound of my voice.’<sup>745</sup> Although there is the realisation, like Janice’s, that there will be ‘Good moments, bad moments’,<sup>746</sup> ultimately he is surviving. Like the use of ‘*Me*’ in *NAM*, the possessive pronoun ‘my’ suggests that Morris accepts the voice as his own, thereby implying his wider self-acceptance. In addition, repetition of the word ‘love’ places emphasis on his newfound ability to feel. The voice is one of encouragement, ‘The trembling will pass. Trust me’,<sup>747</sup> and it reveals that Morris must learn to listen to and to trust his inner self. There is a reference to ‘the present moment’,<sup>748</sup> which acts as an instruction to Morris to begin living his life, and therefore, according to Butlin’s Aristotelian logic, become himself. The voice gently instructs him in a way that is reminiscent of the advice columns from magazines and Joy’s inner voice in *The Trick*: ‘No need to drink it dry. No need for anything. Except for breakfast; for conversation and Clementi. No need for Courvoisier. If you’re trembling – stir the tea and save energy!’<sup>749</sup> The use of alliteration here places emphasis on the rejection of ‘Courvoisier’; while the repetition of ‘no need’ shows Morris does not need alcohol or material possessions. The reader is told ‘This is the first day’<sup>750</sup> of Morris’ new beginning and he is no longer alone as the voice says, ‘I am with you. It is all right’<sup>751</sup> in a reconciliation of self and voice.

However, Butlin muses, ‘like anybody who’s ever been damaged, recovery is never a straight line’,<sup>752</sup> and upon leaving the house Morris experiences a minor setback on the

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<sup>743</sup> *SMV*, pp. 103-104.

<sup>744</sup> Wallace, ‘Voices in Empty Houses: The Novel of Damaged Identity’, p. 230.

<sup>745</sup> *SMV*, p. 107.

<sup>746</sup> *Ibid.* p. 108.

<sup>747</sup> *Ibid.* p. 105.

<sup>748</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>749</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>750</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>751</sup> *Ibid.* p. 106.

<sup>752</sup> Butlin, *Coffee-Table Notes*.

train where he is ‘unable to rise from [his] seat; unable to say aloud, ‘Excuse me, excuse me’’.<sup>753</sup> However, the voice remains, ‘You lost touch with me in the carriage when the mud began seeping in. In your panic you thrust me into the background as far as you could’,<sup>754</sup> reiterating that he needs to accept his voice, for he cannot keep the mud at bay, ‘Not by yourself’,<sup>755</sup> as Morris cannot find a coherent self without listening to his inner voice. The major catalyst for Morris’ change takes place when he witnesses a death at the train station and Butlin argues that this becomes the ‘trigger for things beginning to fracture inside of him.’<sup>756</sup> Perhaps this fracturing is necessary for Morris in order for him to fully understand and begin to accept the individual parts that form his self. There is further reference to water and drowning as the train driver is described ‘like a man drowning – his arms threshing wildly, his mouth wide open, his eyes staring out through the glass.’<sup>757</sup>

He shouts, ‘I’ve killed someone! I’ve killed someone!’ [...] The three of you stare down at the remains of the man with the white jersey and the jeans. At the mess of colours. [...] Everyone feels the need to talk, to say something to someone. You can feel it all around you and inside you. A kind of panic because you also want to talk, to touch people.<sup>758</sup>

There is a suggestion of the possibility of healing through talking to others, as the witnesses come together and Morris realises his desire to connect with these people on an emotional level. There is also reference to the colour white again, but here it has connotations of death, reinforced by the dead man’s white clothing, which is in contrast to the red blood and ‘mess of colours’. Later, Morris recalls ‘The platform, *where the colour white flutters in front of the train to slow it down, then tangles in the wheels to bring it to a dead stop.*’<sup>759</sup> The ‘colour white’ refers to the man’s body, while ‘dead stop’ has a double meaning in that it refers both literally to the train stopping, but also to the man’s death. However, white also has ghostly connotations and it is as though part of Morris, or his former self, has died. This is reinforced by line, ‘Yesterday you witnessed a stranger’s death and felt it to be your own, in part.’<sup>760</sup> Therefore, the figure, which, ‘*flutters in front of the train*’, could be read as the ghost of Morris’ former self instructing him to ‘*slow down*’ and reevaluate his life and behaviour. The word ‘stranger’ also reveals Morris’ lack of self-knowledge and that he must forgive his former selves in order to move forward. As

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<sup>753</sup> SMV, p. 106.

<sup>754</sup> Ibid. p. 107.

<sup>755</sup> Ibid.

<sup>756</sup> Butlin, *Coffee-Table Notes*.

<sup>757</sup> SMV, pp. 83-4.

<sup>758</sup> Ibid.

<sup>759</sup> Ibid. p. 106.

<sup>760</sup> Ibid. p. 103.

Morris stands with his fellow passengers, named ‘the forgivers’, he feels ‘a strong pull to join one of these groups’,<sup>761</sup> envious of the train driver who is ‘forgiven, excused, held, and then listened to.’<sup>762</sup> This emphasises Magellan’s need to forgive his father and himself before others can begin to forgive him. As a result of witnessing the man’s death, Morris begins to acknowledge his drinking problem and to feel his own pain. Butlin states:

In a way what happened to Morris is a metaphor for the whole shebang. People had their filofaxes and everything else appears right, but inside they were falling apart. He was in total denial that he was in any pain, and used alcohol to anaesthetise him. But it’s only after he witnesses a suicide that he starts to wake up.<sup>763</sup>

Butlin’s comment emphasises Morris’ fragmented self, but also suggests the importance for Morris of witnessing the death of another man in making him realise his own desire to survive. Butlin also argues ‘We can’t be half-alive’,<sup>764</sup> and although it may be argued that Morris’ behaviour has been self-destructive, the scene he witnesses prompts him to assess the value of his own life, which ultimately he decides is worth living.

In a moment of breakthrough and clarity, Morris’ inner voice tells him, ‘you must rescue yourself [...] You must keep forcing yourself forwards, your hands stretched out in front.’<sup>765</sup> The image of his ‘hands stretched out in front’ has connotations of protecting oneself from a fall, but also of Morris blindly feeling his way through darkness. Although he may not know where he is going, Morris must keep ‘forcing’ himself forwards. Being sick in the kitchen sink for the last time in the novella, Morris rests his head against the cool metal, describing it as ‘Rest – from the journey, the thirty-four-year journey to reach this one moment’s peace.’<sup>766</sup> However, this moment is bittersweet as he is left retching at the sink. Importantly though, Morris is beginning to make peace with himself and his purging also has connotations of cleansing. There is the idea of life as a journey, which is reinforced by the word ‘traveller’,<sup>767</sup> returning to the image of Morris as an explorer and further emphasising his journey of discovery of self. The journey towards selfhood can also be seen in Galloway’s *Foreign Parts* (1994) and Prillinger notes the way in which Cassie and Rona ‘recapitulate their past, and at the end [...] come to some sort of conclusion’,<sup>768</sup> whereby sorting out their pasts they achieve perspective for the future.

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<sup>761</sup> *SMV*, p. 84.

<sup>762</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>763</sup> Butlin, *Coffee-Table Notes*.

<sup>764</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>765</sup> *SMV*, p. 95.

<sup>766</sup> *Ibid.* p. 101.

<sup>767</sup> *Ibid.* p. 95.

<sup>768</sup> Prillinger, p. 125.

Butlin, Robertson and Galloway portray the self as ever-evolving and Butlin leaves the novella's ending open to the reader's interpretation. He ambiguously states: 'Maybe he's made it, but maybe he hasn't. [...] But I hope he's survived.'<sup>769</sup> In doing so, Butlin leaves Morris at a point where his future is up to him, and as the reader is implicated in the second-person narrative it is up to both the character and the reader to decide Morris' future. The change has to come from the 'You' addressed in the final line of the novella. In the line 'Your tears – and mine'<sup>770</sup> there is a shift from second-person narration to first-person, which suggests the tears could be both Morris' and the reader's, but there is also the implication of the reunification of Morris' selves and the reclamation of his voice. As noted previously, Meyers argues that ascribing an autobiographical narrator to the self brings selfhood to life.<sup>771</sup> This is particularly resonant for Morris whose sense of ownership of voice and self at the end of the novella is demonstrated in this narrative shift from second-person to first-person narration. The tears of the closing line also reveal that Morris can now feel and suggest he has accepted responsibility for his actions, as well as his 'self', in claiming the tears as 'mine'.

Ultimately, these examples of Butlin, Galloway and Robertson's writing reveal the qualities that make us human, the conditions under which people live their lives and the human capacity to survive against all odds. As Braidwood notes, '*The Sound of My Voice* is all about a man's ability to survive, even when faced with the greatest obstacles',<sup>772</sup> because 'where there is hope, even if it is the hope of others, there is a chance of a better life.'<sup>773</sup> In an interview Butlin notes that although the novella is dark, there is a lot of light in it,<sup>774</sup> in the form of both humour and hope, but there is literal sunlight too. By the end of *SMV* it is clear Morris has a newfound awareness of the natural world and life that exists around him, of 'hills and forests',<sup>775</sup> 'the colours of the grass, the flowers, [...] the slightest sunlight is held perfectly in place',<sup>776</sup> 'its warmth saturating you',<sup>777</sup> the warmth he has been craving so desperately. The sunlight provides a link to the darkness and mud that previously filled Morris and the suggestion is the sun's light will overpower this darkness, while its warmth will melt the novella's snow. The cyclical nature of *SMV* can be seen again here in the reference to the sun and flowers, which have connotations of Spring,

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<sup>769</sup> Butlin, *Coffee-Table Notes*.

<sup>770</sup> *SMV*, p. 114.

<sup>771</sup> Meyers, p. 213

<sup>772</sup> Braidwood, 'Indelible Ink'.

<sup>773</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>774</sup> Braidwood, *Scots Whay Hae!*

<sup>775</sup> *SMV*, p. 111.

<sup>776</sup> *Ibid.* p. 107.

<sup>777</sup> *Ibid.* p. 111.

signalling Magellan's rebirth and newfound sense of self. The idea of the evolution of the self is reinforced by a Biblical reference to Christ's resurrection in the sentence, 'This is the second day [alcohol free] – tomorrow you'll be rising from the dead!',<sup>778</sup> suggesting that like Christ, Morris has been born again. His opportunity to start life again is reinforced by the words, 'Thirty-five years past – and thirty-five to come',<sup>779</sup> suggesting his life will now begin again and Stevenson comments that Morris' pain 'is shown not just dissolved in oceans of alcohol or imagination, but perhaps finally *resolved*.'<sup>780</sup> Wallace notes that like Joy Stone in *The Trick*, 'Reconciliation between mind and voice and the rediscovery of selfhood entails a multiple forgiveness',<sup>781</sup> but most importantly self-forgiveness, which can only be achieved through acknowledgement of the self. The final reference to the colour white comes as Morris approaches seventy miles per hour driving his family back from the picnic: 'Silver-light diminished to white-road, white-verge, white-sky. The colour white all around you like silence, snow-silence.'<sup>782</sup> Here, white has connotations of going 'towards the light', as in death, but also of 'seeing the light', in both the religious sense and in terms of having an epiphany and coming to an acceptance of self. In the end, it is not necessary for these characters to have one coherent self, but for them to accept a plurality of selves. In accepting this multiplicity of selves, of past, present and future, there is a realisation that there cannot be an 'essential self' and although this will inevitably result in a self that is not perfect, these characters become who they are by accepting they are not a perfect whole.

In 'Becoming a Writer', Robertson discusses his own evolution of self and the way in which the self shifts depending on place and relationships with other selves in particular:

Identity is such a tricky matter. Culture, place, class, family, history, politics all play a part in determining one's identity. Had I remained in the south of England I would have grown up to be English. I would have been a different person: the same flesh and blood, but a different person. But the possibility of that person ended when I was six. I find this an interesting proposition, both sobering and exciting. We all have the stories and endings of various different people in us, but we have very little conscious control over which ones finally emerge.<sup>783</sup>

Robertson discusses 'identity' in a way that suggests a multiplicity of selves, or different versions of the self across time. His interest in the possibilities for one's selves depending on interactions with the other and the role of fate is explored in various characters

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<sup>778</sup> *SMV*, p. 110.

<sup>779</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>780</sup> Stevenson, 'Introduction', p. 8.

<sup>781</sup> Wallace, 'Voices in Empty Houses: The Novel of Damaged Identity', p. 224.

<sup>782</sup> *SMV*, p. 112.

<sup>783</sup> Robertson, 'Becoming a Writer', p. 340.

throughout *LLS*. This idea of the self as something that evolves across time and through chance encounters is demonstrated in Peter Bond's statement in the novel: 'How far apart people's lives are, and yet how closely they miss each other. How small an adjustment would have left you leading another man's life, and him leading yours',<sup>784</sup> which suggests life's uncertainties and acts as a reminder to the reader of the unfixed nature of the self and the possibility of changing circumstances. Furthermore, in the title 'Becoming a Writer', there is the implication of Robertson finding his own voice and therefore self through the act of writing. Robertson concludes 'Becoming a Writer' in a way that is reminiscent of his depiction of Morris' sudden desire for change. Robertson recalls, 'I was a month short of my thirty-fifth birthday, and I was making a new beginning',<sup>785</sup> which implies the possibility for change, allowing for the evolution of the self across time as something that is fluid and unfixed. In the words 'making a new beginning', there is also the suggestion of Robertson forging his way forward and taking control of his own destiny.

In *And the Land Lay Still*, Robertson reveals that Jack Gordon's past experience of being in the army continues to affect the present, to the extent where Jack becomes a ghostly figure in the novel. He features in italicised preludes to each chapter, thus existing on the peripheries of the novel, so that the text echoes his marginalised existence. The reader is told, for Jack, '*Memory was a confusing place of mist and time*',<sup>786</sup> which reveals the way in which memories and selves shift and change and become blurred over time. The novel moves back and forth across history and time, and its fifty-year time-span allows the reader to trace the development of characters. For example, when Don's wife Liz gives birth to their second son Charlie, Don has a brief encounter with a young nurse named Marjory Taylor, whom he meets again years later after the deaths of their spouses. When Marjory says, 'You could say he picked me up in Tesco, but really we were both picking something up from over forty years before',<sup>787</sup> it is as though they are somehow reverted to their former selves in terms of their feelings for one another, yet they realise both they and the world they live in have changed and developed, which is shown in the sentence, 'The world was crazier but maybe we were wiser.'<sup>788</sup>

Another character in *LLS*, Ellen Imlach, is traced from childhood to adulthood, and from innocence to experience. As a young woman, Ellen is violently raped by Charlie and she chooses to write about her experience objectively in order to try and gain a sense of

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<sup>784</sup> *LLS*, p. 234.

<sup>785</sup> Robertson, 'Becoming a Writer', p. 351.

<sup>786</sup> *LLS*, p. 145.

<sup>787</sup> *Ibid.* p. 626.

<sup>788</sup> *Ibid.* p. 625.



perspective, to ‘put some distance between you and what’s happened to you’,<sup>789</sup> and in order to move forward. Suzette Henke’s notion of ‘scriptotherapy’ is based on the premise that ‘the very process of articulating painful experience, especially in written form, can itself prove therapeutic’.<sup>790</sup> In the same way, Ellen writes about how she felt: ‘Everything in her mind rebelled against everything her body had allowed to happen, and everything in her body was ashamed of the idiocy of her mind’,<sup>791</sup> suggesting her body and mind have become separate entities that have betrayed each other. The disconnection between Ellen’s mind and body needs to be addressed in order for her to reassemble and reunite these separate parts to discover her self and to cease blaming herself. After the brutal attack, Ellen has a bath and there are biblical connotations in terms of the water washing Charlie’s sins away, but also the washing away of this experience of her now former self. She describes it, ‘like peeling dead skin’,<sup>792</sup> as though she has been reborn. When she leaves her flat to live with her new partner Robin, there is a sense of renewal as the sun is shining on the sea, which is later also described as, ‘the grey sea, the blue sea, the black sea’.<sup>793</sup> The repetition of the word ‘sea’ suggests the constancy of the sea and the land and provides a further image of water being associated with life in these texts. Ellen re-imagines the horrific event in the form of a performance in a play:

Out of the smoking ruins that were her self-respect, her emotions and her intellect, a strange image began to emerge. She saw herself with Charlie, she saw herself with Robin, she saw herself alone on a dark stage, rehearsing a play, an actress delivering lines.<sup>794</sup>

In seeing herself on a stage, Ellen’s evolving self is revealed, and there is the suggestion she has created a sense of distance between her former and present selves. The description of Ellen as an actress in her own life is also reminiscent of a younger Janice’s performance in *NAM*, where she pretends everything is ‘fine’, and of Morris and Mary in *SMV*, who must play their parts ‘convincingly’.<sup>795</sup> Ellen’s visualisation of herself as an actress means she is now able to watch herself objectively and learn from past experience, which will also allow her to move forward in the present. She refers to Shakespeare’s Lady Macbeth and there is significance in her lines being given to her by a male writer and director, but also in terms of Lady Macbeth’s need to drive away guilt; to wash out the ‘damned spot’ of Duncan’s blood. This suggests Ellen, like Lady Macbeth, needs to relieve herself of her

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<sup>789</sup> *LLS*, p. 499.

<sup>790</sup> Van der Wiel, p. 12.

<sup>791</sup> *LLS*, p. 512.

<sup>792</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 513-514.

<sup>793</sup> *Ibid.* p. 515.

<sup>794</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 517-518.

<sup>795</sup> *SMV*, p. 20.

own guilt and in Ellen's case, her belief that her body has betrayed her. In the phrase, 'she'd learned the lines and now the director wanted to change her way of saying them',<sup>796</sup> there is the idea of Ellen's life as a performance, where she is an actress reciting lines, but also that the director wants to 'change her way of saying them'. While this may show Ellen's lack of control, it also reveals the possibility for change. Moreover, Lady Macbeth is a powerful female character but lacks humanity, and there is also the potential for Ellen to re-write both her lines and Lady Macbeth's, to become a strong, yet compassionate, female character. Ellen decides to 'sketch out a plan of something, a stage-set for a play she wanted to direct, not perform in',<sup>797</sup> and there is a sense of the new direction her life will take and the persistence of her self in taking control of past events and accepting her former self. As the director of her own life, Ellen has taken charge of her future.

Part three of the novel, which James Campbell describes as a 'novel-within-a-novel',<sup>798</sup> deals primarily with Peter Bond, 'The Original Mr Bond', who is a particularly arresting character in terms of the evolution of the self. Robertson is able to shift between male and female characters providing a convincing portrayal of both genders' search for self. Ian Irvine describes Peter Bond as an alcoholic, 'paranoid and filled with self-loathing',<sup>799</sup> in a way that reminds the reader of Morris Magellan in *SMV*. Peter's drunken evenings alone in his flat cause him to suffer hallucinations and render him shouting at the television, '*I'M THE ORIGINAL BOND, YOU BASTARD*',<sup>800</sup> as he has chosen to change his name in order to 'distance himself from the *other* James Bond'.<sup>801</sup> In the act of changing his name, there are connotations of Peter losing a part of his self, and the suggestion that he has lost a connection with his past as he is also distancing his present self as 'Peter Bond' from his former, childhood self 'Jimmy'. This is reinforced by the ambiguity in the reference to the '*other* James Bond', which could refer to both Fleming's Bond and to young Jimmy. Throughout the chapter Peter recalls memories of his younger self. For example, 'There was this one time they were at Wharryburn, a Sunday in March just a day or two before Jack's 'Disappearance',<sup>802</sup> and 'Peter remembers that Jimmy knew exactly what was coming next'.<sup>803</sup> This reveals the connection between Jimmy and Peter, as former and present selves, yet the change of names from younger self to adult suggests a

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<sup>796</sup> *LLS*, p. 518.

<sup>797</sup> *Ibid.* p. 518.

<sup>798</sup> Campbell, 'A Life in Writing: James Robertson'.

<sup>799</sup> Ian Irvine, 'And the Land Lay Still', *Fiction*, August 4<sup>th</sup> 2010 <[www.ft.com/cms/s/2/977e2824-9b62-11df-8239-00144feab49a.html](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/2/977e2824-9b62-11df-8239-00144feab49a.html)> [Accessed March 2016].

<sup>800</sup> *LLS*, p. 243.

<sup>801</sup> *Ibid.* p. 247.

<sup>802</sup> *Ibid.* p. 257.

<sup>803</sup> *Ibid.* p. 260.

level of disconnection. Bond's fragmented self is further revealed by and reflected in the many voices he hears in his head, 'Croick as Canterbury as Lucy as Edgar as Eddelstane',<sup>804</sup> where others' voices and selves shift and blur into one. Near the end of the novel, there is a move to the present-day with a reference to Daniel Craig, which further emphasises Peter Bond's multiplicity of selves. This is echoed by a list of Fleming's Bond's ever-changing, unfixed identity. Numerous actors played the role of Bond across the time *LLS* is set, with Fleming's literary creation of Bond in 1953, and the first film, *Dr No*, in 1962. However, Jimmy states that he is the original Bond, 'The original Slaemill edition. The pre-Connery, pre-Roger Moore, pre-Timothy Dalton, pre-Daniel fucking Craig version',<sup>805</sup> and pre-Peter Bond too.

At the end of the novel Peter has a conversation in the mirror with his childhood self, Jimmy, in the form of a play script, 'Guy looks familiar. Hello, Jimmy. Hello, Peter. Shit. [...] Can a ghost haunt itself?'<sup>806</sup> When Peter sees the reflection of his former self in the mirror he addresses his younger self, 'My excuse is I've had a few glasses of el vino, Jimmy',<sup>807</sup> suggesting his alcoholism may be the rational cause of the image he has conjured in the mirror, but also revealing how Peter's self is further altered under the influence of alcohol. In agreement with Jimmy, Peter accuses Sean Connery of being a 'joke, a parody of himself',<sup>808</sup> however, the phrase 'parody of himself' has connotations of imitation in the same way Peter could also be accused of self-pretence. The 'mirror scene' also has connotations of facing oneself both literally and metaphorically, as mirrors usually provide a faithful and truthful reflection. Therefore, the meeting of former and present selves at the mirror also provides a physical representation of Peter's need to face his past, and to accept his former self. Robertson also reveals Peter's inner voice, which could in fact be 'Jimmy', partly shown in the play script with 'Jimmy' and 'Peter' as characters. In addition, in a way that is reminiscent of Butlin's *SMV*, Robertson temporarily reverts to writing in the second-person to reveal the workings of Peter's inner mind: 'This is the problem. You're doing fine and then the whisky kicks in and you get into a ranting match with yourself. So. Deep breaths. Calm yourself.'<sup>809</sup> Peter's hallucination continues as he addresses the reflection in the mirror, which slowly disintegrates, 'breaking up, the nose, the mouth, the eyes becoming hollow sockets, the flesh retreating. Skeletal, then

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<sup>804</sup> *LLS*, p. 611.

<sup>805</sup> *Ibid.* p. 667.

<sup>806</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>807</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>808</sup> *Ibid.* p. 667.

<sup>809</sup> *Ibid.*

nothing.<sup>810</sup> Both Peter and Jimmy fade together as one in Peter's final rejection of community and others, where his inner voice instructs him to 'Take a stroll up the hill with Uncle Jack. [...] Take a deep breath, then go.'<sup>811</sup> However, there is an acceptance of the possibility of a 'better' future self when Peter tells himself, 'Next time around, you'll live a better life'.<sup>812</sup> These words have ambiguous connotations, both of the implied death of Jimmy and Peter as one reconciled self, but also leave the reader with the sense that Peter will be able to move forward into the next phase of his self. This emphasises the possibility of change, of multiple or unfixed selves, and that like all of the characters discussed here, Peter will be reborn, providing hope for him in the future.

Like Butlin's choice of the name 'Morris Magellan', Robertson's 'Peter Bond' can be argued to have deliberate connotations; not only surrounding James Bond the fictional character, but of water imagery. In biblical terms, Saint Peter was a fisherman in his former life, thus providing further links between the water and sea imagery which features in both *SMV* and *NAM*, and also reinforcing the idea of former selves. Reminiscent of the mud and oceanic imagery surrounding Morris' alcoholism in *SMV* (pp. 22-26, 40, 100 for example), the line 'sink or swim Mr Bond, sink or swim',<sup>813</sup> in *LLS* refers to Bond's alcohol consumption, where water and alcohol are linked in both texts so that the motion of the sea echoes the characters' sickness. The connotation of drowning versus survival in the phrase 'sink or swim' conjures images of water's connection with and life as can be seen in both Galloway and Butlin's writing. Here, it further highlights Bond's need to take charge of his own fate and to succeed or fail on his own. Like Janice and Morris, for Peter Bond, life is increasingly reduced to a game where play merges with reality:

Croick: It's show time, Peter. Take the money or open the box. Take the money or open the box.

Bond: Just tell me the fucking truth.

Croick: Oh, bad contestant! You took the money, Peter. The box stays closed.<sup>814</sup>

In this game-show scene, where Peter is the contestant, his lack of control is further revealed and in his search for truth he is also seeking his self. However, the box remains 'closed' which highlights Bond's rebelliousness as well as his sensation of being trapped, as is revealed in the endless corridors of his mind and the never-ending mess throughout his flat. Bond reflects:

You think back over your life and you hardly believe you existed, that you did things you did or knew the people you knew. Life was the kind of out-of-control

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<sup>810</sup> *LLS*, p. 667.

<sup>811</sup> *Ibid.* p. 668.

<sup>812</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>813</sup> *Ibid.* p. 341.

<sup>814</sup> *Ibid.* p. 363.

story you'd have been belted for in school. *And then I woke up. It had all been a dream. [...] It had all been a dream and then I didn't wake up.*<sup>815</sup>

Bond reverses the typical school student's narrative, '*And then I woke up. It had all been a dream*', so that he does not awake from the dream, making it more ominous and further suggesting his lack of understanding of his own existence. However, there is the suggestion his story can be re-written, and the narrative concept of self allows for the hope of change. The emphasis on the truth and reality continues when Bond considers what is real and what is not, yet, 'all he knew of reality were the scraps he remembered from his dreams',<sup>816</sup> which suggests even his 'reality' is uncertain. Meanwhile, the rhetorical question, 'How would you know?'<sup>817</sup> provides further ambiguity as it addresses the reader too, making the reader and Bond question what is real and what is not and further revealing his self-doubt.

Bond's alcoholism is also reminiscent of Morris and reveals the ways in which alcohol alters the self and increases the level of uncertainty in Bond's life as the night becomes 'a cloud of unknowing'.<sup>818</sup> This may be a reference to an anonymous medieval text, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, which suggests one must surrender to 'unknowing' in order to become closer to God. There is also an implied sense of annihilation in the intensity of this experience and Bond's self-destructive nature is also highlighted, where he is depicted in a constant battle between the sober self and the drunk:

He enjoyed a drink.

No, correction. He enjoyed drink.

No, correction. He liked to drink.

He didn't know he liked to drink until he liked it too much not to. [...] The drink was good for him. The drink kept him going. That self-destruct button: he'd have pushed it a lot fucking sooner if it hadn't been for the drink.

Maybe he should have.<sup>819</sup>

Bond is torn between the belief that drink is the only thing worth living for, and his awareness that his self-loathing is a result of it. Robertson employs more water imagery here, 'He pours another drink, just a splish. Another. Splosh. Another. Splash. More. Fool. Him',<sup>820</sup> and the use of punctuation and onomatopoeia mirrors the action and sound of pouring liquid into a glass. The light-hearted, childlike nature of words such as 'splish',

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<sup>815</sup> LLS, p. 364.

<sup>816</sup> Ibid. p. 359.

<sup>817</sup> Ibid.

<sup>818</sup> Ibid. p. 245.

<sup>819</sup> Ibid. p. 265.

<sup>820</sup> Ibid. p. 273.

‘splash’ and ‘splosh’ is undercut by the darker ‘More. Fool. Him’, which is almost venomous, while the word ‘him’ also separates Bond’s selves and further invokes the image of him looking at his life as an outsider who cannot control events. His increased drinking leads to alcohol-induced hallucinations, and in the climax of Bond’s lack of control over his evermore intruding thoughts he imagines a security guard turning off the lights in his head, ‘What the fuck is a security guard doing in your head? In *your* head?’<sup>821</sup> ‘Turning out the lights’ has connotations of death; however, he soon realises there is nobody there, ‘Just yourself. Empty room, empty corridors’,<sup>822</sup> which provides a link to the earlier description of the empty corridors of his mind. He instructs himself to calm down, ‘Just sit in the corner like a good auld boy and read the papers’,<sup>823</sup> what he believes he should be doing according to stereotype. However, his thoughts continue to be troubled with ‘cartoons and scary monsters and fuck knows what else to keep him entertained’,<sup>824</sup> until he wonders if this is the end, ‘when the drink can’t keep the horrors at bay and the horrors can’t keep you off the drink?’<sup>825</sup> In the climax of his hallucinations, which take on the form of a play script, Bond’s former employer Edgar appears as a ‘butfish’,<sup>826</sup> a butler in the form of a fish, in a play on the uniform of black trousers, waistcoat and tails. The buttfish speaks in numerous voices, appearing as Michael Jackson and Gordon Jackson from *Upstairs, Downstairs*, before speaking in an English voice, until Bond realises it is not real, but is in fact Edgar’s ghost. Pittin-Hedon suggests Bond’s narrative ‘draws attention not just to the fluidity of the story, but also to its plasticity, its capacity to always accommodate, or engulf into another form.’<sup>827</sup> Robertson employs humour again here but it serves to darken the tone, ‘He can handle ghosts. He is neither unfamiliar with nor disturbed by the concept of ghosts. Plus, major benefit, he doesn’t have to offer him a drink.’<sup>828</sup> The play script format allows Robertson to move across time in order to reveal the workings of Bond’s mind, as he remembers and misremembers scenes from his past.

Alcohol has a particular effect on the men in these texts, who seem to turn to alcohol in order to alter or escape their selves. Bathurst notes in *LLS*:

The men need the drink to have a conversation, to tell the truth, to get together, to fall apart. They need it to deal with their women, their lives, their politics, to manage any kind of connection to each other at all.<sup>829</sup>

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<sup>821</sup> *LLS*, p. 232.

<sup>822</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>823</sup> *Ibid.* p. 233.

<sup>824</sup> *Ibid.* p. 243.

<sup>825</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>826</sup> *Ibid.* p. 276.

<sup>827</sup> Pittin-Hedon, p. 76.

<sup>828</sup> *LLS*, p. 277.

<sup>829</sup> Bathurst.

There is the idea that the men in *LLS* struggle to communicate with each other, which can be seen in the case of Billy and Charlie, Don and Jack, and Mike and Jean, the only female who seems to require alcohol to converse. The suggestion is that while alcohol alters the self, it also enables some characters to speak and to have the ability to express their selves, while disabling others. In *NAM*, Eddie is described as a violent drunk, ‘a whole series of accidents waiting to happen.’<sup>830</sup> Like Morris and Bond, for Eddie, ‘the booze [was] becoming more than medicine’<sup>831</sup> and at times alcohol renders him unable to speak. He is described as ‘moaning, as though a word was stuck in his mouth and he couldn’t manage to let it out.’<sup>832</sup> The family try to ignore his problem and Galloway uses light-hearted language in Beth’s attempts to brush off his violent tendencies, for example, ‘It just broke. *Butterfingers*’<sup>833</sup> and, ‘*off you pop*’.<sup>834</sup> However, Janice soon realises such accidents only happened when he was ‘in no fit state’.<sup>835</sup> The reader is told with enough drink, Eddie was fun, ‘the life and soul of the party’, but then, ‘he’d lose the bright mood, opt for the dark’,<sup>836</sup> until he becomes ‘something animal’, further emphasising the way alcohol alters the self and affects relationships. Later in *LLS*, Bond tells the imagined Edgar: ‘I just . . . I just like to talk’,<sup>837</sup> in a confession of his loneliness to himself, as Edgar is not really there. His confession is the first sign that Bond is now able to self-reflect and by the end of the novel, although he is still thinking about alcohol he manages to ‘exercise some self-control’.<sup>838</sup> Bond’s ability to reject alcohol is a sign of the change he has undergone and reveals that he is moving forward, while it also has connotations of a different, more positive form of self-control. Previously, Bond drank in order to suppress emotion, as a form of control over his self, whereas now he is in charge of his own emotions and is able to use self-control in a way that suggests he is now self-aware and has taken ownership of his self.

The theme of survival and the persistence of the self is key to all three texts and as Bathurst notes, ‘Robertson is a wise writer who can tease out the humanity in all his characters with real grace and skill’.<sup>839</sup> In *LLS*, there is an emphasis on the ability of

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<sup>830</sup> *NAM*, p. 39.

<sup>831</sup> *Ibid.* p. 13.

<sup>832</sup> *Ibid.* p. 43.

<sup>833</sup> *Ibid.* p. 40.

<sup>834</sup> *Ibid.* p. 39.

<sup>835</sup> *Ibid.* p. 39.

<sup>836</sup> *Ibid.* p. 41.

<sup>837</sup> *LLS*, p. 318.

<sup>838</sup> *Ibid.* p. 666.

<sup>839</sup> Bathurst.

multifarious characters to endure both wartime and domestic life. For example, Don's friend Saleem reflects on his father's life and his own means of existence:

I don't want to be a bloody shopkeeper any more than he did, but it is how he survived, it is how I survive. It is not the desired life, it is not the perfect life but it is a life.<sup>840</sup>

As Saleem states, he may not have the 'desired life', but he is thankful for what he has. Similarly, for Jack, simply being alive is 'enough',<sup>841</sup> and Irvine Welsh also notes the way that Robertson's characters are 'trying to get by'.<sup>842</sup> Welsh suggests Don is the 'moral centre of the book',<sup>843</sup> while Ian Irvine is in agreement, stating:

Characters meet and connect in various ways but, as the book progresses, the life of Don Lenny, the novel's *homme moyen sensuel*, emerges as its pivot. The modesty, integrity and the decency with which he deals with both the everyday and occasional exceptional burdens of his life appear by the conclusion as exemplary.<sup>844</sup>

The reader is told, 'Don didn't believe in fate, God or any of that. He believed in humanity, and that humans had the power and the will to change themselves and the world',<sup>845</sup> a belief which is central to *LLS*, but also echoes Galloway's belief in 'our extraordinary persistence as human beings'.<sup>846</sup> When others question Jack's integrity as he rejects his former life and self, Don admires his resolve and determination to survive; 'he felt an affinity with the man. He respected him, what he'd survived, his present purposefulness'.<sup>847</sup> It is this emphasis on human persistence and everyday survival against the odds that is key to all of these texts. At the end of the novel Bond asks, '*What are we to be if not ourselves? What are we to be if not kind to one another?*',<sup>848</sup> emphasising Don's call for human compassion. The line, '*even me, even you*',<sup>849</sup> shows the reconciliation between Bond's disconnected selves, but also reveals Bond ultimately hopes for love and human relationships in his 'next life'. In the words 'even you' he may also be addressing the reader in a reminder of the importance of being humane and the potential of relationships.

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<sup>840</sup> *LLS*, p. 444.

<sup>841</sup> *Ibid.* p. 373.

<sup>842</sup> Welsh, 'And the Land Lay Still by James Robertson'.

<sup>843</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>844</sup> Irvine.

<sup>845</sup> *LLS*, p. 527.

<sup>846</sup> Galloway, 'Anything But Ordinary', p. 14.

<sup>847</sup> *LLS*, pp. 158-159.

<sup>848</sup> *Ibid.* p. 611.

<sup>849</sup> *Ibid.*



By the end of *LLS* it is clear many of the characters have found a sense of voice, self and self-acceptance: Ellen has overcome her traumatic past and is able to rewrite and redirect her own future, while Mike finds his voice, and self, through telling the stories of his father's photographs. At the end of the novel Mike gives a speech at the exhibition's opening night and there is the sense that he has found a voice to 'say something they'll remember'.<sup>850</sup> However, in Jack's search for self, '*Words were something else you didn't need, written, spoken or heard. You talked if it was necessary, letting the words go with care [...] You preferred to listen*'.<sup>851</sup> There is the suggestion that for Jack, like Peter Bond, solitariness and silence were required in order to find his self. There is also a message for the reader that one can learn from listening to others. In the final section of the novel, the various threads are knotted and Mike's 'sense of achievement and hope'<sup>852</sup> echoes Robertson's achievement upon completion of the novel. As Doug Johnstone claims:

Issues of nationalism and language aside, *And the Land Lay Still* remains a universal tale, in which the passage of time and the changing generations have led to a radically different world from the one that existed half a century ago.<sup>853</sup>

The characters' lives intersect as they meet in different places across time, and at the end of the novel Robertson reminds the reader of 'the constancy of their impermanence',<sup>854</sup> and of the ultimately finite nature of human life, while the land will remain 'still'. Human inconstancy and the fluidity of self is also confirmed in the description of the photograph of Jack that features in the exhibition:

He is staring from the past, from the future in the past. [...] Someone behind the glass but he is trapped, he is trapped and also he is gone, and this is the truth of the image.

In the end, Jack's death is linked to both water and the land and having left all people behind, he has no memory and feels no hunger, cold, heat or pain. The line, '*You were pouring from yourself like the water to the sea*',<sup>855</sup> gives the impression his death is natural, cyclical and destined. Furthermore, the cyclical nature of the novel allows for a fitting conclusion which links the renewal of the land to the evolution of the characters, which are all pulled together, either as guests or in the photographs. Like their subject matter, and as is emphasised in *NAM*, Angus Pendreich's photographs are transient in that

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<sup>850</sup> *LLS*, p. 639.

<sup>851</sup> *Ibid.* p. 146.

<sup>852</sup> Jamieson.

<sup>853</sup> Doug Johnstone, 'Scots Guard: James Robertson has dedicated himself to preserving the native culture and language north of the border', *The Independent*, 7<sup>th</sup> August 2010 <<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/scots-guard-james-robertson-has-dedicated-himself-to-preserving-the-native-culture-and-language-2043248.html>> [Accessed March 2016].

<sup>854</sup> *LLS*, p. 670.

<sup>855</sup> *Ibid.* p. 635.

they can only capture a moment in time, reflected in the final chapter's title: 'The Gift of the Moment'. Although Angus sees his photographs as 'the recording of facts' or what already exists,<sup>856</sup> the word 'gift' encourages the reader to accept the beauty in the ephemeral and to recognise that the impact of Angus's photography depends entirely on the viewer, so that their meanings are transient too. It is left to Mike to provide the final word of wisdom in the novel:

You push forward into the dark, not with certainty but with determination. If you keep going forward, you may eventually come out of the dark and into a place you recognise.<sup>857</sup>

In these lines there are connotations of 'seeing the light', of the persistence of self and ultimately, of the need to keep moving forward in order to survive and arrive home.

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<sup>856</sup> Pittin-Hedon, p. 65.

<sup>857</sup> *LLS*, pp. 537-538.

## Conclusion

Despite evidence in these examples of contemporary Scottish fiction of characters' fractured relationships and their inability to establish or maintain them at times, *The Sound of My Voice*, *This is Not About Me* and *And The Land Lay Still* reveal that forming a relationship with both one's self and other selves is central to human survival. Indeed, Jones notes that 'Eventually new variants of the self emerge in Galloway's texts, realised not through a foundational fixity but through vibrant interaction with others'.<sup>858</sup> Thus, according to the texts discussed here, one should embrace the discontinuity of the self, which need not be a fixed entity, but rather something fluid that evolves and develops across time and through interactions with others. Acceptance of a multiplicity of selves can therefore be considered essential and only once the characters in the writing of Butlin, Galloway and Robertson have reached a point of self-acceptance and forgiveness of their own fragmented humanity can they begin to develop relationships with others, and in turn, feel that they belong. By the end of *This is Not About Me* Janice has realised that 'she has to allow herself to exist',<sup>859</sup> ultimately signalling her newfound self. In *The Sound of My Voice* it is essential for Morris to forgive his former and present selves and his father in order to move forward. Meanwhile, in *And the Land Lay Still*, Peter Bond reveals the potential for his future self in his decision that, 'next time around, you'll live a better life',<sup>860</sup> allowing for the possibility of positive change.

Many of the characters in these three texts reach a point of crisis that is necessary in order for them to develop and move forward, where 'Recovery, in this sense, signifies what Caroline Garland describes as 'the capacity to *get on with it* [...] rather than to *get over it*'.<sup>861</sup> To return to Kennedy's *Colonel Blimp*, where she suggests the need to experience pain, to make oneself open to vulnerability<sup>862</sup> in order to be able to interact emotionally with others. Kennedy notes, 'Pain, now there's a thing – a little path to take us round and start us at the start again',<sup>863</sup> which suggests the cyclical journey of life and death but also re-birth and the ever-evolving self, where emotional feeling is key. Similarly, for Yule and Manderson:

Vulnerability is the key. Admitting one's own sense of shame, failure or lack of self-esteem, and allowing oneself to experience the resulting pain and sorrow – to

<sup>858</sup> Jones, 'Burying the Man that Was', pp. 211-212.

<sup>859</sup> Greenlaw.

<sup>860</sup> *LLS*, p. 668.

<sup>861</sup> Van der Wiel, p. 13.

<sup>862</sup> Meyers, p. 210.

<sup>863</sup> Kennedy, *Colonel Blimp*, p. 16.

feel it as well as comprehend it – opens the person to the possibility of renewal, and success.<sup>864</sup>

Thus acknowledging one's mistakes and opening oneself to the possibility of relationships, although sometimes painful, is vital in order to feel and move forward. Compassion is central to human relationships and Kennedy claims 'if we underestimate the humanity (the dark and the light) of our enemies we are always wrong and we always risk losing a part of our own human qualities.'<sup>865</sup> The enemy she refers to is the 'other' or 'the alien'<sup>866</sup> and her argument can also be applied to one's multiple selves, thus further pointing to the need for self-knowledge and self-acceptance. Kennedy's emphasises the importance of human interaction and rejects the idea of a 'whole' self in favour of one that is ever-evolving and which embraces both the light and dark, or good and evil in humanity. She notes that by the end of the film, Blimp can 'feel love [...] the precious parts of humanity without which there will be no home'.<sup>867</sup> Here, Kennedy suggests the potential of human love and of relationships with one's selves and others as the key to belonging and redemption. As Kennedy argues, and as can be seen in these examples of Butlin, Galloway and Robertson's fiction, self-acceptance and forgiveness are the route home.

To return briefly to Edwin Morgan, whose view of Scotland and its transformation remained optimistic in light of the failed referendum on Scottish devolution, which Morgan viewed, not as an ending, but a new beginning, or, to use his own description, 'a feeling of "nevertheless"'.<sup>868</sup> Morgan's more positive view defies 'Scottish miserablism' and is suggestive of a 'new beginning', of Scotland's rebirth, both nationally and at an individual level. This optimism permeates his work and his idea of 'nevertheless' goes far beyond the political in a way that can also be related to individual and psychological experience. Morgan's optimistic ideology can, and should, be applied to readings of other examples of Scottish literature from the 1980s onwards. As this thesis has demonstrated, themes of self-pity and political concerns need not be the defining feature of contemporary Scottish literature. Butlin, Galloway and Robertson's writing encourages readers to think of new ways to imagine the self – in literature that encompasses and transcends the purely political and national. By studying the personal, human relationships in these texts, this thesis has revealed the need for selves to interact with other selves in order to come home. It has shown that 'Home' need not be a country, nor a specifically Scottish notion, but a

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<sup>864</sup> Yule and Manderson, p. 94.

<sup>865</sup> Kennedy, *Colonel Blimp*, pp. 61-62.

<sup>866</sup> Ibid. p. 50.

<sup>867</sup> Ibid. p. 62.

<sup>868</sup> Gavin Wallace, 'New Currency or Old? 'The Coin', by Edwin Morgan', *The Bottle Imp* <[www.arts.gla.ac.uk/ScotLit/ASLS/SWE/TBI/TBIIssue2/Coin.html](http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/ScotLit/ASLS/SWE/TBI/TBIIssue2/Coin.html)> [Accessed September 2016].

search for belonging that all selves face, where going home correlates to finding one's self. Like Morgan's feeling of 'nevertheless', Galloway, Butlin and Robertson have looked back across history, time and their characters' evolving selves in order to reveal their ability to continually survive the everyday challenges they face.

In reference to the final pages of *And the Land Lay Still*, Irvine notes that Don Lennie's 'modesty, integrity and the decency with which he deals with both the everyday and occasional exceptional burdens of his life appear by the conclusion as exemplary.'<sup>869</sup> Similarly, throughout *This is Not About Me* Galloway returns to the theme of 'our extraordinary persistence as human beings.'<sup>870</sup> In these three texts there is the idea of dignity and of 'getting by',<sup>871</sup> and for Galloway, it is this everyday endurance that makes human beings heroic. Robertson suggests that in another novel prior to *LLS*, *The Fanatic* (2000), 'I suppose I was trying to say at the end, it's OK just to exist.'<sup>872</sup> However, perhaps the endings of these three texts leave the characters at a point where they are enduring, but having resurfaced, they now have the potential to move beyond mere survival, so that they may even prosper.

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<sup>869</sup> Irvine.

<sup>870</sup> Galloway, 'Anything But Ordinary', p. 14.

<sup>871</sup> *NAM*, p. 2.

<sup>872</sup> Robertson, *Scottish Writers Talking 4*, p. 158.

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