

This BA thesis handles the ways in which anarchism manifests in the works of James Kelman, and the merit of Kelman's claim to the title 'anarchist' is investigated. One of the main concerns of anarchism as a political ideology has been individual liberty free of oppression from authorities and hierarchical relationships; for this reason the starting point of the thesis is to discover the basis of the concept of freedom Kelman operates with: what are its sources, why the concept is so crucial to him and what role plays authority (and authorities) in it. The topics of freedom, political representation and direct action in Kelman are investigated and their relevance is sought after in author's fiction. Representation in literature and his stance on hierarchies is investigated. Strictly politically dogmatic point of view is not always taken to reproduce the anarchist position concerning author's fiction.

To make this possible, first, the political essays and other texts from Kelman are investigated from which a base of his standpoint on the anarchist concepts mentioned is constructed; similarity to various anarchist ideas is considered. These are later translated into his approach to fiction and artistic vision in general, and the way the notion of freedom and fight against hierarchy express in its content and style; the common gripes of critics are considered and related to class position. Hierarchy is examined in connection to cultural domination of the English literary establishment and the English language in Scotland; pertaining anarchist as well as authors not explicitly anarchist are brought in to compare with Kelman's position; the possible application of Gilles Deleuze, as a favourite of Kelman's critics, and his anti-authoritative philosophy are brought to attention. The principal critical apparatus is taken from Jesse Cohn's essay "What Is Anarchist Literary Theory?" in which Cohn theorizes that a relatively forgotten volume of work of anarchists and authors whose thoughts have been recognized as having anarchic qualities could be used to build a self-contained approach to literary criticism similar to other minor oppositional theories such as postcolonial or feminist theory.

The research confirmed Kelman's libertarian, anarchist leanings; they are vital for his politics as well as activism and manifest in the style and use of language in his novels that challenge cultural and linguistic hierarchies and question their validity. By employing demotic varieties of language used by working class people Kelman shows possibility of other than middle class culture and advocates use of non-standard English in literature and by extension in other fields where Standard English holds sovereign position. Primarily it is by his refusal of authority that interprets the world, which manifests in refusal of electoral politics and attempts to dismantle hierarchies that assign cultures or languages their respective use and by extension worth. In the stories, Kelman tries to liberate the subject from the third party omniscient narrator and let them speak from themselves. When one confronts Kelman's art with the anarchist literary theory the preoccupation with representation without stereotyping is revealed; it shows that Kelman's standpoint is overall moral, free from nationalist tendencies (as is the anarchist) and is interested in transforming the world by introduction of under- or misrepresented portions of society into literature.

Especially research based on Cohn's essay promises further uses and developments; it could be applied to other authors and at the same time, together with other texts, proves that one does not need to reach for ideologically motivated analyses and that to reconstruct anarchist theoretical point of view one can draw on authors not outspokenly anarchist. The anarchist position promises a non-dogmatic approach which liberates one's insight from moulds and is feasible to be used on every other author to escape from the shackles imposed by already existing theories.