

## Scottish Prose Non-fiction



**Spotlight:** Daniel Gray

### Biographical Details

Daniel Gray is a journalist, writer, broadcaster, and editor. Although brought up in Teeside, England, Gray has been resident in Leith for much of his adult life and has written and published extensively on Scotland. A graduate from Newcastle University in politics and history, Gray has authored, co-authored or edited a number of books on both subjects, including *Mon the Workers*, an oral history of the Scottish Trades Union Congress; *The Historical Dictionary of Marxism*; and *Homage to Caledonia* (which explores Scotland's involvement in the Spanish Civil War). However, he is perhaps best known for his work on football. As well as editing the quarterly periodical *Nutmeg* and presenting and producing its podcast, he has written or collaborated on several collections of essays, books of photojournalism, and travelogues that explore and celebrate football across society, with a particular focus on Scotland.



### Publications of Interest

- *Homage to Caledonia: Scotland and the Spanish Civil War* (Luath Press 2008)
- *Stramash: Tackling Scotland's Towns and Teams* (Luath Press 2010)
- *This is Scotland: A Country in Words and Pictures* (Luath Press 2014)
- *Snapshot: Scenes and Stories from the Heartlands of Scottish football\** (Nutmeg and Arena 2020)
- *A Life of Industry: The Photography of John R. Hume* (Historic Environment Scotland 2021)

### Where to Begin?



- 'Connecting the Fight: Scotland in the 1930s', *Homage to Caledonia*, Chapter 1
- 'Introduction', *Stramash*
- 'Chapter 4: Coatbridge', *Stramash*



### Style

- Travel writing
- Historical account
- Nostalgic/reflective



### Core Themes

- Working-class life and communities
- The role of football in society
- Social justice



### Contextualising

Whether his primary focus is on political movements, historical events, or football, almost all of Daniel Gray's writing is concerned more deeply with the lives and experiences of working-class people and communities, and the ways in which they have sought and fought for social justice and asserted their identities. In this respect, his writing bears comparison with that of Andrew O'Hagan. Gray's work can also be seen as coming from the fanzine tradition, where ordinary football fans self-published writing on their clubs and the game more widely to counter the more selective views of the mainstream press, and as part of a growth of more serious sociology-based sports writing in the UK from the 1990s onward.



### Understanding

Thinking about your chosen Daniel Gray text, consider the following questions, geared towards checking understanding:

- Can you identify **three** aspects of **social inequality** that affected the people Gray describes?
- Explain how the communities Gray describes developed an **identity** through **shared values**.
- Based on the information Gray provides, can you identify at least **three** key **differences** between society a century ago and today?

### Analysing

Choose **one** of the features below and explain how Gray uses it in his writing.



Imagery	Humour	Interview	Anecdote	Historical references
---------	--------	-----------	----------	-----------------------

### Evaluating

Thinking about your chosen Daniel Gray text, consider the following evaluative questions:



1. Do you think Gray provides a **fair** picture of the society he describes? Give reasons for your answer.
2. What **lessons** do you think Gray wishes us to take from his discussion of the **social values** held by the people and communities he describes?
3. *In your opinion*, which aspects of Gray's style make his subject matter more **interesting** and **engaging**? Give examples to support your answer.