

7. Scotland 2020

Hopeful stories for a northern nation

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Scotland 2020 is a project that explored the connection between stories and thinking imaginatively about the future. This book attempts to inject a new quality to the debate about Scotland's future – hope. The book contains specially commissioned short stories about the future by leading Scottish fiction writers.

Scotland has a problem thinking imaginatively about the future.

There is an undercurrent of doubt and pessimism in Scottish culture that likes to accentuate the negative. Globalisation is usually blamed for the erosion of Scottish values and identity. But often that pessimism turns into fatalism – the feeling that the future is beyond our control.

The 'official future', which is promoted by Scottish public institutions, takes a more optimistic view and sees economic growth leading to a better tomorrow. There is also a sense of fatalism in this version of the future – the idea that the shape of the future has already been determined by powerful economic and social forces.

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The idea of story and storytelling is central to Scotland 2020, and contained in the book are five specially commissioned short stories about the future by leading Scottish fiction writers. Also included are essays and dialogues with internationally renowned thinkers. Their conclusion is that hoping for a better future for Scotland is not naive, but a pre-condition for acting to make it happen.