
Social Mobility in James Kelman's *A Disaffection*

Fadi Mumtaz Yousif Alrayes
Asst. Prof. Anan J Lewis Alkass Yousif, PhD
University of Baghdad/College of Arts
Department of English

Abstract

Though social mobility in the post-industrial society of Scotland has helped changing social class structure, Scottish working class still suffers from cultural devaluation. That is to say, in a post-industrial society, knowledge is not really the main human capital. The purpose of this study is to explore Kelman's untraditional cultural and social representation of the Scottish working class individual and his everyday experiences. Based on the novelist's individualization of the Scottish working class characters, the study argues that in the post-industrial times in which social mobility can be achieved, contemporary societies like Glasgow still suffers from class division and cultural fragmentation. This article discusses Kelman's novel *A Disaffection* (1989), exploring the character of Patrick Doyle, a bitter and alienated schoolteacher whose portrayal raises questions about the role of education in social mobility, issues of cultural and class estrangement, which form a major factor in reconstructing or deconstructing the working class identity.

Keywords: Education, Mobility, Class, alienation, ambivalence, State, colonization, Periphery, Privileged.

A Disaffection is Kelman's first novel whose reputation outspread Glasgow national reputation and was nominated for the Booker prize in 1989; nevertheless it has won instead the Tait Black Memorial Prize from the University of Edinburgh. It explores a Glaswegian reality on a level that, perhaps, was not familiar before in Scottish fiction. Throughout the novel, Kelman takes his readers so close to the working class social life embarking upon several issues mainly set in the contemporary capitalist Glasgow. The sense of delusion of opposing life modes of Patrick Doyle is highly underlined; a teacher of a working class background who suffers from an insecure economic and social life that witnessed a drastic change by achieving social mobility. Within his new class environment, Patrick faces the lack of meaning of wholeness within himself, a matter which causes him a total disaffection from both, class of origin and the new class he mobilized to.

The novel also reveals the role of education in social mobility, distribution of wealth and how society molds the individual based on

the criteria of university degrees and intellectual capacity. In *Education and Social Mobility in Scotland*, Cristina Iannelli and Lindsay Paterson assume that:

The continual and rapid changes in technology that characterize modern capitalist economies require highly specialized and skilled work forces. Then, from the individuals' point of view education becomes an instrument for social mobility. (1)

Kelman intends to uncover the reality of educational system in Scotland as means to climb the social ladder, creating in return a class conflict and identity crisis within the Scottish working class and middle class communities. The issue of unequal wage-divide that privileges the middle class more than the working class in terms of payment is also explored in the novel. The conflict between the state and the Scottish blue-collar individual is similarly tackled in order to reveal the inhumane social atmosphere in which the working class individual exists. Moreover the sense of ambivalence experienced by this class is also dealt with in *A Disaffection* in a way to reveal the interior life of Patrick.

Postcolonial Scotland is interpreted in a way to penetrate the double standards of Scottish national identity. The Scottish duality, as it will be seen here and other chapters, is discussed to reveal the social and economic divisions experienced in Scotland, basically reflected through the dichotomy of Scottish-British relationship, language and national identity. Mainly, represented through the use of Standard English and English Scots, the difference between countryside and city and Catholicism and Protestantism. To serve this purpose, Kelman employs an untraditional narrative technique, language, setting, character portrayal, etc., projecting the bitter reality of the Scottish working class individual.

The novel speaks of a young Scottish working class man in his twenties named Patrick Doyle who is born to a family that lives in the poor allies of Glasgow in the 1980s. He has an MA degree in English arts from Edinburgh University that helped change his working class status to become a teacher. Education and social mobility provide Patrick with a new different life, but not without consequences. As it will be disclosed later, Patrick becomes unhappy, alcoholic, immersed in depression and alienated from others, feeling that he does not fit within the middle class to which he climbed to.

-Education and Social Mobility

In Scotland, the working class individual lives in a capitalist world¹ where productivity and profit making are prioritized over the

¹ For further information, see Weber. The German sociologist Max Weber (1864-1871) notes that capitalism was born from Protestantism. Both share common principles like hard labor, acceptance

worker's economic condition and his safety. Unlike the Scottish middle class individual, the Scottish blue-collar knows the meaning of experiencing economic insecurity and work dangers, waking up since early morning to work for long hours under unsafe conditions for little wages until his body gets numb. In a capitalist society, the Scottish working class individual encounters a number of consequences, such as living in deprivation, harsh economic situation, labor divide and sometimes the choice of being unemployed for safety reasons. The French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) ² says that "culture and education aren't simply hobbies or minor influences. They are hugely important in the affirmation of differences between groups and social classes and in the reproduction of those differences" (qtd in Craig 253). Social mobility, according to the British social epidemiologists, Kate Pickett and Richard Wilkinson, is important for the working class individual because "there is a direct link between one's social class and life opportunities that he may experience" (22). Thus, education for the contemporary Scottish blue-collar is a solution to bear social and economic burdens.³ It can provide what the Scottish working class individual has always dreamt of: wealth, comfort, descent job, beautiful house, safe working environment, as well as gain of respect (Breuilly 288). The Irish novelist Stewart Stafford (1980-) remarks that "education is the way out of poverty trap" (qtd in Head 32). Kelman defies the post-industrial perspective that emphasizes that "somehow we've moved from the whole idea of the class society," expressing his concern with "the all-pervasive anxieties nurtured by unequal distribution of wealth and privileges" (Toremans 3).

In *A Disaffection*, Patrick's new middle class identity allows him to find a job as a teacher at a secondary school in a time of scarce employment (Kovesi 12). Teaching is a middle class occupation by which the individual has the possibility to work in a safe environment and have a fair income paid by the Scottish capital. Kelman says that Patrick:

of the individual for his position in society, labor is a means to be rewarded, no reward for the idle individual etc. (124).

² For further information, see Thomson. Bourdieu in *Distinction* (1979) mentions that every individual has four types of capitals or powers that can give him privilege in society: social capital, cultural capital, economic capital and symbolic capital and each one is related to other. For him, education lies under cultural capital that can mobilize the individual in social ladder and make him privileged and in return it provides him with economic capital which is money and wealth (289).

³ For further information, see Trevor-Roper. Unlike Kelman's new Scottishness, old Scottishness excluded education as being connected to social mobility and to the construction of Scottish working class identity. The writers of old Scottishness prefer to escape from the social reality of Scottish society (15).

was rich. He was a f... schoolteacher with bankers cards and limitless credit and a fair f..... tidy wee f..... sum in hard paper currency ...the capitalists paid him a fortune , they f..... showered him with gold (60).

Ironically, education and social mobility does widen the social barrier and economic inequality, conceiving an economic divide between the Scottish working class and the bourgeoisie. After receiving his college degree, Patrick laments that by saying “I got my ‘honours’. My (Honours)! My!!!honours!!! I became a registered civilian on behalf of forces that are corrupt” (210). He displays here the conflict he suffers being an acknowledged middle class civilian just because he is a university degree holder. Patrick is aware of the economic divide amongst the different classes, noting that teaching brings him a decent income compared to the working class jobs that are poorly paid:

He probably thought of teaching as a fairly comfortable method of earning a better- than – average salary. And it wasnt a better-than-average salary. Well it was, but only in relation to the average hourly-paid wage of working- class people ...if you compared it with theirs then the teachers’ was fairly damn bloody abysmal. (18)

Kelman shows that “his characters suffer from growing frustration in the face of economic inequality which reminds them of the unbridgeable difference between haves and have-nots” (Hames 11). Patrick’s brother, Gavin has no university degree so that he is not socially mobilized and does not own a middle class job. There is no equality between the two anymore because Patrick is a university graduate, having middle class job and decent wage; whereas Gavin lacks them all. The German philosopher Karl Marx (1818-1883) emphasizes “The alienation of man thus appeared as the fundamental evil of capitalist society” (qtd. in Craig 225). Kelman says that “Gavin didnt wish to speak to his young brother, especially on a basis of equality. His young brother had a good sort of middle-classish wage whereas he had f... all” (303). He wishes to have a “work that was great in itself that could bring profit to the individual person” (304). That is why Kelman believes that “the Scottish system of education is directly productive of social classes” (Hames 98). Thus, education has a dual influence on the Scottish working class life. On the one hand, it can be economic and social productive to the Scottish working class who can afford it. For those who cannot afford it, on the other hand, is the same apparatus that deprives this class from this productivity. Then, education begets tensions and instability between the same members of the working class, besides it instigates a wave of a alienation, as the next sub-section is going to disclose, that befalls the Scottish working class individual (Houston 257).

Disaffection : an Identity Crisis

Patrick is the only one amongst his family who ascended the pyramidal ladder, yet what he accomplished, it came to have its own negativity and consequences. He starts to suffer from an alienated consciousness, which is a kind of identity crisis that for the French postcolonial theorist Frantz Fanon (1925-1961) is an individual's separation from his native identity, culture, traditions, language, etc., causing in return the collapse of the ego.⁴ As a blue-collar individual, Patrick feels that he is more himself, but as a middle class, he feels that he is buried alive, more like a stranger who does not fit in. On his first day as a teacher, he falls into a hurricane of disaffection that drowns him into an eddy of loneliness (Hames 44). He sees that the school is "full of them [the middle class]. He was finished with it, finished with it; he was just finished with it" (15). He says, "I'm just sick of the whole carry on, teaching and the rest of it" (19). Disaffection takes place when an individual is not in accordance with the circumstances of the new environment in which he finds himself (Allen 45).

Patrick is overwhelmed with emotions and the desire to walk the slums of Glasgow, living with his working class community and family because his home is and will always be that of the working class. At the school, Patrick's class identity is recognized depending on his origin as a working class individual due to his vulgar Glaswegian language.

In *Starting from Scratch: A Different Kind of Writers' Manual*, the American novelist [Rita Mae Brown](#) (1944-) emphasizes that "Language is the road map of a culture. It tells you where its people come from and where they are going" (47). To occupy a position like a middle class teacher, one must speak in Standard English and watch his language (Kovesi 190). Alison and all the teachers around him speak in a refined formal English language. The teachers' English language increases the boundaries between him and the middle class because theirs is refined from vulgar words unlike Patrick's. Thus, he finds that Alison is offended by his Glaswegian tongue:

It was the word of course, ar*e, she didnt like it and hadni been able to cope when he had said it. It was an odd word right enough. Ar*e. There arent many odder words. Ar*e. I have an ar*e. I kicked you on the ar*e. This is a load of ar*e. Ar*e. It was an odd word. But in this life there are many odd things, an infinite multitude of them. (146)

⁴ For further information, see Bressler. The collapse of the ego is a term used by Fanon to show one's acceptance of other cultures and traditions to be part of his native identity (204).

Being estranged in the middle class atmosphere makes Patrick's hatred towards that class even much worse. His alienation makes him angry and concerned about the middle class conduct attempted upon the working class. He starts to think of his father who is a simple machine setter if he is mistreated by his middle class manager or not (Kovesi 36). He prepares a bunch of questions for his brother Gavin to know about how much wage he receives, if he is badly behaved with at work and if his co-workers are in a self-centered union in which each one has his own interest over the common interest:

How much of a f..... wage do ye earn? Are you getting exploited badly or just ordinarily so? Is your rate for the job fixed by person or persons unknown? Is your union as corrupt as mine? Did your leaders sell ye out that last time as usual? (280)

His privileged class identity makes Patrick feel lonely and dejected because he is no more amongst his own people, saying "I'm sick of being alone and being a teacher in a society that I say I detest all the time" (248). His mind is "always going this way or that way and he is just never is able to get down and relax somewhere" (66). He sits alone near a couple of pipes, thinking they will make a good musical instrument, imagining to dye them with a different colour to alter their original one. For a moment, he meditates on the value of the pipes and their original colour, saying "What was wrong with their own colour? Their self-colour. Their colour of self?" (9). Patrick thinks if he colours these two pipes, their true essence, distinctiveness and their selfhood will be lost just like him after mobilizing from the working to the middle class. Like a musical instrument without strings, Patrick's life becomes "a hollowness of tone" (120). He compares his life to the paintings of the Spanish painter Francisco Goya (1746-1828) whose paintings depict how the world falls into madness, death, and pessimism after the ignition of the war between the Napoleonic France and Spain (Chu 153).⁵

Heading back to his house, Patrick feels disaffected as he walks the middle class streets of Glasgow. A thought comes to him that Glasgow is an empty city as though it is a place for the walking dead. Being from the middle class world makes him see Glasgow as a dead city where people do not greet each other, "Was there not a place for sentimentality. Were you not allowed to start bloody greeting nowadays, was that it! Was that the way things were" (11). Despite that there are people who some of them drive the cars, and others

⁵ For further information, see Stach. The condition of pessimism and despondency that Patrick goes through after mobilization reminds the reader of Kafka's *Metamorphosis* (1915) wherein Gregor Samsa who is a salesman metamorphoses into a cockroach turning his life upside down (59).

walk, they go on their own way without talking with each other. The middle class world deprives to the spirit of community and sentimentality, and everything seems dead to Patrick, but “He is not able to just be dead like everybody else. Everybody they were dead. How come else was dead. He was not like them, and not able to just be dead” (216). It is in human nature that an individual who is from a different class, culture and place to feel homesick yearning to be surrounded with his native roots. However, besides the alienation that the working class Glaswegian has to endure, the state structure is there to distress his existence.

The State vs the Scottish Working Class Individual

As part of new Scottishness⁶ Kelman’s novels challenge and expose the Scottish capitalist establishment, its institutional systems and law enforcement, which oppress the Scottish working class individual through their practices and authority (Head 23). In *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination*, Craig states that Kelman is known for “his anti-establishment attitude in writing and political activism.” Kelman novels show radical politics in relation to the middle class predominant attendance in the institutions of the Scottish state where the only official used language is Standard English not the Scottish. Thereby Kelman questions the “tension between those who are powerless and power holders” (26).

The French Neo-Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser (1918-1990) emphasizes in *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* (1970) that the educational institution is the most influential ideological state apparatuses.⁷ It makes the working class accepts the life of oppression and ruling class dominance through installing certain morals, thoughts, way of talking, behaviors, etc. Althusser says that “Ideological State Apparatuses function, not 'on violence', but 'on ideology’” (244). Ideology for him “produces in the individuals distorted conceptions of their place in the sociocultural order and thereby serve to reconcile them to that place and to disguise the inequitable relations of power and privilege” (UK Essays). In other words, the ideological state apparatuses are ideological means

⁶For further information, see Lhotová. Kelman’s new Scottishness unlike old Scottishness shows the state abuse as part of the re-identified Scottish working class identity stressing how it is directed towards the working class individual. *Auld Licht Idylls* (1888) by Barrie celebrates old Scottishness by excluding the state-working class feud from the Scottish working class identity showing that the state is at the service of its working class subjects (35).

⁷ For further information, see Althusser. The ideological state apparatuses are various such as educational institution, church, family, media, theatre, press etc., which all are repressive tools of power holders (45).

practiced by the ruling class to maintain their dominance and power over the other classes rather than using coercive force.

Patrick does not want to be part of an institution that is run by the middle class. He begins making excuses to avoid attending Milne's meetings, "I've got to go to the toilet Mister Milne" (160). His avoidance of being part of these meetings is a sign for Patrick saying no to the educational system. Patrick goes further by comparing Milne to an imaginary figure, Dracula, because Patrick feels being fed on if he obeys Milne like Dracula feeds on other's blood (Kovesi 93).

The rebellion Patrick embarks on by inciting "his students to perform the acts of resistance" to challenge the educational system methods by teaching his students to use the Glaswegian language, rather than Standard English. This accentuates what Fanon calls the rejection of the humility of the cripple⁸ and here it means that Patrick does not accept the imposed rules of the educational system (197). David McCrone in *Scotland, the Brand* remarks that in Scotland the "school disassociates its working class subjects [the students] from their inherited values" (36). Therefore, the school seems to brain wash the students' minds with the notion of class. Through his lectures, Patrick endeavors to raise the awareness of his students of the real world they live in, to see the world as he does. His concern of them does not stem from the desire to alter their class identity as he did, but rather to warn them about class mobility, hoping that they may pursue a better life than his. Patrick's defying attempts overrule the established rules of education and may derive him to lose his job (Nicoll 24).

In doing so, his lectures become means to make the students angry at their teachers, state, and parents who would, perhaps, force their children to seek university degrees. Interestingly enough, Patrick makes his students repeat after him some slogans every day as, "You are here being fenced by us the teachers at the behest of the government in explicit simulation of your parents viz. The suppressed poor. Repeat after me" (25). The French philosopher Michel Foucault (1926-1984) notes that "[Where there is power, there is resistance](#)" (qtd. in Head 57). Patrick does not teach them the syllabus that is

⁸ For further information, see Garland-Thomson. Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) uses the term the humility of the cripple referring to a crippled veteran telling Fanon's brother that he has to accept the inferiority of his black skin color just like I accept the fact of being without a leg. Fanon replies to this is that "his chest has the power to expand without a limit" (140) which means he does not yield to the imposed subordination but he rejects it.

required by the school; instead he plays some music with the pipes.⁹ John murphy, one of the students asks him, “If ye think the world’s as bad as all that then how come you’re just gonni go away and play the pipes instead of doing something more useful!” (200). Murphy does not know what Patrick is doing, thinking that his teacher is just wasting time, rather than relating to them the reality of the outside world.

Further, Kelman explores the issue of mass surveillance by the state over its subjects to keep control. In *A Disaffection* Kelman emphasizes how the Scottish working class individual feels paranoid and deprived of his right of privacy. Foucault in his book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975) describes the modern society like a Panopticon prison¹⁰ whose subjects do not know when, where, how and why they are being watched, surveilled, arrested and punished by the state’s penal system (Head 245).¹¹ Foucault says that “Our society is not one of spectacle but of surveillance” (qtd. in Brown 570). This causes paranoia of sorts to pervade in society where people start to order and behave their selves to avoid the penal power that is a set of means and practices used by the state to control the individual.

Kelman finds that the Scottish working class individual “feels unsecured and deprived of personal freedom everywhere for he is always aware of the threatening powers of the state” (McCrone 78). The Scottish working class individual finds himself under the surveillance of his employer whenever he practices his blue-collar job and feels he is being watched and followed by the police. He develops a paranoia of sorts for living in a place that its power structures can do him harm. Patrick thinks that he is being watched by the government through television. That is why he does not watch TV or own one in his house because he considers it a mere technological device by which the state has authority over people. His conspiracy theory is that “ye aye think it’s you that’s doing the bloody watching but it’s no, it’s

⁹ For further information, see Camus. The act of playing with the pipes seems absurd stressing Camus’s theory of the absurd in *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942). Sometimes the absurd acts on the surface look meaningless and nonsensical, but in the bottom they carry symbolic values (4).

¹⁰ For further information, see Foucault. Panopticon prison was designed by the British philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) during the 18th century in Britain. The structure of this prison consists of a circular prison and in the middle of it there is a tower that has many windows through which the guards are the only ones who can watch the prisoners, but the latter cannot see anything that is behind the windows. As a result, the prisoners behave themselves because they cannot tell if they are being watched or not (278).

¹¹ For further information, see Sellin. Penal system consists of the means of power like police, law court, technological means like camera, phones, etc., (19).

you that's actually being watched – the government's got the f... security forces all taking notes!"(215). As such Foucault in *Discipline and Punish* says that the penal system is a "subtle calculated technology of subjection" (221). It is quite important, away from state power, to show how and why the Scottish working class individual experiences a double-standard national identity.

Postcolonial Scotland

After the Act of Union of 1709, Scotland lost its sovereignty to become part of the United Kingdom. Scotland became run by the English state but the majority of the Scots look for independence. In the modern age, many of the Scots protested against that union calling for an independent nation. They were angry at the way the English take advantage of their nation's wealth like the North Sea Company that had stolen the Scottish oil (Harvie 8). The author himself explains his condemning attitude towards Britain illustrating:

When a colony attempts to break free, you know, the question that the imperial power always asks is, 'Why do you not like us?' To me, whether we like them or not is irrelevant. It's the master-slave thing, you know, the slave says, 'I wish to be free,' and the master goes, 'Why? I treat you well.' The concept of freedom somehow doesn't apply to a subjected people" (Toremans 581).

Kelman remarks that "the Scottish working class individual's national identity has double standards" (Kovesi 46). He dismisses "the old national identity of the Scottish working class that is submissive and loyal to the royal family and the Scottish state" (Hames 197).¹² Instead, he redefines their national identity into that of polarization: the national and anti-national. The Scottish working class individual shows nationalism when it comes to the Scottish-English relation through the antagonistic attitudes towards England. Patrick's father has nationalistic spirit against England's exploitive politics that harm Scotland. Discussing that Scotland has been economically exploited; Mr. Doyle condemns England for monopolizing the Scottish fishing business. He remarks that besides that England has been stealing the Scottish oil for years, the bourgeois restaurants in England get a high quality of Scottish sea food that is taken from Scotland's water, leaving the Scots only with the leftovers. Thus, Mr. Doyle looks at the Scottish-English relation as that of Kelman's view of the master and the slave:

¹²For further information, see Buchan. Buchan shows in *The Thirty-Nine Steps* the old spirit of national identity which is part of old Scottishness. One of his character the Milkman is a working class Scot who helps a British spy to escape from being killed, though he mistreats him. Besides the Milkman earns little wages but he prefers not to criticize the Scottish state and remain a loyal individual (125).

Of course ye know if you're buying your fish at the pier it's twice the size of what you get here in Glasgow, Mr Doyle said , I mean dont think because it's whiting it's got to be a wee fish. Some whiting ye get's big. But the best of the catch aye gets sent down south to England. The posh big restaurants, it's them that buys it all up. Mr Doyle glanced at Pat: Yous go on and on about Scotland's oil, well they've been stealing our fish for years. (110)

The national spirit of the Scottish working class individual disappears when there is a dispute between him and the state. He plans to leave Scotland or he has already left owing to economic security and state abuse. Jack Derek in Kelman's *Events in Yer Life* (1991) has already left to England for job opportunity (Kovesi 50). The anonymous main character of Kelman's *Translated Accounts* (2001) plans to leave Scotland after being exploited by the state police saying that "This was my country yet not my country. Why was I here. It was to question from the past, having no meaning for the now" (89). In *You have to be Careful in the Land of the Free* (2004), the protagonist travels to America to escape from Scotland's poor conditions of work and the state mistreatment saying "F... the motherland, blood and guts and soil and shite, it didnay matter ... to me" (29).

Kelman does not show a national intimacy between the Scottish working class individual and Scotland. This individual is mistreated by the Scottish state and treated less than he deserves unlike those of the middle class. It is unexpected to see the working class to have strong national bounds compared to what this slice of people endure. By doing this, Kelman's novels serve as protesting documents for the working class Scots to understand their reality and what is happening to them to better and change their life.

Conclusion

Throughout *A Disaffection* Patrick demonstrates resistance to working class traditional representation through their use of Scottish vernacular, rejection of politeness norms and state hierarchy. His self-doubt, inadequacy, and identity crisis make him too weak to take a communal action towards social change, though he do desire to gain it. This attitude indicates in itself a protesting spirit and a re-identification of the Scottish working class. Kelman's *A Disaffection* underline a culture of the ordinary and anti-heroic situated in the urban and unsettling working class of Glasgow; a literary representation that takes English fiction out of its comfort zone towards a reality of no neat beginnings or happy endings.

Belonging to working or middle class is not only a label that categorizes the individual but also a way that would lift him or drag him down. Throughout his novels, Kelman suggests that no individual seems to be free from class categorization in the post-industrial

society of Scotland in which discrepancy between these two class spheres is thought to be declining. This discrepancy pervades every aspect of Scottish life starting from its state institutions to the streets of Glasgow, forming a destructive force to the Scottish working class individual. The fear of change felt by the working class stands as another feature that leaves it in-between spaces, which increases in the feeling of disaffection and social alienation. Yet, within this disaffection and sense of national and cultural alienation Kelman seems to empower the voice of his characters.

Kelman underlines that the working class individual is supposed to be accepted within the fabric of Scottish society irrespective of his language, culture, or blue-collar work. He explicitly gives voice to these voiceless figures much more than just lamenting their misery. Patrick's peculiar use of language and obvious contempt against imposed cultural values of the post-colonial authority represent defiance against any cultural compliance, asserting that his rights to social and even linguistic individuality can no longer be silenced. Although Kelman never intends to convey any moralization, he does uphold the reconstruction of a new and productive working class individual of a highly acknowledged cultural value within Scotland.

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المستخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى البحث في إعادة تمثيل كيلمان الثقافي والغير التقليدي لهوية الفرد الاسكتلندي المنتمي للطبقة العاملة وتجسيد الحياة اليومية التي يعيشها في اسكتلندا ما بعد الصناعة. استناداً إلى الطابع الفردي الذي يضيفه الروائي الى شخصياته، تؤكد الدراسة على أن في عصر ما بعد الصناعة لا تزال المجتمعات المعاصرة مثل غلاسكو تعاني من الانقسام الطبقي والتفكك الثقافي، وان مفهوم المجتمع اللأ طبقي أو العقلية اللاطبقية في القرن الحادي والعشرين لم يتحقق بعد.

تناقش هذه الدراسة رواية كيلمان ، سخط (١٩ ٨٩) ، مسلطا الضوء على شخصية باتريك ، وهو مدرس منتمي الى الطبقة العاملة يعيش بمرارة واغتراب . يثيرالفصل تساؤلات حول دور التعليم في الحراك الاجتماعي ، وقضايا الانعزال الثقافي والطبقي التي تشكل عاملاً رئيسياً في إعادة بناء او هدم هوية الطبقة العاملة.