Screen Depictions of Masculine Identity in Post-Industrial Wales

Alexander Yell

Candidate Number: [redacted]

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First Supervisor: Prof. D.J Britton

Second Supervisor: Dr. E. Price

SWANSEA UNIVERSITY

English and Creative Writing Department

School of Culture and Communication

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Abstract

This PhD submission comprises an original screenplay, titled *The Last Giant King,* and the accompanying exegesis. Through a combination of academic study and creative work, my aim is to explore the ways in which masculinities in post-industrial Wales are depicted on screen, chiefly within the medium of film.

While there has been an increasing focus on screen portrayals of masculinity in Film Studies since the 1970s, discussions of masculinities in Wales have often found themselves coming under the umbrella of British cinema. In many instances, discussions of Wales are relegated to a cursory mention, a footnote, or even overlooked altogether. This could lead one to reasonably conclude that Welsh masculinities are indivisible from British masculinities.

However, there are several extant studies on the ways in which masculinities are portrayed in Welsh industrial *novels*, which suggests that there may be expressions of masculinity in creative fiction which are specific to Wales. In this exegesis I have attempted to identify and constellate recurrent themes and signifiers which across several films mark out masculine identities as explicitly Welsh.

In my opening chapter, I present an overview of films set in Wales during the first half of the twentieth century when Wales was still largely industrialised. I analyse the ways in which masculine identities in Wales are intimately linked with physical labour, bodily prowess and community.

In the second, chapter I briefly outline real life consequences of deindustrialisation in the post-Thatcher era and the effects which this has had on masculinities in Wales.

In my third chapter, I focus on screen depictions of Welsh masculinities in the post-industrial era. Once again, I attempt to identify themes which reoccur across several films. Due to the changes in they way films are funded and produced, coupled with the far looser ties between community,

identity and masculinity in a more globalised society, identifying elements peculiar to Wales becomes ever more challenging.

In my final chapter I explain the creative choices that I have made in my screenplay and the ways in which I have tried to make my characters, and their expressions of masculinity recognisably Welsh: I have used a realist portrayal, via setting, character motivation and dialogue and elided those elements with Welsh myths and legends, chiefly Y Mabinogi. In doing so, I hope to show how masculine identities in Wales have specific and identifiable qualities.

Declaration

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed: 

Alexander Yell (candidate)

26/09/2024

Statement 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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Alexander Yell (candidate)

26/09/2024

Statement 2

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

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Introduction

The idea for this thesis, and the accompanying screenplay, originated with my curiosity about how Welsh identity is constructed and transmitted, both locally and globally, via the medium of film. Benedict Anderson's exploration of nationalism, *Imagined Communities* (1983), as the title would suggest, defines a nation as "an imagined political community…it is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest of nations will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear them yet in the mind of each lives the image of communion."[1] For Anderson, the creation of a national consciousness can be traced back to the invention of the printing press. For the first time a vehicle for the mass transmission of culture and knowledge, written in the national language, was able to construct images of a common national and linguistic identity.[2] Anderson added that the novel was also a key medium for the transmission of national culture. It is perhaps axiomatic, then, to suggest that the development of cinema is has a highly important part to play in the development of the imagined community.

The problematic of a shared identity in the United Kingdom is particularly acute. Wales had been gradually appended to England to create a nation state, under the English crown, between 1536 and 1543[3]. The Scottish and English crowns were united in 1707, and the 1801 Act of Union created the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Each of these four territories were governed from a single, centralised Parliament in Westminster. An added dimension of complexity was, of course, the vast multi-racial empire which was ruled by a single monarch.[4] The creation of a coherent and unified 'British' nation meant that "it was assumed that all four nations would be increasingly fused through a single parliament, laws, system of justice and culture" which were, for the most part, to be

[1] Benedict Anderson *Imagined Communities* (1983) (London: Verso Books, 2006) p.6
[2] Castelló, E. (2016). Anderson and the Media. The strength of "imagined communities". *Debats. Journal on Culture, Power and Society*, 1. 59-63
[3] Gwyn Alf Williams *When Was Wales* (London: Penguin Books, 1985) p.119
[4] Sian Pooley "Identities, Communities and Communication." *British Library Newspapers.* (Detroit: Gale, 2007). p.2

transmitted from the hegemonic centre. In short, Britishness was frequently elided with Englishness.[5] This was, of course met with resistance of varying degrees of strength. Irish independence, the subsequent issues in Northern Ireland, as well as the Scottish independence movement is beyond the scope of this essay. However, in Wales the linguistic and cultural resistance to the centralising tendencies of the British state provided enough complexities of their own. The growth of the Welsh language press is illustrative of the growth and transmission of a Welsh culture as separate from the hegemonic British culture.[6]

This linguistic and cultural split between 'official' anglophone British culture and Welsh language and culture is reflective of the linguistic and political divisions that continue to exist in Wales. These divisions were famously adumbrated in Denis Balsom's 'Three Wales Model' (1985). Balsom identified a tripartite model of Wales defined by geography language, politics, employment and culture. The three areas of Wales he named 'Welsh Wales', the largely English-speaking industrial (and soon after post-industrial) valleys region of the south-east; '*Y Fro Gymraeg'*- the Welsh speaking north and west of the county, and 'British Wales' which extends from Bridgend, taking in Cardiff and Newport before extending up the entirety of the entirety of the eastern border with England. While the inhabitants of *Y Fro Gymraeg* and Welsh Wales identify as 'Welsh', those in British Wales, according to Balsom, have no specific Welsh identity.[7] Balsom's model is arguably reductive and out of date[8] but it does help to illustrate the divisions and contradictions that exist in Wales.

[5] Ibid p.3
[6] The first weekly Welsh language newspaper, *Baner ac Amserau Cymru* centred upon Welsh affairs for a Welsh language audience. *Baner* promoted "a Welsh cultural identity that celebrated the d the contribution of those who had battled against the English, Anglican and aristocratic establishments."- Ibid.
[7] Balsom's work is outlined in Daryl Perrins 'The Cinema Has Two Tongues: The Cinema Cultures of Wales' in John Hill, ed. *A Companion to British and Irish Cinema* (New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, 2019) pp.510-511
[8] For instance, the highest number of Welsh speakers can now be found in Cardiff https://www.gov.wales/welsh-language-data-annual-population-survey-2022. Accessed 20/03/2024.

Wales, and its people, therefore, find themselves caught between competing and often contradictory forms of identity. In these circumstances, questions about how an 'imagined community' can be realised in terms of cinematic representation become difficult to answer.

The Welsh historian Gwyn Alf Williams in his passionately political historical study *When Was Wales* (1985) wrote that "the Welsh as a people have lived by making and remaking themselves generation after generation, usually against the odds, usually in a British context."[9] He suggests that the ruptures, contradictions and crises are the things that shape Welsh national identity. Williams was writing in the wake of the overwhelming vote against the creation of a Welsh Assembly in 1979, and the brutal crushing of the 1984- 1985 miners' strike. Thoroughly disillusioned with the state of mid-eighties politics, he ends his book by darkly ruminating upon whether Wales could survive into the future; would we finally end up being absorbed into that wider political project, Britain?

Gwyn Williams did not live to see the victory of the 1997 devolution referendum which finally granted devolved powers to Wales and saw the creation of the Welsh Assembly, later to become The Senedd. Wales, it seemed, was no longer in the existential danger it found itself in a decade earlier and instead had voted to have at least some say in its own destiny. If Wales and the Welsh are defined by what Daryl Perrins describes as "hyphenated identities"[10] this was at least masked, for the time being, by the vote for devolution. Yet even a cursory glance at the voting numbers- the 'Yes' vote won by a margin of 0.6% on a turnout of 50.1%[11]- show that this was a country which was at least ambivalent about its identity. A further referendum on increased powers for the Welsh Assembly was won by a far more convincing margin of 63.49%-36.51% in favour, but on an overall turnout of just 35.6%.[12] Another 'rupture' occurred on 23rd June 2016 when the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union. The nationwide result of 52% in favour of leaving the EU, was

[9] Williams 1985 p.304
[10] Perrins in Hill, ed. p.512
[11] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/special/politics97/devolution/wales/live/index.shtml. Accessed 20/03/2024.
[12] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-politics-12447463. Accessed 20/03/2024.

mirrored almost precisely in Wales, which voted 52.5% in favour of leaving, which was similar to the English vote of 53.4% in favour of 'Brexit.' Scotland and Northern Ireland, the other member nations of the 'Celtic fringe' voted strongly in favour of the UK retaining its membership of the EU.[13] This vote in Wales, as Perrins argues, meant that "53% of the Welsh electorate declared loyalty to an idea of Britishness in voting to leave the EU."[14] The highest concentration of 'leave' votes in Wales tended to be in the post-industrial areas of the south Wales valleys, which replicated the votes of the post-industrial areas of England's northern and north-eastern regions. Here, Perrins further asserts, the people of post-industrial Wales were voting along class lines rather than national ones and in doing so were voting in line with parts of England "with which they shared a common history and economic inheritance."[15] Once again, the problematic nature of Welsh identity was thrown into sharp relief.

The vote to leave the EU, and the subsequent political and constitutional tumult, coincided with my beginning to think about how Wales is represented in film. As someone who grew up in the largely anglophone, post-industrial south-east of Wales, witnessing large swathes of this part of the country vote in line with the British/English hegemon, in contrast to *Y Fro Gymraeg* tilting more heavily towards the 'Remain' vote, I began to wonder whether monoglot English-speaking Wales has any cultural identity of its own. Having spent most of my life in a post-industrial milieux and having watched the shifting fortunes of my own hometown during its gradual economic reorientation I decided, firstly, to survey films focusing on post-industrial Britain. For the purposes of this study, I have located post-industrial films as those produced after the 1979 election of Margaret Thatcher. Thatcher's time in office was characterised by the dismantling of the post war consensus and the embracing of Friedmanite neoliberal economic policies. This resulted in a shrinking of the welfare state, large scale privatisation, high unemployment and the movement from large scale

[13] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/politics/eu_referendum/results. Accessed 21/03/2024.
[14] Perrins in Hill, ed. p.511
[15] Ibid

manufacturing to a service-based economy. The pursuit of free market economics has been the policy, to a greater or lesser extent, of each successive government in the post-Thatcher era.

The term post-industrial, of course, should be mentioned in the context of what preceded it: an industrial society. Britian was the first country to industrialise, and the Industrial Revolution led to the creation of "the world's first industrial working class."[16] The historian E.P Thompson in *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963, 1968) charts the early years of the formation of working-class identity and consciousness through shared economic interests, political radicalism, collectivism, and opposition to and tension between, the more moneyed middle- classes.[17] As the title of Thompson's work suggests, his study focuses on the English working class, yet accounts of the formation of working class identities in Wales show that the two evolved along similar lines.[18] By the 19th century the term "working class" or the "working classes" had come into common usage and described a recognisable socio-economic group.[19] Welsh academic and cultural critic Raymond Williams notes that the term "working class" has a complicated history. After all, if work is synonymous with productivity and usefulness the surely all those who are not working class are unproductive. As Williams opines, "easy enough for an aristocracy, but hardly accepted by a productive middle-class."[20] However, there came to be a strong association between working-class and *workman* or *working man* who were defined by their engagement in manual labour. This association was further complicated by the Housing of the Working Classes Act 1885 which defined the working class as those persons "who earn their livelihood by wages and salaries."[21] Yet there arises an ambiguity in this classification as there existed salaried workers who did not perform

[16] Ken Roberts *Class in Modern Britain (*London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2001) p.81
[17] E.P Thompson *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Vintage Books London, 1980)
[18] See for instance David Smith, ed. *A People and a Proletariat: Essays in the History of Wales* (London: Pluto Press London 1980); Kenneth O. Morgan *Rebirth of a Nation: Wales 1880-1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,1981)
[19] Eric Hopkins *The Rise and Decline of the English Working Classes 1880-1990: A Social History* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson,1991) p.iv
[20] Raymond Williams *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Harper Collins,1983) p.65
[21] Ibid

manual labour. Williams concludes that class can be an expression of economic relationships which overlaps with consciousness of one's own social position. Class, therefore, "is virtually equivalent to rank"[22] in that it dictates a system of hierarchical relationships. It is perhaps fair to conclude, then, that images of industrial society are frequently characterised by working-class manually labouring bodies. These bodies, due to the physical intensity required by this labour, are predominantly male. Certainly, as Claire Monk argues, British cinema which features characters in post-industrial settings, frequently depicts deindustrialisation and the economic hardships and worklessness it creates, as intimately linked with a crisis in masculinity.[23] This would suggest that the labouring male body within an industrial milieux had the effect of underpinning a stable masculine identity.

A further problem arises in locating Wales in cinema. If Wales is deeply ambivalent about its own identity, then screen depictions of Welsh identity are no different. David Berry's *Wales and Cinema: The First Hundred Years* (1994) described as a "tremendously useful and important historical work"[24] is breathtaking in its scope and at the same exposes the difficulty and contradictions inherent in projecting images of Wales. The minutiae of film production is well beyond the scope of this essay, but it is worth noting that Berry' work certainly shows that the existence of a Welsh 'national' cinema is far from straightforward.

Berry, in 2005, compiled a list of 24 'classic' films from Wales. The earliest film in the list was *The Proud Valley* (Penrose Tennyson, 1940) and the most recent was *Dal/Yma/Nawr* (Marc Evans, 2003). The list included several high-profile English language films, such as the Hollywood produced *How Green Was My Valley* (John Ford, 1941) and *Zulu* (Cy Enfield, 1964) which arguably sits within the canon of 'British' cinema, as well as several Welsh language productions which can be more definitively described as 'Welsh film'. A number of these films, then, were variously not produced or

[22] Ibid p.66
[23] Claire Monk 'Men in the 90s' in Robert Murphy, ed. *British Cinema of the 90s* (London: BFI, 2000) pp.156-166 (p.156)
[24] Steve Blandford 'Introduction' in Blandford, ed. *Wales on Screen* (Bridgend: Poetry Wales, 2000) pp.11-37 (p.20)

financed in Wales, featured few or no Welsh actors and made by non-Welsh directors. This, as Jones explains, "illustrates some of the complexities of film classification since films may qualify as 'Welsh' for various reasons."[25] Therefore, the cinematic representation Wales and the Welsh is seemingly split in at least three different directions between Wales, Britain and the United States.

Wales has been variously described as a 'stateless nation' or a 'minority nation'[26] which exists within the wider British political project. As such, certain important questions of representation arise. Andrew Higson, when discussing the concept of 'national' cinemas, asks several pertinent questions which could be applied to screen depictions of Welsh identities: "Where were these films made and by who? Who owns and controls the industrial infrastructures, the production companies, the distributors and the exhibition circuits?"[27] In the case of Wales, as we have seen, the answer to this question can be that a wide-ranging group of entities are involved in these processes. The same answer can be given to the questions, "what are the films about? Do they share a common style or worldview? What sort of projections of the national character do they offer?"[28] Because of the complexities and potential pitfalls of trying to locate a truly Welsh 'national' cinema that sits alongside a British national cinema, it is perhaps more useful to find and constellate thematic commonalities within films from a diverse range of production backgrounds.

A survey of films set in Wales and depicting Welsh characters produced in the period prior to deindustrialisation produce images of Wales as largely proletarian society which foreground images of masculine bodily performance through labouring, typically in coalmining and agriculture, or in sporting competitions such as football and rugby. These images tend designate Wales as a rigidly

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[25] Elizabeth Dilys Jones *Changing Narratives of Minority Peoples' Identities in Welsh and Basque Film* Doctoral Thesis University of Wales: Trinity Saint David 2013 pp.21-22

[26] Breton author Mikael Bodlore-Penlaez has listed Wales among several stateless nations in *Atlas of Stateless Nations, minority peoples on search of recognition* trans. by Ciaran and Sarah Finn (Aberystwyth: Y Lolfa, 2011). Additionally, Elizabeth Dilys Jones' thesis, mentioned above, is based upon the notion of minority identities.

[27] Andew Higson 'The Concept of National Cinema' in Alan Williams, ed. *Films and Nationalism* (London: Rutgers University Press,2002) pp52-67 (pp.52-53)

[28] Ibid p.53

patriarchal society. This has not gone unnoticed by critics and academics. Dierdre Beddoe pointedly states that "Welsh women are culturally invisible."[29] Indeed, women in these films are often depicted as the Welsh 'mam', a figure which Gwenno Ffrancon describes as "the most romantic and enduring image of them all, the loving Welsh mam."[30] The mam is a figure of domesticity who "had little visibility or influence away from the home"[31] with public life being dominated by male characters.

If cinema from this period foregrounds the labouring man, at the expense of women, and post-industrial cinema is preoccupied with masculinity in crisis then this seems a useful point of intersection between 'Welsh' and 'British' cinema which will allow me to explore the ways in which depictions of masculinity in post-industrial Wales differ from those of a more generalised notion of Britain.

[29] Dierdre Beddoe 'Images of Welsh Women' in Tony Curtis, ed. *Wales: The Imagined Nation* (Bridgend: Poetry Press,1986) pp.227-238 (p.227)
[30] Gwenno Ffrancon 'An Angel in the Home? Rachel Thomas, Sian Phillips and the On-Screen Embodiment of the Welsh Mam' in *Transactions of the Honourable Society of the Cymmrodorion 2009* New Series, Volume 16 2010 p.110
[31] Jones p.87

Review of Relevant Literature

Introduction-Laura Mulvey and the 'Male Gaze' of Cinema

In attempting to analyse the ways in which masculinity is presented on film, it is perhaps useful to refer to Laura Mulvey's 1975 essay, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' which has "probably generated more debate […] than any other single article in the history of film theory."[1] Mulvey incorporates the psychoanalytical theories of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan to explore how popular narrative cinema constructs the relationship between the spectator and the screen and argue that filmic depictions of masculinity and femininity are conceived along phallocentric lines. In other words, a film's diegesis is centred around an active male protagonist and ultimately an audience of male spectators[2] It is worth outlining the theories that form the basis of Mulvey's writing. Her essay relies strongly upon the psychoanalytical theories of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacanian. I shall therefore attempt to provide a brief overview of their work in relation to gender and sexuality.

Masculinity and Psychoanalytical Theory

Sigmund Freud: Sexual Identity and the Oedipus Complex

Pamela Thurschwell states that "Freud's writings embody a core of ideas that amount to more than the beliefs of a single thinker. Rather, they function like myths for our culture; taken together they represent a way of looking at the world that is powerfully transformative."[3] Freud's theories are

[1] Barbara Creed 'Introduction' in *The Sexual Subject: A Screen Reader* ed. by John Caughie and Annette Kuhn (London: Routledge, 1992) pp.15-21 (p.16)
[2] Laura Mulvey 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema' first published in *Screen,* Autumn 1975, vol.16, no.3, pp.6-18 reproduced in Caughie and Kuhn, eds. pp.22-34.
[3] Pamela Thurschwell *Sigmund Freud* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2000) p.1

wide ranging and as such I shall confined myself chiefly to his theories of the formation of sexual and gender identity.

Freud's key theory in the development of sexual identity is the Oedipus complex. Named after the Sophocles play in which tragical Theban king is doomed to kill his father and marry his mother, it has become the template for the process by which the mother child/dyad is interrupted by the father, thereby initiating a path to self-realisation. What is striking about Freud's most famous theory is that he chooses a tragedy as the founding myth of human sexuality. Oedipus stumbles along his narrative path, unaware until the final moments that his story is predetermined, his fate inescapable. Oedipus's fate being out of his hands suggests that the Oedipus Complex is a process over which the subject has no control; we are unwittingly forced to follow a trajectory imposed upon us which always conforms to that of Oedipus. At the story's outset, Oedipus, as King, is at the centre of his own narcissistic fantasy. His world is one of abundance and seeming omnipotence. This corresponds to Freud's theories of infantile, pre-Oedipal sexuality: "each infant begins life in a state of polymorphous perversity, loving, eroticising, wanting everything and everyone that interests it."[4] ."[5] Like the infant, Oedipus is not yet cognisant of the reality of his circumstances. It is only when it is revealed to him that he unwittingly murdered his father that he realises the awful truth, that he has been in an incestuous marriage with his mother all along. The "intrusion" of the father into Oedipus' psychic life causes a painful rupture in which, as Freud states, "the early efflorescence of sexual life is doomed to come to an end because its wishes are incompatible with reality and with the inadequate stage of development the child has reached."[6]

Jacques Lacan: The Mirror, The Imaginary and The Symbolic

[4] Ibid p.41
[5] Ibid
[6] Sigmund Freud 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' in A.A Brill (Trans) *Sigmund Freud: The Collected Works (*New York: Pacific Publishing Studio, 2010) p.192

Lacan, like Freud, describes the earliest stage of childhood as one of primary narcissism. In contrast to Freud, however, Lacan rejigs the narrative somewhat and inserts an extra developmental phase that occurs before the resolution of the Oedipus complex. This is what Lacan calls the mirror phase. He postulates that between the ages of six to 18 months, the infant child will learn to recognise its own reflection in the mirror. From this moment, the child is aware of their own totality as separate from the rest of the world around them. The child can gaze at and, through movement, manipulate its own reflection. This, in turn, gives the child a sense of wholeness and mastery. Yet, at such a young age, the child's limbs are still uncoordinated. Therefore, whilst the mirror gives the *illusion* of wholeness, the child, with their flailing limbs feels alienated from their own image. As Lacan puts it:

"The mirror stage is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation- and which manufactures for all the subject […] the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality."[7]

This alienation from one's own body image is the foundation of our entire mental development: the moment of self-recognition initiates the formation of the ego. The ego acts as a sort of regulatory fiction that allows us to maintain the belief that we are whole and coherent subjects; "the function of the ego is, in other words, one of misrecognition*;* of refusing to accept the truth of fragmentation and alienation."[8] This forms part of what Lacan fittingly refers to as the Imaginary phase of psychological development. We imagine ourselves as coherent and knowable subjects, with the ego acting as a bulwark against fragmentation and incoherence. Jean-Louis Baudry contends that Lacan's imaginary/ mirror phase corresponds directly to the ways in which film texts construct and position us as spectators. A film, as a series of discrete images. gives the illusion of motion when run through a projector. The spectator, in turn, is forced to make sense of these images. In this way, Baudry likens our spectatorial relationship with the cinema screen to our self-recognition during the mirror

[7] Jacques Lacan 'The Mirror Stage as Formative of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience,' in *Ecrits: A Selection* trans by A. Sheridan (London: Routledge, 1977) pp. 1-7
[8] Sean Homer *Jacques Lacan* (London: Routledge, 2005) p.25

stage.[9] Christian Metz, however, argues that unlike the mirror phase in which the child recognises themselves as an object, the film spectator must necessarily recognise their absence from the screen image and is "thus able to constitute a world of objects without first having to recognise himself within it."[10] This, as Sean Homer states, places the act of film spectatorship in the realm of what Lacan names the Symbolic.[11]

. In Lacanian thought, the Symbolic is the developmental stage that immediately follows the Imaginary/mirror phase. The central maxim of this theory is that the human unconscious is structured like a language. Lacan draws heavily on structural linguist Ferdinand de Saussure's *Cours de linguistique generale* which contends that human society is structured and governed through language. De Saussure argues that language is not simply a set of referents that correspond to actual concrete phenomena, instead it is a system of signs that have no necessary, inherent relation to the objects that they describe.[12] While de Saussure postulates the existence of a concrete relationship between the signifier and the thing which it signifies, Lacan finds that the relationship between the two to be much looser, resulting in "an incessant sliding of the signifier under the signified"[13]. This means that the signifier never settles upon a final meaning, rather it always refers to another signifier "which in turn refers to another signifier in an almost endless chain of signification."[14] It is through this endless signifying chain that the human world is constituted, and it is contingent upon the unconscious mind to decode its meaning. This process Lacan names the Symbolic Order. However, this unconscious process is beyond the control of the subject; we are, after all, born into a world in which language precedes us. This leads Lacan do describe the unconscious as the "discourse of the Other."[15] The Other, in this instance, represents the Symbolic Order and therefore language.

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[9] Jean-Louis Baudry 'Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus' *Film Quarterly* 28(2) 1974-75 pp.39-47
[10] Christian Metz *Psychoanalysis and Cinema: The Imaginary Signifier* (London: Macmillan, 1982) p.46
[11] Homer pp.29-30
[12] Ferdinand de Saussure (1916) *Course in General Linguistics* trans. By R. Harris (Illinois: Open Court, 1983)
[13] Lacan 1977 p.154
[14] Homer p.42
[15] Lacan 1977 p.292

The moment we enter the world of language, we become caught up in the signifying chain from which we cannot escape.

Lacan uses his theory of the symbolic to expand on Freud's Oedipus Complex. In Lacanian terms, the moment at which the child realises that it is not the sole object of the mother's attention and desire represents the transition from the imaginary to the symbolic. The child, however, is never quite sure where, and to whom or what, the mother's desire is directed. This leads us to yet another important Lacanian term: the Phallus. Like Oedipus, the Phallus originates in mythology and is often linked with (male) sexual potency. Lacan, however, is quick to point out that the Phallus is never the 'penis' but rather "it refers to an entirely imaginary object invested with an entirely imaginary and undefined power."[16] The Phallus is the undefinable object that distracts the mother's desire which the child knows it does not possess. The resolution of the Oedipus complex, therefore, sees the child to submit to the Law and accept that they do not possess the Phallus. For Lacan, this constitutes a form of symbolic castration.[17] However, the male subject may compensate for the lack or loss of the Phallus by pretending that they possess it.[18] Mulvey's analysis asserts that this process occurs in narrative cinema whereby the male figures onscreen represent the fantasy of possessing the Phallus, which in turn allows the male spectators to partake in that fantasy. It is possible to argue therefore, as Muley does, that cinema is caught up in the circuit of gendered power relations and as such performs an ideological function.

Masculinity and Power

Louis Althusser: Interpellation

[16] Lionel Bailly *Lacan* (London: Oneworld Publications,2009) p.76
[17] Ibid pp.76-81
[18] Homer p.99

Marxist philosopher Louis Althusser also finds that language constitutes us as subjects. Althusser uses a materialist conception of history which conceives of all human existence as being founded upon the relations of material production between individuals.[19] In his essay, *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses* Althusser explains his theory of power using two key concepts: the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) and the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA).[20] For Marx, the state is an apparatus of repression which "enables the ruling classes…to ensure their domination over the working class."[21] Althusser departs from Marx and instead demonstrates that the state need not actively coerce workers to serve the needs of capital. Instead, many states use ideology to achieve the same ends. In this way, violence and repression, the RSA, is only ever used as a final resort. The ideology of the state can be transmitted through various ISAs: education, religion, politics, the family, etc.[22] This form of ideological 'conditioning' which instructs the subject in the "dominant discourses, techniques and customs of society"[23] not only leads to the reproduction of material conditions but constitutes us as subjects in the process which Althusser names interpellation. We are, according to Althusser, 'hailed' as subjects through recognition and become "concrete, individual, distinguishable and (naturally) irreplaceable."[24] Althusser's theory can be useful in the study of gender and masculinity. We are, after all, potentially subject to interpellation even before we are born. For instance, if the parents of a child are aware of its gender before it is born, they may select a name which is deemed appropriate for that gender. After that, the clothing that the child wears may be specific to that gender. Later still, certain types of gendered behaviour may be expected. For Althusser, there is nothing natural or inevitable about these decisions and ways of

[19] Luke Ferreter *Louis Althusser* (Oxford: Routledge, 2006) pp.13-39
[20] Louis Althusser 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' in Louis Althusser *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* trans.by Ben Brewster, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001) pp.85-126
[21] Ibid p.92
[22] Ibid pp.85-126
[23] Ferreter p.86
[24] Althusser p.117

being, rather they are transmitted and naturalised by ideology. For Althusser, this is ultimately in the service of capital and the ruling class.

Antonio Gramsci: Hegemony

The problem with Althusser's theory, as Robert Shail points out, is in its rigid inflexibility which condemns it to being too deterministic in its view that all power relations and cultural products are "hopelessly tainted by conformity to the dominant ideology."[25] Antonio Gramsci, proposes a theoretical model of power relations which allows for more flexibility. Gramsci's theory of hegemony takes the view that power structures are less unidirectional than in Althusser's thinking. Rather than subjects being either dupes who are unaware of their conditioning by ideology or alternatively coerced by state violence, Gramsci's theory of hegemony involves the dominant (ruling) group obtaining the consent of the subordinate (subaltern) group. Consent is obtained in various ways. For instance, the hegemonic group addressing the needs and interests of the subaltern group through economic means.[26] Subaltern groups are aware of their status but receive a "dividend" in return for their consent. Furthermore, Gramsci believed that in time subaltern groups themselves could themselves "form an active hegemony."[27] Hegemony therefore contains within itself the potential for its own overthrow.

R.W. Connell: Hegemonic Masculinity

In *Masculinities* (1995) Connell uses Gramsci's work to develop her theory of hegemonic masculinity. Connell explores the ways in which the complex interplay of forces allows certain constructions of

[25] Robert Shail *Constructions of Masculinity in 1960s British Cinema* Doctoral Thesis, University of Exeter, 2002, p.25
[26] Peter Ives *Language and Hegemony in Gramsci* (London: Pluto Press,2004) p.69
[27] Ibid

masculinity to take precedence over others and have led to the historical subjugation of women. Connell situates the body as central to social construction and gender dynamics. In the first instance, this is in the service of capital: "hard labour in factories and mines literally uses up the workers' bodies; and that destruction of the toughness of the work and the worker can be a method of demonstrating masculinity."[28] This suggests an intersection between class and masculinity; Connell points out the distinction between this mode of working-class labour and middle-class, white-collar labour where mental and intellectual prowess are the things that are exalted.[29] These two modes of masculinity show that different hegemonies constantly jostle for position. This is relevant in societies which have transitioned from industrial to post-industrial. The formation of an industrial society necessarily means that workers' bodily capacities for producing labour are their only economic asset. That is not to say that industrial masculinities are predicated solely on physical strength. However, in societies where work has gone through a process of casualisation and deskilling, "working class men are increasingly defined as possessing force alone."[30] At the same time, middle-class men in white-collar professions are increasingly defined as the bearers of skill .

Hegemonic masculinity must also necessarily exclude subordinate or subaltern forms of masculinity. The most prominent example of this is homosexual masculinity which is "positioned at the bottom of the gender hierarchy amongst men".[31] Anyone displaying traits which are deemed to be insufficiently masculine, regardless of sexual orientation, is liable to be pushed to the bottom of the hierarchy. The existence of a hierarchy suggests that subaltern masculinities are complicit in the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity. Complicity can be sought and gained in the guarantee of a "patriarchal dividend, the advantage men in general gain from the subordination of women.[32] While

[28] R.W Connell *Masculinities* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995) p.36
[29] Ibid
[30] Ibid p.55
[31] Ibid pp78-79
[32] Ibid

the number of men who embody and practice hegemonic masculine standards may be small, subaltern groups can also benefit from the subordination or oppression of women.[33]

As stable and overweening as this gender order would seem, other scholars, such as Petersen (1998) and Whitehead (2002) find the concept of hegemonic masculinity and its power too unidirectional, the assumption being that power always begins at the top and moves downwards. For Whitehead, there can be no possibility that the bearers of hegemonic masculinity can exist as rational actors outside of the relations of power.[34] Petersen finds that Connell's theory incorrectly assumes that there is some fixed, historically constant masculinity which is forever worn upon the body in some sense and that this fails to recognise that the concept of the material body is "constituted by shifting relations of power/knowledge."[35]

Michel Foucault: The Body and Operations of Institutional Power

The criticisms of Connell's theory are rooted in Foucauldian thought. Foucault is wary of the universalising tendencies and asserts that there can be "no universal understanding that is beyond history and society."[36] Much of his work attempts to uncover how human beings have been historically constituted as subjects.[37] Foucault finds that the rise of clinical medicine and psychiatry

[33] Connell points, for instance, out that of the 55 US fortunes over $1 Billion in 1992 only five were in the hands of women- Ibid p.82. In 2023 there are 2054 US fortunes worth over $1 billion-106 of these are in the hands of women. As such, while the overall number of female billionaires has increased, women have decreased as a proportion people holding $1 billion or more- https://www.forbes.com/billionaires/ accessed 09/03/2024
Beyond capital, men also possess the means of violence, and it is overwhelmingly men who use it as they are "authorized by an ideology of supremacy."-Ibid p.83
[34] Stephen M. Whitehead *Men and Masculinities* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002) pp.92-99
[35] Alan Petersen *Unmasking the Masculine: 'Men' and 'Identity' in a Sceptical Age* (London: Sage Publications, 1998) p.70
[36] Paul Rainbow 'Introduction' *The Foucault Reader* ed. by Paul Rainbow, (London: Penguin Books, 1991) p.4
[37] Michel Foucault 'The Subject and Power' in Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rainbow *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982) p.208 quoted in Rainbow 1991 p.7

in European hospitals and prisons in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is key to modern subject formation and leads to taxonomies which divide human subjects into categories via a process of objectification which provide "both a social and a personal identity."[38] This medicalisation of the body plays a prominent role in dictating correct ways of being. Foucault describes how eighteenth-century therapeutics would categorise certain subjects as 'mad' if they exhibited certain behaviours regarded as deviant. This had the effect of associating good health, both physical and mental, with 'correct' sexual behaviour and therefore morality.[39] This forms part of a process of standardisation as we see the categorisation of the 'healthy man' which in turn leads to the definition of the 'model man'.[40]

Foucault also explores disciplinary power in institutional settings and how the control of bodily utility enforces of correct ways of being.[41] This is upheld by what Foucault describes as the "normalising gaze" which objectifies subjects through continual observation,[42] and leads him to formulate an overarching theory of the exercise of disciplinary power in society: Panopticism. His concept is based on Jeremy Bentham's architectural plan for the model prison, the *Panopticon* (1791). Bentham's panopticon is designed around the possibility of the permanent observation of the subject.[43] However, the subject can never be sure whether they are being observed or not, they must always behave as if they are the subject of the normalising gaze. In this way the "individual is at the same time both 'object' and 'subject' of this power: the subject is 'watched', but is being trained to watch himself, to be his own inspector."[44] In Foucauldian thought, however, even if there is an external observer, the observer themselves is never outside of the operations of power and they too can be

[38] Rainbow p.9
[39] Michel Foucault 'The Birth of the Asylum' in Rainbow, ed. 1991 pp.154-156
[40] Michel Foucault *Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* trans. by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage,1975) p.34
[41] Michel Foucault *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* trans. by Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage, 1979) p.170 quoted in Marcelo Hoffman 'Disciplinary Power' in *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts* ed. by Dianna Taylor (New York: Routledge,2014) pp27-39 (pp.28-29)
[42] Ibid pp.32-34
[43] Ibid p.34
[44] Ellen K. Feder 'Power/Knowledge' in Taylor, ed. 2014 pp.55-68 (pp.58-59)

subject to a regulatory gaze.[45] Indeed, Foucault sees power as immanent in many types of relationship. Power, for Foucault, is so granular that it can be broken down into its smallest constituent parts. This interplay is present in all social interactions from the micro (interactions between individuals) to the macro (the state). Power is, therefore, everywhere; it is reproduced in all interactions from one moment to the next.[46]

The Masculine Ideal

Gerald Mosse, in *The Image of Man* (1998) uses this technique of historicization to present a genealogy of the creation of modern (European) masculine types and standards. Although Mosse does not heavily cite them specifically, his description of the ways in which the masculine body is constituted and how certain types of masculinity come to be viewed as the dominant standard mirrors the theories of Foucault and Connell. Rather than positing an analysis of hegemonic masculinity, he instead charts the creation of a masculine stereotype. Whereas hegemony can be embodied and transmitted by individuals at various levels of society, the stereotype fulfils a symbolic function. In the confusion and tumult of modernity, with its rapid and bewildering social, technological and economic changes, the masculine stereotype presents the male body as a totality. In other words, it takes disparate and abstract elements and combines them into a concrete, coherent whole. As culture and society entered, in the second half of the eighteenth century, an age centred upon the visual, the need for tangible symbols became ever more important. The fact that few, if any men were, or are, able to conform to or embody the stereotype, mattered less than the symbol itself.[47]. The stereotype is partially defined and strengthened by its opposition to the other: bodies that were unable to conform to the ideal masculine type. Society, then, began to view the

[45] Ibid
[46] Michel Foucault *The History of Sexuality: Volume I* trans. by R, Hurley (New York: Vintage ,1990) quoted in Richard Lynch 'Foucault's Theory of Power' in Taylor ed.pp.13-26 (p.21)
[47] Gerald Mosse *The Image of Man: The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) pp.3-5

ideal masculine type as coterminous with morality. Virtue, in the modern age, was externalised; it was quite literally embodied. This means of course that bodies which did not live up to the ideal type were said to be morally degraded[48] which, in nineteenth century Europe, led to the creation of laws designed to repress non-conforming masculinities.[49]

Judith Butler: Gender as a Regulatory Fiction

Judith Butler's writing on gender formation draws heavily upon Foucauldian theory, particularly the argument that biological sex is not the object cause of gender identity.[50] One of Butler's central theories, put forward in *Gender Trouble* (1990) is that gender is a "repeated set of bodily acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, a natural sort of being."[51] Butler contends that sex and gender, rather than being natural material entities, are "cultural constructions which contour and define the body."[52] Gender, then, is reproduced through performativity and gendered behaviour must be constantly repeated so as to maintain itself.

Masculinity On the Screen

The Hollywood Male

For this section I shall be limiting myself to an overview of depictions of masculinity in American and British cinema. This is, firstly, for reasons of scope. Secondly, cinematic depictions of Wales often fall

[48] Ibid p.6
[49] According to Mosse, the most prominent examples of counter-typical, and therefore repressed, masculinities from the late eighteenth to the mid twentieth century were Jews and homosexuals- ibid pp.57-57.
[50] Johanna Oksala 'Freedom and Bodies' in Taylor, ed. pp. 89-97 (pp.94-95)
[51] Judith Butler *Gender Trouble*: *Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (Oxford: Routledge, 1990) p.33
[52] Sarah Salih *Judith Butler* (Oxford: Routledge, 2002) p.49

under the umbrella of either British or American film production. Thirdly, Mulvey's influential essay focusses primarily upon Hollywood cinema produced in a specific period.

Central to Mulvey's analysis is the imbalance in gendered power which is transmitted through the construction of images. The spectatorial gaze, for Mulvey, is always masculine, whereas women, never able to possess the gaze, exist merely as images.[53] In other words, the gaze is always split between the "active/male and passive/female."[54] The controlling figure within the narrative, who is typically male[55], and around whom the film is structured, and with whom the spectator can identify, functions as a surrogate for the for the gaze of the spectator. The male protagonist, since he is in control of narrative events, "carries the active power of the erotic look" which provides the spectator with a "satisfying sense of omnipotence."[56] The male star represents a complete and powerful ego who can control events more effectively than the spectator/subject. Mulvey likens the spectator's relationship with the cinema screen to the infant (mis)recognising its own reflection in the mirror and imagining itself to be in full control of its motor skills.[57]

This phantasy means that the male figure, as an active agent, demands an existence in a three-dimensional space which corresponds to the spectator/subject's own imaginary bodily coherence. The screen protagonist is a "figure in the landscape" who, thanks to the "realist" camera movements and editing techniques of Hollywood cinema, which do their best to recreate the "so-called natural conditions of human perception", is permitted to "command the stage, a stage of spatial illusion in which he articulates the look and creates the action."[58] The male figure, as sole bearer of the "look" means that even female stars, depicted as in possession of some power and agency within the

[53] Mulvey 1975 in Caughie and Kuhn, eds. 1992 p.27
[54] Ibid
[55] A footnote in Mulvey's essay acknowledges the existence of female protagonists in cinema, but points to a discussion which concludes that the narrative strength of such protagonists is more apparent that real- p.34.
[56] Ibid p.28
[57] Ibid
[58] Ibid

narrative, have to be rendered ultimately unthreatening. The female figure, Mulvey argues, represents the threat of castration who can reawaken this Oedipal anxiety in the male spectator. The male figure, as bearer and controller of the gaze, has the option to counter or nullify this anxiety. He may, for instance, punish the female figure for provoking this anxiety in him or else construct her as a guilty object and act as her saviour. Either way, this devalues the woman to point where she ceases to be a threat.

Steve Cohan in *Masked Men* (1997) discusses screen masculinities from around the same period as those analysed in Mulvey's essay.[59] For Cohan, the 1950s represents a crisis point for masculinity. Post-war masculine identities represent a disjuncture between normative masculine standards and the lived realities of men. Cohan deploys Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity to explore the ways in which Hollywood cinema of the period attempts to "mask" the anxiety of men's inability to conform to normative masculine standards and present a stable, coherent identity while at the same time recognising that certain films made during this era "highlight the multiple masquerades that constituted masculinity in its representation."[60] Representations of white, middle-class masculinity during the period are typified by the wearing of a grey flannel suit, which becomes the uniform of middle-class executive and allows the masculine subject to wear the markers of social power upon his body.[61] The suit, ultimately represents little more than a mask: the male masquerade, the donning of masculine symbols, functions to obscure the failure of masculinity. However, the symbolic tearing away of the suit, the symbols of the masquerade, to reveal the body beneath, can serve to serve to reestablish the body's 'naturalness.' The unclothed body, which is intended to be gazed at on screen, a common feature of the Hollywood Bible epics of the 1950s, feature depictions of the sculpted male physique, coded as a form of primitive masculinity and embodied by quasi-

[59] Mulvey's essay focusses heavily on the films of Alfred Hitchcock from the 1950s and 60s; Cohan confines himself to the 1950s.
[60] Steve Cohan *Masked Men: Masculinity and the Movies in the 1950s* (Bloomington: Indiana Press, 1997) p.x
[61] Ibid pp.2-25

mythological protagonists which seeks to excavate a premodern masculinity which is unencumbered by the feminising effects of modern existence.[62] The sculpted body, however, has to be defined, developed and rigorously maintained. This situating of the body as an object to be gazed at mean that the body itself is transformed into just another mask.[63] Ultimately, the supposed natural male body is little different to the flannel suit: they both function as masks which seek to uphold the pretence of a stable and coherent masculine identity.

The rendering of the body as not just visible, but as spectacular has been covered extensively in film studies. *Spectacular Bodies* (1993) by Yvonne Tasker examines American action cinema of the 1980s and early 1990s. This period saw a proliferation of violent, "blockbuster" movies which feature heroes "in advanced stages of both muscular development and undress."[64] Action movies of the period frequently became multi-part franchises, each led by a 'star'. The construction the star persona, as Richard Dyer asserts, is complex and multifaceted. Star images coalesce around certain individuals in the first instance as phenomena of cinematic production and consumption[65]. These figures then encourage the viewer/consumer towards an interplay of identification, projection and imitation[66] who nonetheless, through their star status, embody a dichotomy: they must function as figures of identification, and as such must be constructed as ordinary, but also transcend that ordinariness to fulfil the star image.[67] This dichotomy is particularly apparent in the construction of "spectacular bodies" where the hero is typically defined through bodily performance rather than "articulate, verbal masculinity."[68] Articulacy is associated with middle class masculinity, which is the bearer of social and cultural power, in contrast with the physicality associated with working class individuals. The centring of the spectacular body of the protagonist who occupies a 'lower' social

[62] Ibid p.189
[63] Ibid p.185
[64] Yvonne Tasker *Spectacular Bodies: Gender, Genre and the Action Cinema* (London: Routledge,1993) p.91
[65] Richard Dyer *Stars* (1980) (London: BFI, 1998) p.10
[66] Ibid p.18
[67] Ibid p.43
[68] Tasker p.107

status exposes the dichotomy between lowly and transcendent.[69] The manner of bodily performance in these films is one often characterised by subjection and resistance which often takes the form of the violation of the boundaries of the body which Tasker asserts "derives from a Christian tradition to which martyrdom and sacrifice are central."[70] This serves to elevate the bearer of ordinary, proletarian masculinity to the status of the divine. Secondly, the hero's ability to resist the boundaries of his body from being permanently destroyed- the wounded hero is often witnessed in a process of cleansing and healing his own injuries-means that the hero's body, once again, can overcome fragmentation and remain coherent.

The Working-Class Body in Pre-War Hollywood

By the 1930s Hollywood had produced stars such as James Cagney and Humphrey Bogart who could embody the signifiers of working-class masculinity. Cagney was an "authentic city man" who could "realistically depict anger, violence, and meanness without any suggestion that he was a worthless villain."[71] The underworld criminality that Cagney projects in his films) is carefully constructed so that the use of violence is ultimately shown to be futile and destructive. The "sociological punch"[72] that these films nevertheless "permitted much vicarious pleasure" for audiences, who could "watch gangsters break the law, use violence, take risks…but were free themselves to leave the theatre safely."[73] Here we can find yet another form of phallic fantasy: Cagney's hoodlum figure refuses to submit to the 'castrating' expectations of society and as such for the majority of the respective films

[69] There are some exceptions to this. In the *Indiana Jones* series, Dr. Henry 'Indiana' Jones (Harrison Ford) holds the high-status job of professor of archaeology, yet the narrative of each film relies heavily on Jones' bodily rather than intellectual performance.
[70] Tasker p.39
[71] Peter Stead *Film and the Working Class: The Feature Film in British and American Society* (London: Routledge,1989) pp.51-52
[72] Stead pp.46-72
[73] Robert Warshow *The Immediate Experience* New York 1962, part 2, 'The gangster as tragic hero' quoted in Stead 1989 p.53

he is the possessor of the phallus. In the final reel, however, he is forced to relinquish the phallus as society metes out the ultimate sanction for transgressing its boundaries: death.

Humphrey Bogart similarly portrays a form of working-class masculinity which ensures that the characters he plays are believable as the "ordinary American workingman."[74] In *Black Legion* (Archie Mayo 1937), for instance, Bogart plays Frank Taylor, a Detroit worker whose ostensible frustration at being passed over for promotion in favour of a Polish colleague causes him to join the violent, white-supremacist, anti-immigrant Black Legion. Bogart's ability to successfully embody the dichotomy of ordinariness and star persona means that he can realistically depict "how a weak man can be drawn into a recognisably Fascist organisation."[75] As in Cagney's films, the violent masculine fantasy is ultimately framed as a social ill. In *Black Legion* Bogart as Taylor bears this social ill upon his body; he begins drinking to excess and loses his job. Bodily disintegration and eventual death once again serve to restore the equilibrium of the symbolic order.

Constructions of Working-Class Masculinity in British Film

Working class masculinity, in British cinema prior to the nation's entry into the Second World War, was, as Andrew Spicer argues, typically realised through performance as a "working-class, cheery buffoon, a comic Everyman."[76] Spicer's taxonomic study of masculine types in British cinema, *Typical Men,* finds that on the predominant heroic screen image which proliferated in 1920s and 1930s belonged to the "hegemonic form of the debonair gentleman."[77] Working-class performance was typically limited either to supporting roles or, where there was a space for a working class protagonist, this would frequently be in comedy films. Some of the most popular British working-class stars of the period, such as George Formby, Max Miller and Will Hay had performance

[74] Stead p.70
[75] Ibid p.68
[76] Andrew Spicer *Typical Men: The Representation of Masculinity in Popular British Cinema* (New York, I. B Tauris, 2001) p.7
[77] Ibid

backgrounds in the music hall variety tradition.[78] Their performances, therefore, were necessarily limited to comedy films which were constructed around their comedic personas. Spicer describes this type of masculine performance as belonging to the tradition of the Fool and the Rogue. These types can fulfil a subversive function as they "occupy a liminal space, licenced space on the margins of society for 'unacceptable' masculine traits."[79] This non-normative masculinity has the power to expose the arbitrariness of the social construction of normative masculinity through the undermining of hierarchical systems and hegemonic masculine performance codes. However, this subversion is always framed as a "harmless rebellion against virtue."[80] In this way, the working-class protagonists of pre-war British film differ from their American counterparts. The criminality of characters played by Cagney and Bogart can similarly place them in a liminal position outside of social norms. Their characters represent a genuine threat to the symbolic order and are depicted, albeit temporarily, as possessors of the phallus, the non-threatening nature of the Rogue of Fool means that they can never fully participate in the phallic fantasy and are subject to the symbolic castration of the symbolic order from the outset.

Britain's entry into the Second World War initiated profound ideological shifts across the whole of society. The long-term reorientating of capitalism towards the extended provision of welfare, healthcare and housing as part of what would become known as the post-war consensus pointed to a shared wartime experience that cut across social lines.[81] This changed social configuration had a profound impact on British film. The notion that WWII was the People's War, was felt to be important enough an ethos as to be transmitted through the medium of film. Shortly after the outbreak of war the government, via the Crown Film Unit, a department of the Ministry of

[78] Sarah Street *British National Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1997) p.121
[79] Spicer p.19
[80] George Orwell 'The Art of Donald McGill' in *Collected Essays* Secker and Warburg London 1961 p167-178 quoted in Spicer 2001 p.19
[81] Street p.50

Information set about assembling a team of filmmakers to create dramatized documentaries featuring 'real people' to depict the "wartime drama of the common people."[82]

It is worth noting that, in the pre-war period, working class subjects were often placed at the centre of documentary features, particularly those directed by John Grierson. For Grierson documentary filmmaking served an ideological function. Grierson's belief was that filmmaking, dictated by market forces and private enterprise, meant that "information-and access to it-is managed and regulated in the interests of the most powerful social groups."[83] Documentaries, in contrast, had the power to serve as "the ideal social-democratic means of mass communication, documentation and education, bridging the gap between the citizen and his community."[84] This means that documentary practices can "bind together the individual subjects of a nation through as system of mass communications, reproducing the nation as a rational communicative community."[85]

It is therefore logical that the wartime government chose the documentary form as a socially unifying strand of British filmmaking that could illuminate "the melodrama of everyday life."[86] 'Hybrid' documentaries such as *Target for Tonight* (Harry Watt, 1943) set aboard an RAF aircraft during a bombing raid and *Fires Were Started* (Humphrey Jennings, 1943) which depicted the lives of firefighters during the Blitz, featured fictionalised scenarios and a mixture of genuine serving personnel and actors. Constructing working class masculinities as heroic, as well as downplaying the social stratification that existed in Britain meant that these films promoted "an overall image of Britain as a diverse but united community of common interests."[87] The documentary-melodrama, as Sarah Street argues, also began to influence narrative cinema. *Millions Like Us* (Frank Launder, Sidney Gillat 1943) which is set in a wartime aircraft factory and *This Happy Breed* (David Lean 1944)

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[82] Stead p.122
[83] Andrew Higson *Waving the Flag: Constructing a National Cinema in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,1995) p.182
[84] Ibid p.183
[85] Ibid p.184
[86] Ibid p.262
[87] Street p.50

which depicts a suburban family during the inter-war years, focus on "varied groups of characters- often representing different classes, generations and regions- rather than on individuals" which invites the spectator to "identify as part of a collective national community."[88] Films of the time which fit less easily into the documentary-melodrama aesthetic and more neatly into the 'war film' genre, such as *In Which We Serve* (Noel Coward, David Lean 1942) and *The Way Ahead* (Carol Reed 1944), still represent a 'flattening out' of social hierarchies which allows "the heroic common man" to come to the fore.[89]

[88] Ibid p.55
[89] Spicer p.13

Chapter One: Screen Depictions of Masculinity in Industrial Wales

Introduction

The Welsh cultural theorist and novelist Raymond Williams, whose papers are lodged at Swansea University, confined the description of "working class" to those whose livelihood is derived from their bodily labour.[1] It could be argued that a number of films of the 1950s and 60s feature working-class leads who do not do physical work- particularly films like *Look Back in Anger* (Tony Richardson, 1959) or *Live Now, Pay Later* (Jay Lewis, 1962) which have their origins in the Angry Young Man movement.[2] However, Williams, a life-long socialist and later Welsh Nationalist, does present a definition which resounds with a more general filmic glorification of men's physicality, especially in Wales where heavy industry- coal mining, slate quarrying, steel and copper smelting- were the foundations of the national economy.

Andrew Spicer asserts that the "heroic common man" character does not take a central role in British cinema until the outbreak of war.[3] From the texts he analyses, we can infer that Spicer confines his definition of cinema to feature length fiction.[4] Other academics such as Sarah Street[5], James Chapman[6] and Charles Barr[7] tend to include drama-documentaries from the pre-war and

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[1] Raymond Williams *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Harper Collins, 1983) p.65
[2] Christine Geraghty 'Albert Finney- a Working-Class Hero' in *Me Jane: Masculinity, Movies and Women* ed. by Pat Kirkham and Janet Thumim (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1995) pp.62-72
[3] Andrew Spicer *Typical Men: The Representation of Masculinity in Popular British Cinema* (London: I.B Tauris, 2001) pp.7-27
[4] Ibid pp.1-5
[5] Sarah Street *British National Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1997)
[6] James Chapman 'Cinema, Propaganda and National Identity: British film and the Second World War' in *British Cinema Past and Present* ed. by June Ashby and Andrew Higson (London: Routledge, 2002) pp.192-206
[7] Charles Barr 'Introduction: Amnesia and Schizophrenia' in *All Our Yesterdays: 90 Years of British Cinema* ed. by Charles Barr (London: British Film Institute, 1986) pp.1-30

wartime period. And for historian Peter Stead, "it was in the 1930s that Wales really made its film debut."[8] Ideologically driven documentary makers such as Humphrey Jennings and Paul Rotha, opposed to the "free market" influence of Hollywood, were among the "intellectuals and creative artists [who] began to appreciate the values of the proletariat [which]… became to many the classical expression of a long suffering and democratic working-class community."[9]

The drama-documentaries *Today We Live* (Ralph Bond, Judy Grierson, 1937) and *Eastern Valley* (Paul Rotha, Donald Alexander, 1937) depict the struggles of unemployed miners and their attempts to overcome enforced idleness. Both, as Berry describes use "fairly standard cinematic devices"[10] such as a straightforward, linear narrative and the foregrounding a of single protagonist. In *Today We Live,* the hardship of the workless miners is illustrated by images which would end up becoming synonymous with depictions of industrial Wales: the towering pithead gear and shots of unemployed men searching for coal on the slag heaps. These "slag-heap shots became an icon of proletarian hardship"[11]. In this chapter, I survey several films set in Welsh industrial communities and attempt to constellate the ways in which they present masculine identity. The films I analyse are the products of both Britain and the United States and span a period of five decades, the earliest being *Y Chwarelwr/The Quarrymen* (Ifan ab Owen Edwards, 1935) and the most recent being *Grand Slam* (John Hefin, 1978) which was released the year before the Thatcher government was elected to office. I will confine my analysis to the most prominent examples; other film texts which exhibit similar themes within a broader narrative focus, will be mentioned in footnotes.

The Labouring Body

[8] Peter Stead 'Wales in the Movies' in *Wales: The Imagined Nation- Essays in Cultural and National Identity* ed. by Tony Curtis (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press, 1986) pp.161-179 (p.165)
[9] Ibid
[10] Dave Berry *Wales and Cinema: The First Hundred Years* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1994) p.131
[11] Stead in Curtis, ed. p.167

The Struggle Against Bodily Inertia and Idleness

The presentation and utilisation of the (gendered, masculine) body is central to constructions of masculine identity in social, ideological and psychoanalytical terms. In this section I shall attempt to analyse the ways in which the labouring body is depicted in film texts depicting industrial Wales.

The documentary *Today We Live* foregrounds out of work pitman, John Adlam. He is depicted as both part of his community, Bond and his cameraman Donald Alexander introduce him in a sequence which shows him leaving his home and walking through the village on his way to the local coffee shop, and yet at the same time, via Bond's *mis-en-scene*, he is set apart from the community. Carefully composed shots set him in relief from the milieux are techniques often used by narrative cinema to introduce a protagonist: Adlam is constructed as the narrative's "hero". At the same time, a voiceover tells us that many of the men in the village, due to the long-term nature of their worklessness, are beginning to lose the manual skills they once possessed. The loss of the performative ability of the body threatens to place these subjects outside of normative masculine standards due to bodily degradation. Adlam endeavours to apply for a grant from the National Council to build an occupational centre. Hardship is depicted as a struggle against bodily inertia; proletarian suffering is characterised by stoicism and resourcefulness.

How Green Was My Valley (John Ford, 1941) is arguably one of the most high-profile screen depictions of life in the Welsh coalfields. The film was highly financially and critically successful and in a testament to the palatability of the story to American audiences, it was the recipient of five Academy Awards including Best Picture and Best Director for John Ford.[12] Despite the film being criticised for offering an unrealistic and highly romanticised view of Welsh industrial society, offering what Stead describes as a "mythical Shangri-La"[13] and being accused by Mark Woods of being, in

[12] Berry p.165
[13] Stead in Curtis, ed. p.172

actuality, "an Irish story in a Welsh motif,"[14] which is seemingly confirmed by director Ford's purported indifference to the distinctions between the Celtic nations,[15] the film does foreground thematic concerns which can be found across several Welsh industrial texts.

Set during the late Victorian era, the film recreates its South Wales mining village on a California backlot.[16] It unfolds from the perspective of the adolescent Huw Morgan (Roddy McDowall) who witnesses his elder siblings leaving the valley primarily due to the threat of worklessness and poverty. During the adaptation of Richard Llewlyn's original novel, Ford was keen on what can be termed the "*n*-minus-one plot" which is a feature across Ford's which sees the gradual diminution of the core group of characters.[17] In *How Green Was My Valley,* this is represented by the erosion of the central Morgan family.

Masculinity, for the older characters in *How Green Was My Valley,* is associated with the ability to earn and spend money, "just as men spend their strength and brains earning it" Huw's voiceover narration tells us. The men of the Morgan family, except for young Huw, are the bearers of both physical and intellectual skill represented through spending power. Early in the film, the mine owner decreases the men's wages. The miners, including the Morgan boys, decide to strike in retaliation. putting them in direct conflict with family patriarch, Gwilym (Donald Crisp) who prefers mediation. There is bitter recrimination between Gwilym and four of his eldest sons, Ianto (John Loder), Davy (Richard Fraser), Gwilym Jr. (Evan S. Evans) and Owen (James Monks) and the four boys storm out of the house. The strike goes ahead and Gwilym is temporarily ostracised by the men of the village. Ford's treatment of industrial politics has been criticised for its superficiality, with Stead stating that the film's depiction of unemployment is "only there for pictorial effect for the movie was not

[14] Mark L. Woods *An Evaluation of the National Cinema of Wales and Whether this Cinema Constructs or Represents a National Identity* Doctoral Thesis, University of Glamorgan, 2007 p.94
[15] According to David Berry, when presented with the criticism that the film was an 'Irish' story transposed to the Valleys, Ford responded, "It's [Wales] a Celtic country, isn't it? [...]they're all Micks, aren't they?"-quoted in Berry, 1994, p.161
[16] Ibid p.165
[17] Lea Jacobs 'Making John Ford's How Green Was My Valley' *Film History*, Vol. 28, No. 2, Film History and the Individual Film (2016), pp. 32-80.

interested in economic factors."[18] The deliberate withdrawal of labour, and its attendant connotations of collectivisation and socialism is presented, ultimately, as having a deleterious effect on the masculine identities of the Morgan boys. Despite the strike eventually being resolved, there are now not enough jobs for all of the men, including two of the Morgan boys, Owen and Gwilym Jr. They decide that rather than "standing in line…to have bread from the government", they will seek their fortune in the United States. The Morgan boys, in their desperation to conform to normative masculine standards of self-reliance and breadwinning, are prepared to break up their family.[19]

Heroism and the Male Body in Danger

Several texts which depict masculinity in industrial Wales depict the labouring body as not in danger from idleness but overwork. Julia Kristeva asserts that that the maintenance of bodily boundaries is essential to a coherent identity. The splitting or disintegration of these boundaries, in the case of the labouring body through severe injury or death, threatens to collapse the body's (masculine) identity.[20] The drama-documentary *Y Chwarelwr,* described as the first Welsh language "talkie"[21] depicts the life of slate quarrymen in Blaenau Ffestiniog. We are shown scenes of bodily strength and performance as the men mine for slate. The film centres upon a young man, Wil, and his ailing father, Tomos, whose physical struggles are apparent as we witness him stumble and clutch his chest. Nevertheless, he pushes his aging, ailing body into the dangerous physical labour demanded of the slate worker. Edwards presents us with images of Tomos using ropes to scale the face of the quarry to place an explosive charge. Here, then, the masculine body is at constant risk of collapse and disintegration. In a later scene, Tomos attends a service at his local chapel where his daughter,

[18] Peter Stead *Film and the Working Class: The Feature Film in British and American Society* (London: Routledge,1989) p.96
[19]Other films which contain, at certain points, the threat of unemployment include *The Proud Valley* (Pen Tennyson, 1940) and *Blue Scar* (Jill Craigie, 1949)
[20] Julia Kristeva *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Trans. by Leon S. Roudiez. (New York: Columbia UP, 1982) p.3
[21] Berry p.144

Nesta, is giving a Bible reading to the congregation. During the service, Tomos's body finally fails, and he dies. In Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection, the abject is the debased other which we attempt to expel from the body. The return of that which we attempt to expel is a source of horror for the subject. As Kristeva explains, one of the chief representations of the abject is the materiality of death. Aging, with its concomitant bodily breakdown and decay, forcibly insists upon reminding the subject that "this is what life withstands, hardly and with difficulty on the path to death."[22] However, the filmmakers' decision for Tomos's death to take place in the chapel not only implicitly links him with a potent symbol of Welsh culture, but also gives his death a religious significance.

Similarly, at the climax of *How Green Was My Valley,* a mining disaster claims the life of Gwilym Morgan. An explosion causes the mine shaft to partially collapse, trapping several of the men. Huw, along with several others from the village, descend underground to rescue the miners. Huw finds Gwilym trapped under the rockfall. They embrace one another before Gwilym dies from his injuries. *The Proud Valley* (Pen Tennyson, 1940) also features an underground disaster which kills several miners, including the patriarchal choir master Dick Parry (Edward Chapman). As with *Y Chwarelwr,* the deaths in *How Green Was My Valley* and *The Proud Valley* are imbued with religious significance. In *How Green Was My Valley,* during the attempted rescue of Gwilym, we see that that the Morgan family matriarch Beth (Sara Allgood), Huw's sister Angharad (Maureen O'Hara) and Huw's sister-in-law, Bronwen (Anna Lee) have been holding an all-night vigil outside the colliery.[23] Beth states, before she is told of Gwilym's death, that "He [Gwilym] came to me just now. […] He spoke to me and told me of the glory he had seen." Suffering and sacrifice, therefore, is explicitly linked with spirituality and saintliness. The film ends with an image of Huw cradling his father's lifeless body. The narration of older Huw tells us that "Men like my father cannot die. They are with me still…loving and beloved forever." This indicates that heroic masculinity and the patriarchal values that it

[22] Kristeva op cit.

[23] The mise-en-scene here is profoundly religious. The three women, their hair covered by shawls, are evocative of *The Three Marys* who are mentioned in certain of the Biblical gospels as witnesses to the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ.

represents transcend the life of any one individual; here, then, Huw's dialogue serves to construct the heroism and sacrifice of the miners in mythopoetic terms. Glyn Tegai Hughes explains that "the myth enables men (sic) to identify. We are able to ally ourselves with something far greater than ourselves, with some eternal state of being, with powers moving in or above history."[24]

The Proud Valley presents the labouring body in similarly mythological terms. Some of the common themes that Tegai Hughes identifies in the novels of Jack Jones, Rhys Davies, and Gwyn Jones, "singing, violence, generosity […] the terrors and the comradeship of the pit, the physical scars of the valleys and later the scars on the lives of the idle thousands"[25] can be found in *The Proud Valley*. After the death of Dick Parry, newly arrived itinerant worker David Goliath (played by African American star Paul Robeson), whose own character name is overtly suggestive of Biblical themes, leads the male voice choir in singing the African American spiritual song, *Deep River*. Immediately preceding this, David gives a brief eulogy, stating that Parry was, "a man, every inch of him." The implicit association between masculinity and religion/ spirituality once again elevated to the level of mythology.[26]

Masculinity and Welsh Industrial Communities

In this section I shall attempt to demonstrate that screen depictions of 'industrial' masculinities in Wales depend for a sense of wholeness and coherence upon the stability and continuity provided by the communities which the characters inhabit. Raymond Williams in *The Country and the City* uses the term 'knowable communities' which "show people and their relationships in essentially

[24] Glyn Tegai Hughes 'The Mythology of the Mining Valleys' in Sam Adams and Gwilym Rees Hughes, eds. *Triskel Two: Essays on Welsh and Anglo-Welsh Literature*, ed. by Sam Adams and Gwilym Rees Hughes (Llandybie: Christopher Davies Publishers, Ltd.1973) pp.42-61 (p.43)
[25] Ibid p.59
[26] *Blue Scar* and *Zulu* (Cy Endfield, 1964) also feature threats of injury and violence to the masculine, labouring body. However, while *Zulu* in particular foregrounds heroic displays of masculinity, neither film presents masculinity in overtly religious terms.

knowable and communicable ways"[27] and is "one that in addition to being visible in all its stratification and variation, is likewise consciously known and understood as such by its fictional inhabitants."[28] The sociologist Pierre Bourdieu uses the term habitus to explain the social organisation of communities and the ways in which the individual subject is inducted into their social world through "schemata or structures of perception, conception and action."[29] In other words, as Phil Cohen states, the habitus consists of "a set of customary rules, rituals and invented traditions" which informs the ways in which subjects behave in, and react to, the social world which they inhabit. In Cohen's analysis, this has the effect of binding subjects together in a process akin to Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, resulting in the formation of "imagined communities of labour."[30] These themes are expressed in the film texts that I have analysed in several ways.

Fathers and Sons

Cohen goes on to state that initiation into industrial, labouring communities is, or was, often based upon fathers initiating sons into the same occupational habitus which represents "an almost exclusive masculinism" and means that "growing up is essentially an apprenticeship into a fixed inheritance"[31] Indeed, the theme of the enculturation of the son into the masculine community/habitus through the son's 'inheritance' of his father's occupation appears across multiple films. *Y Chwarelwr, The Proud Valley, How Green Was My Valley,* and *Blue Scar* (Jill Craigie, 1949) all feature young protagonists who either follow the father into his profession or finds them already working side by side, the son having been initiated into the habitus. Each of these films feature scenes which depict the death of the father either due to an accident stemming from the

[27] Raymond Williams *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973) pp.165-166
[28] Ibid
[29]Pierre Bourdieu 'Habitus' in *Habitus: A Sense of Place* Second Edition ed. by Jean Hiller and Emma Rooksby (London: Routledge, 2016) pp.43-53 (p.43)
[30] Phil Cohen 'Labouring Under Whiteness' in *Displacing Whiteness: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism*, ed. by Ruth Frankenberg (London: Duke University Press, 1997) pp.244-282 (pp.246-247)
[31] Ibid pp.247-248

dangerous nature of his work, or due to the toll hard physical labour has taken on his body. In each instance, however, the stability and continuity of the labouring community/habitus is reasserted through the son whose earning capabilities are predicated upon tough, skilled physical labour.

Furthermore, as Cohen points out, labouring communities have been characterised by (white) racial homogeneity and endogamy. The consanguinity that results from this "provides a template for what we might call the protoracialization of labour power."[32] In films such as *The Proud Valley,* closed, racially homogenous communities place heavy restrictions upon non-white masculine identities.[33] Similarly in *Zulu* (Cy Endfield, 1964) which finds a deracinated Welsh "community" in the South African veldt, the boundaries of the community, and therefore of (white) masculinity must be reinforced.

The Maintenance of Industrial Communities and the Fear of 'Encroachment'

The films *How Green Was My Valley* and *The Last Days of Dolwyn* (Emlyn Williams, 1949) arguably foreground the anxieties surrounding social fragmentation the most strongly of the texts which I have analysed.[34] *How Green Was My Valley* opens with Huw as an older man in his cottage. His voiceover narration narrates that "I am packing my belongings in the shawl my mother used to wear when she went to the market, and I am going from my valley. And this time I shall never return." Ford's camera tracks forward and through the window of the cottage to the village beyond. The village is blackened by coal dust, the chimneys of the mine workings belch smoke into the valley and vast slag heaps threaten to engulf the dwellings below. Huw's narration laments the fact that many of the men and women he knew are now dead, including his own family, and that the village has

[32] Ibid
[33] Richard Dyer notes that Robeson's David "is never seen to pose any threat. He is stoic in the face of racist taunts and, for example, has no sexual relationship of any kind."- Dyer quoted in Berry p.169
[34] As outlined earlier in this chapter, in Jacobs (2016), director John Ford's major contribution to the final screenplay was to focus heavily upon the dispersal and decline of the Morgan family and by extension, their community.

become overwhelmed with the grime and detritus of heavy industry. Yet, as Huw insists, "there is no fence nor hedge around time that has gone. You can go back and have what you like of it, if you can remember. So, I can close my eyes on my valley as it is today and it is gone, and I see it as it was when I was a boy. Green it was and possessed of the plenty of the earth." The film flashes back to the village as it was, years before. The cottages are now gleaming and pristine. The figures of young Huw and his father Gwilym are framed against the lush green mountains and valleys which had not yet been disfigured by the relentless extraction of coal.

The Last Days of Dolwyn also features the threat of community destruction and the efforts to maintain its boundaries. Here, the village of Dolwyn is to be flooded to provide water to Liverpool. The film opens with a structural echo of *How Green Was My Valley*: the present day in, which the community has met an ignominious end, quickly gives way to a flashback to the village as it was in 1892, and we find ourselves in "a remarkably changed milieu and a homogenous community of people at ease with each other and with nature."[35] Both films, then, initially present an image of wholeness and stability. Huw Morgan's opening description of the landscape of his childhood as verdant and plentiful points to a narcissistic, pre-Oedipal fantasy of abundance and indivisibility. The narrative is, of course, constructed around Huw's subjectivity which places him in a position of omnipotence and the dispersal of the Morgan family throughout the film can be viewed as analogous to the resolution of the Oedipus complex: the transition from a sense of wholeness to fragmentation.[36]

Similarly, in *The Last Days of Dolwyn* the community is threatened by encroachment from the outside. We learn that Rob (Emlyn Williams) a recent arrival in the village from Liverpool, is an agent of Lord Lancashire (Allan Aynesworth) who has been sent to persuade the debt-ridden Lady Dolwyn

[35] Chris Hopkins '*Hiraeth* and Ambiguous Pastorals: Wales, England and Rural Modernities between the Wars' in *Rural Modernity in Britain: A Critical Intervention* ed. by Kristen Bluemel and Michael McClusky (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018) pp.103-118 (p.103)
[36] Pamela Thurschwell *Sigmund Freud* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2000) p.1

(Barbara Couper) to sell the land on which the village sits. Rob, then, embodies an existential threat to Dolwyn; the destruction of the fantasy of wholeness, the danger of which haunts this film just as much as Ford's before it.

'Authentic' Masculinities and Pastoral Communities

The depictions of Welsh industrial communities as largely closed, homogenous and often mythological spaces construct them, in several of the films I have surveyed, as forms of prelapsarian idyll. This, I would argue, locates them within pastoral conventions. The pastoral mode, as Paul Alpers states, is a term whose definition is rather broad and there is disagreement between scholars about which works count as pastoral.[37]Yet there are certain common elements which can be found in texts which are classified as pastoral. As a mode of artistic expression that stretches back into antiquity[38] with its longevity meaning that it has been subject to historical influences as it traverses poetry, the novel, music, art, cinema, etc. A feature of the early pastorals, one which can be detected in films such as *How Green Was My Valley* and *The Last Days of Dolwyn,* is the construction of a mythological golden age in a rural setting. As Huw tells us in the opening scenes of *How Green Was My Valley*, the nascent mining industry has only just begun "to poke its skinny black fingers through the green"; the village remains for the most part rural. Friedrich Schiller describes the pastoral idyll as firstly, "a conflict between the past and future…by presenting a state of innocence in the past, the idyll…leads us backwards and only imbues us with a sad feeling of loss."[39] This sense of loss, Peter Marinelli tells us, can occasion a "retreat into childhood"[40] or else the celebration of "the golden pastures of Arcadia"[41] elements of which are apparent in both films. A specifically Welsh

[37] Paul Alpers *What Is Pastoral?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press,1996) p.8
[38] Ibid pp.31,51
[39] Friedrich Schiller 'On Naïve and Sentimental Poetry' in H.B Nisbet, ed. *German Aesthetic and Literary Criticism: Winckelmann, Lessing, Hamann, Herder, Schiller, Goethe* Cambridge University Press Cambridge 1985 p.211 quoted in Alpers p.33
[40] Peter V. Marinelli (1971) *Pastoral* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018) p.76
[41] Ibid p,77

dimension can be observed here: the concept of hiraeth. The term can be defined as "'grief or sadness after the lost or departed, longing, yearning, nostalgia, wistfulness, homesickness, earnest desire *for what might have been*" and is "an abidingly pastoral aspect of Welsh culture."[42]

A common feature of traditional pastoral works is the figure of the shepherd. The shepherd, as Marinelli describes, "remains first and foremost an emblem of humanity, a general rather than specific type."[43] In the modern pastoral, the figure may no longer be an actual shepherd, but rather a figure who fulfils the same function. In *How Green Was My Valley* this figure is represented by Mr. Gruffydd (Walter Pidgeon), a central figure in the film's narrative, and the pastor of the village chapel. The "happy coincidence of meanings in the word *pastor*, shepherd and priest"[44] imbues the pastoral mode with a spiritual dimension. Mr. Gruffydd, as pastor/shepherd can guide his 'flock' on matters both faith based and material. Indeed, at climax of the film, Gruffydd angrily criticises his congregation for indulging idle gossip which he describes as "poverty of the mind". Gruffydd laments that few of the congregation have managed to achieve the upright, compassionate, muscular Christianity that he espouses. Gruffydd, then, stands as an agent of an authentic masculine culture in defiance of the spiritually bereft, chattering masses.

The clergy and the chapel are also central to *The Last Days of Dolwyn'*s narrative; worship and piety remain an essential element of the harmonious community. Early into the film we see Rob climb into the graveyard and peer through the window of the chapel, carelessly placing his foot on the grave of a child inscribed in Welsh. This sequence, of course, situates Rob as the narrative's antagonist who shows callous disregard for not only Dolwyn, but the history and culture of Wales. This ultimately places him in conflict with village scion Gareth (Richard Burton), himself having recently returned from an extended period in Liverpool. Gareth confesses to his adoptive mother, Merri (Edith Evans) that he ran away from Liverpool after he grew to despise the overcrowding, artifice and intimidating

[42] Hopkins p.103 (Author's italics)
[43] Marinelli p.6
[44] Ibid p.10

new technology. Gareth's adumbration of the sharp distinction between the impersonal nature of the city and the harmonious "authentic" culture of rural Wales constructs him as the "pastoral man", who has chosen to abandon the complexities of city life and become the shepherd figure "the simplicity of whose life is the goal towards which all existence strives."[45] We witness Gareth at ease in his community. He helps to deliver a calf in the morning, serves in the local shop in the afternoon before reading to Merri from their Bible. Later we witness him gambol through the hills outside Dolwyn as he shyly attempts to win the affections of Margaret (Andrea Lea), Lady Dolwyn's ward. Rob, on the other hand, as a member of the inauthentic urban mass, despises the village and wishes to submerge it forever.[46]

Men as Possessors and Transmitters of Welsh Culture

Notions of authentic masculine identities, in the films which I have surveyed so far, tend to be intimately linked to authentic Welsh culture. In these films, then, it is typically the male characters who are the possessors and arbiters of cultural authenticity.

The sociologist Michael Hechter in *Internal Colonialism* (1975) formulated the model of peripheral regions and cultures. Hechter's book examines the relationship between the so-called "Celtic fringe" nations and the cultural and economic dominance of England. Hechter postulates two distinct cultural groups which exist in industrial societies: The core group, the "dominant cultural group which occupies territory extending from the political centre of society […] outward to those territories largely occupied by the subordinate".[47] The subordinate here can be taken as the second group, the peripheral cultural group. Both groups are "to a large extent regionally concentrated."[48]

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[45] Marinelli p.5

[46] Other films which feature the clergy, and the chapel as a central facet of Welsh life include *Y Chwarelwr, Valley of Song* (Gilbert Gunn, 1953) in which the initially "happy, harmonious community [...] is soon a comic battleground" over the role of contralto in the village choir, which is eventually resolved with the help of the minister (Mervyn Johns)- Berry p.234

[47] Michael Hechter *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development* (1975) (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1999) p.18

[48] Ibid

In films such as *Y Chwarelwr, The Proud Valley, How Green Was My Valley, Blue Scar,* and *A Run For Your Money* (Charles Frend 1949) we witness the ways in which the peripheral and core cultures interact with one another, with the peripheral culture typically designated as authentic and the exclusive domain of the male characters.

In *Y Chwarelwr* we see the quarrymen taking their lunch in a cabin (Caban) on the quarry site. The men stage a mock eisteddfod as Wil, accompanied by an accordion, performs a folk song, the words of which he reads from a book. The culture of the Caban is something which is unique to the slate regions of north Wales. The Caban "became a place of learning, debate, poetry and song – a place where working men came together to share their culture."[49] Here, Wil is not only constructed as the bearer of manual skill but also as cultured and literate. As Gwenno Ffrancon states, the quarryman is depicted as "Y Chwarelwr ceidwad y diwylliant Cymraeg/ conserver of Welsh culture."[50] In both *How Green Was My Valley* and *The Proud Valley* the male characters initially transmit their cultural authenticity through their participation in male voice choirs. In these two films, alongside *A Run For Your Money* and *Blue Scar,* we witness interactions between members of the peripheral (Welsh) culture and those of the core or hegemonic culture.

In *The Proud Valley* the miners march from the periphery to the core (London) to attempt to ensure the survival of their community by pleading with representatives of the core culture. *A Run For Your Money* ostensibly treats both the labouring body and the peripheral culture of which it is part with less reverence than other texts that I have analysed. The film concerns two South Wales miners, David "Dai Number 9" Jones (Donald Houston) and Thomas "Twm" Jones (Meredith Edwards) travelling to London after winning a competition organised by The London Echo newspaper. Their

[49] https://nation.cymru/culture/caban-culture-of-welsh-quarrymen-like-tribes-across-the-world-says-documentary-filmmaker/

[50] Gwenno Ffrancon *Cyfaredd Y Cysgodion Delweddu Cymru a'i phobol ar Ffilm 1935-1951* University of Wales Press Cardiff 2003 p.20 quoted in Elizabeth Dilys Jones *Changing Narratives of Minority Peoples' Identities in Welsh and Basque Film* Doctoral Thesis, University of Wales: Trinity Saint David, 2013 p.50 (Author's translation).

prize includes £100 and tickets to an important Rugby Union match between Wales and England as a reward for "Filling more coal in a month than any other pair of pit butties in any field anywhere." This enables the two men to make their "pilgrimage" to London. The film opens underground. A tracking shot shows us the labouring bodies of the mine workers as they load coal onto a conveyer. Twm and Dai are summoned to the surface as the boss wishes to "tell 'em a thing or two." This leads the miners to speculate that Twm and Dai may be about to lose their jobs. This sequence deploys by now familiar visual and narrative conventions found in several of the other texts which I have examined: the male body toiling underground and the potential threat of joblessness and destitution. This is immediately undercut in the following scene above ground as the pit manager Mr. Davies (Peter Edwards) informs the two men of their competition win, thrusting a glass of whisky into each of their hands as a means of celebration. Not only does this illustrate a "supposed rapport between the management and the men"[51], immediately extinguishing any political dimension in the film, but also alerts us to the fact that *A Run For Your Money* is, as Stead puts it "pure music hall."[52] Davies launches into a long soliloquy, dreaming of the fame that Twm and Dai's triumph will bring to their village of Hafoduwchbenceubwllymarchogcoch. The name of the village is a clear parody of Welsh words and place names which appear unpronounceable to those unfamiliar with the Welsh language. Additionally, the nickname "Dai Number 9" is a reference to the apparent recurrence of boys' names in Welsh pit communities.

This joke is repeated a few scenes later when Twm and Dai arrive in London on the South Wales to Paddington train. Unaware that they are to be met by The Echo's gardening correspondent, Whimple (Alec Guinness), the two men leave the station. Whimple, trying to locate his two Welsh charges, orders an announcement over the station's P.A system requesting that David and Thomas Jones of South Wales come to the station master's office. This leads to a highly amusing piece of visual comedy in which nearly every man who has disembarked from the South Wales train

[51] Berry p.217
[52] Stead in Curtis, ed. p.175

converges on the station master's office. The repeated mockery of Welsh naming conventions coincides with the parodic depiction of other Wales-specific traditions. Whimple is told to identify Twm and Dai by the leeks that they will be wearing, only to quickly realise that everybody from the South Wales train is wearing leeks in support of the Welsh rugby team. These two visual gags situate Wales not as part of a wider national community which was postulated at the climax of *The Proud Valley,* but as a peripheral culture which appears quaint or even foolish when uprooted from its natural environment and placed in the metropolitan core.

Hechter contends that the core, "the expanding metropolitan state" must necessarily "disparage the indigenous culture of peripheral groups."[53] The film's early mockery of Welsh language and culture, coupled with Twm and Dai's 'primitive' unworldliness, would seem to confirm the film's ideological standpoint. However, the relationship between the dominant (superior) and subordinate (derided) cultures is quickly problematised. Twm and Dai visit a café where they are approached by con artist Jo (Moria Lister) after she overhears them discussing their prize money. Jo feigns romantic interest in Dai and suggests that she accompany him to the newspaper offices to collect the winnings which she intends to steal. Meanwhile, Twm has a chance meeting with Huw Price (Hugh Griffith). A fellow member of the peripheral Welsh culture who has made his own pilgrimage to the core, Huw is a gifted harpist and singer who had once been awarded the grand prize at the eisteddfod. Huw's time in the hegemonic centre of culture, however, has left him a penniless drunk who has been forced to pawn his beloved harp. Huw, as the musical/poetic Welsh man, is the former possessor and transmitter of high peripheral culture. The necessity for the core culture to demonstrate its superiority over that of the periphery has rendered his cultural gifts valueless. The symbol of his talents, the harp, has been surrendered to English avarice. This loss of the sense of self can, in turn, threaten the boundaries of the body and risks the fragmentation of masculine identity. Huw and Twm rescue the harp and therefore reclaim a symbol of their identity. They dash across London,

[53] Ibid p.64

harp in tow, to watch the rugby match at Twickenham. They arrive just as the match finishes and the Wales rugby team run out victorious. Once again, this can be read as the peripheral culture triumphing over the hegemonic core culture through the superior physical ability of the Welsh players.

Meanwhile, Dai finally recognises Jo's ill intentions but not before she manages to steal the money and make off on foot. Escaping into a theatre, she stumbles across Twm and Huw's performance of *Ar Hyd Y Nos.* So moved is Jo by the poetic, soulful Welshmen that she immediately experiences "moral regeneration" and returns the money to Dai.[54] The film ends with the three men returning to the 'periphery', Dai and Twm as heroes whilst Huw "can be liberated again back in a nation which can properly appreciate not merely his talent […] but his peccadilloes and, above all, his taste for life."[55] *A Run For Your Money,* despite its parodic treatment of Welsh language and culture, as well as depicting the people of Wales as simple and prone to credulity, privileges this authentic, masculine culture over the superficial and feminising culture of the metropolis. [56]

Backward Welsh Communities and the Performance of 'Primitive' Masculinities

While many of the films that I have surveyed so far have presented Welsh masculinity in heroic or even mythical terms, certain films from this period present Wales as an underdeveloped and educationally backward region which must be redeemed by representatives of the core, hegemonic culture.

[54] Berry p.217
[55] Ibid
[56] *Blue Scar* also deals with the movement from a peripheral culture to the core, although this film's treatment of these issues differs from *A Run For Your Money*. Miner Tom (Emrys James) may represent a *dominant* form of masculinity, which wields power at a local level, the colliery's industrial psychologist, Alfred Collins (Anthony Pendrell) an Englishman of the professional 'collar and tie' class, represents *hegemonic* masculinity. Alfred, in his status as a middle-class professional whose labour relies upon his mental acuity, has access to capital, both cultural and financial, something which is not permitted to Tom.

The Corn Is Green (Irving Rapper, 1945) based upon Emlyn Williams' 1938 semi-autobiographical play treats its Welsh industrial community as a primitive backwater. The film is a product of Hollywood and is a vehicle for its star, Bette Davis, who plays L.C Moffat, a teacher who comes to the mining village of Glansarno with a determination to set up a school for the boys of the village who would otherwise be condemned to labour in the coal mine from the age of twelve. Despite the film, and the play, being largely written in English, the villagers, are meant to be Welsh speakers. Welsh language words and phrases are scattered throughout the film.[57] Even before Moffatt's arrival in the film we are alerted to rural/industrial Wales's status as a society of illiterate peasantry. The postmistress Sarah Pugh (Gwyneth Hughes) complains that her post office "has not had a letter in seven weeks. Nobody but me can write, and it's no good me writing because nobody but me can read." A member of the local gentry, Mrs Ronberry (Mildred Dunnock) concurs, claiming that "people in this part of the country are practically barbarians." It is clear from the outset, therefore, that Moffatt has arrived in Wales on a civilising mission, drawn to the muscular savagery of the miners[58]

Once again, the labouring body is presented differently to many of the other films I have surveyed so far. Labouring in the mines is, in Moffatt's view, something from which the boys and young men of the village need to be emancipated through education. When we are introduced to the miners, they are framed in long shot, coal-blackened and partially shrouded in mist. This distancing technique,

[57] Hopkins in Bluemel and McClusky, eds. p.114

[58] Another Hollywood production which treats Wales as an uncultivated society in need of redemption is *The Citadel* (King Vidor, 1938) based upon A.J Cronin's eponymous novel, is one of the earliest cinematic treatments of hardship and suffering in the South Wales coalfields and offers "a fuller view of South Wales than any previous feature film" -(Stead in Curtis, p.199). The film's protagonist, the idealistic Scottish doctor, Andrew Manson (Robert Donat) arrives in the mining village of Blaenely. He is initially determined to treat the Welsh miners suffering from tuberculosis and a prove a link between their ailments and the inhalation of coal dust. While the film offers a broadside against private medicine and espouses the importance of unionisation, the Welsh characters are portrayed as backward and indolent. Additionally, despite the film being "first 'Welsh' fictional feature of any real significance with a contemporary theme," -(Berry p.148) much of the film's narrative takes place outside of Wales with text more concerned with the journey of its hero, "the Anglo-Saxon individualist" who finds redemption after almost succumbing to corruption- (Stead in Curtis p.169)

with coal dust and mist serving to partially obscure any individual facial features of the miners, renders them "other" to Moffatt and by extension, the audience. They are presented as an undifferentiated mass who, we have just been informed, are illiterate savages.

Moffatt manages to persuade several of the miners to enrol at her school and her educational mission finds some initial success. A group of miners, led by Morgan Evans (John Dall) arrive at Moffatt's school. Morgan mockingly askes Moffatt if he can "have a kiss" much to the enjoyment of the other men. She seemingly obliges before administering a beating to Morgan. This sequence, firstly, introduces us to Morgan, who will become a central character in the narrative. It is telling that Morgan's first onscreen interaction with Ms. Moffatt involves him crudely, if jokingly, propositioning her. The unrestrained sexuality, and evocation of bodily pleasures, displayed by Morgan, coupled with his status as "savage", constructs him, according to Bram Dijkstra, as a feminised figure.[59] Moffatt's use of physical punishment for this transgression "marks the border between the civilised subject and the uncivilised object"[60] with Moffatt, as subject, disciplining the savage object, who is yet to be subjectified.

Unlike other films analysed in this chapter, the mineworkers in *The Corn is Green* possess no authentic culture of their own, rather culture must be imposed upon them through the embourgeoisement of formal, Anglophone education. Moffatt's civilising mission appears to pay off, as she discovers that Morgan is a gifted poet whose writings point to someone who is possessed of "evident mental 'treasure' poking through the rough shell covering of the peasant miner's life."[61] Strikingly, the first time in the film that we see Morgan and the other miners with their skin scrubbed clean of coal dust is during scenes set in the classroom. Through an anglicised education,

[59] Bram Dijkstra *Evil Sisters: The Threat of Female Sexuality and the Cult of Manhood* p.100
[60]Aidan Byrne *Constructions of Masculinity in Four Welsh Novels in English: Lewis Jones's 'Cwmardy' and 'We Live', Richard Llewellyn's 'How Green Was My Valley' and Gwyn Thomas's 'Sorry For Thy Sons'* Doctoral Thesis, University of Southampton, 2007 p.201
[61] Woods p.96

Moffatt has encouraged the men to shed the dirt of uncivilization and adopt the "cleanliness" of culture and civility.

In a later scene, Morgan visits the local public house. His body still displays the cleanliness which the film has established is representative of Morgan's increasing educational refinement. The other miners in the pub, lacking Morgan's civility, remain blackened with coal dust. The publican (Arthur Shields) chides Morgan for using English rather than Welsh to communicate. The miners join in the derision, mocking Morgan's attendance of school and its associated anglicisation. One of the miners accuses Morgan of being "ci bach yr ysgol/ the school's little dog" which enrages him and causes him to get into a fist fight with his tormentors. The use of the Welsh language as a catalyst for Morgan's outburst links it with the primitivism of violence, which cuts through his civilised veneer and reawakens his baser instincts.

Morgan's reversion to primitive instincts is linked to a later scene in which Morgan engages in a moonlight tryst with local girl Bessy Watty (Joan Lorring) which results in Bessie falling pregnant with Morgan's child, although this is not yet apparent to him. Betty later confesses her pregnancy to Ms. Moffatt, who intimidates her into silence for fear of spoiling Morgan's education. Morgan, meanwhile, regains his civility and, under Moffatt's tutelage, passes the entrance exam for Oxford University. Ms. Moffatt has finally succeeded in her mission to lift a "barbarian" from the peasant mass and transform him into a cultured individual.

The Corn Is Green, then, privileges a form of masculinity which is defined by academic learning and mental acuity. Unusually for a film set in a mining community, it features no scenes of men working underground. Any depiction of strength and manual skill is subordinate to the training of the gifted noble savage and his journey to culture. Moffatt herself possesses a "missionary quality."[62] as "an

[62] Ibid

indefatigable Englishwoman"[63] a "rational and modern"[64] proto feminist who attempts to rescue Glansarno from its own ignorance. At the film's climax, she tells Morgan that he has the potential to become "a man for a future nation to be proud of." Morgan, therefore, can attain his status as a male subject defined by his educational attainment who will exist in a putative nation of similarly cultivated individuals. It is axiomatic that the "future nation" of which Moffatt speaks is a British imperial construct which excludes Welsh peasantry in favour of the "imperial man."[65]

Welsh Masculinity and Mobility

Several of the film texts that I have surveyed so far see their characters temporarily moving from the periphery to the hegemonic core, or else interacting with agents of the core culture. The performance of Welsh masculinities in these films either retained the characteristics of the heroic or mythologised labouring man or alternatively as members of a primitive society in need of the benevolent hand of civilisation. However, social changes that took place across Britain between the late 1950s and 1960s, the popular view of which "centre on a perceived contrast between the drab conformism of the earlier decade and the bright freedom and liberality of the latter period,"[66]which in turn are often reflected in the way masculinity is constructed in British cinema during the period.

Stanley Baker's Star Persona: Social and Geographical Mobility

Welsh screen star Stanley Baker, as Robert Shail argues, is a particularly useful figure for analysis in that he embodies a form of "masculinity in transition."[67] Spicer states that Baker managed to "forge a consistent persona as the modern tough guy"[68] which Shail describes as drawing on the popularity

[63] Berry p.206
[64] Woods op. cit.
[65] Ibid
[66] Robert Shail *Constructions of Masculinity in 1960s British Cinema,* Doctoral Thesis, University of Exeter, 2002, p.40
[67] Ibid
[68] Spicer p.72

of "American stars such as Robert Mitchum with his inherent moral certainty and dubious methods."[69] Both Shail and Spicer emphasise the importance of locating Baker's star persona within the specific context of the social changes which were ongoing at the time. Shail draws on the work of cultural historian Arthur Marwick, who describes the mid-1950s in Britain "as a period marked by the overt desire, fostered by government and business in particular, to reestablish consensus" in reaction to the radical social changes brought about by the 1945 Labour government.[70]

The national consensus was underpinned by the relative economic stability of the period between 1951-64 which saw uninterrupted full employment, an increase in average earning of 30 percent, and the unprecedented availability of mass-produced consumer goods.[71] A Conservative government was in power during this entire period, and, despite Labour's initial fears that this would lead to the rolling back of the advances made from 1945-51, the Conservatives largely continued Labour's policies.[72] This ethos was broadly reflected in British cinema of the time, particularly in the mid-1950s, with the most prominent British stars of the period such as John Mills, Jack Hawkins, Kenneth More and Richard Todd embodying varying degrees of stoic, middle-class professionalism. This is particularly evident in the war films of that decade which, in distinction with their "People's War" counterparts of the 1940s, privileged masculinity and homosocial bonding where the protagonists "embodied an idealised golden age, and a patriotic noble Britishness, as well as meritocratic professionalism."[73]

Shail points to the Suez Crisis of 1956 as in important moment in the changing nature of Britain's image of itself. The national humiliation brought about by Suez meant that the "twin myths of British

[69] Robert Shail 'Stanley Baker's 'Welsh Western': Masculinity and Cultural Identity in *Zulu*' in *Cyfrwng Media Wales Journal Vol. 1* 2002 pp.11-25 (p.11)
[70] Arthur Marwick *British Society Since 1945* Penguin, London 1996 pp. 100-107 quoted in Shail 2002 (1) p.40.
[71] John Hill *Sex, Class and Realism: British Cinema 1956-63* (London: British Film Institute, 1986) p.5
[72] Ibid
[73] Andrew Spicer 'Male Stars, Masculinity and British Cinema 1945-1960' in *The British Cinema Book Second Edition* ed. by Robert Murphy (London: British Film Institute, 2001) pp.93-100 (p.96)

military invulnerability and our accepted sense of our own importance in the world were shattered."[74]This event, coupled with broader social changes which meant that, for instance, by the end of the decade the cinema-going demographic was increasingly dominated by the working-class, caused a substantial shift in the way masculinity was depicted on screen. Stanley Baker, as Shail has suggested, was at the forefront of this shift, to the extent that by 1959 he was one of the most popular British screen stars.[75] Baker's screen persona meant that his authentic Welsh, working class credentials, he was a native of Ferndale in the Rhondda Valley and the son of a coal miner, could be foregrounded in his performances. Peter Stead describes Baker as projecting "an uninhibited display of masculine energy […] from an actor untouched by traditional Home-County and film studio blandness."[76]

In the film *Hell Drivers* (Cy Endfield, 1957) for instance, Baker's character, ex-con Tom Yately, is "presented as a young man on the threshold of adult life who has to undergo a series of initiations into the brutal male culture from which he stands apart in courage, determination and sensitivity."[77] Yately's entry into the violent and highly competitive world of short distance haulage driving tests the boundaries of Yately's body. As in certain of the mining films I have examined, the labouring male body is in constant danger of fragmentation. Yet the boundaries of Baker/Yately's body withstand these tests and he ultimately prevails, the film hinting that he has a better life ahead of him. Thus, Baker's screen persona comes to symbolise "mobility aspiration…an attractive, virile and ambitious hero, pursuing a combination of personal and social ambitions against a hostile environment…seeking to establish his role and status in the adult world."[78] The director and producer Joseph Losey also saw an element of social mobility in Baker's screen persona which Losey

[74] Shail 2002 (1) p.41
[75] Spicer in Murphy, ed. p.98
[76] Stead 1989 p.190
[77] Spicer p.73
[78] Herbert Gans *American Films and TV Programs on British Screens: A Study of the Function of American Popular Culture Abroad* University of Pennsylvania Institute for Urban Studies, 1959 pp.60-68 quoted in Spicer p.74

felt could add an element of class tension with Baker as " a working class guy who carries something of his background with him into the wider world […] Losey wanted Baker to display all the class and sexual arrogance of a Welsh miner's son as he came up against social privilege, authority and affectation."[79] Baker's persona, therefore, allowed him the opportunity to move in and out of various social positions, while always retaining a proletarian masculinity which was "thrilling, sexually desirable and subversive."[80]

Stanley Baker's Welsh Masculine Identity in *Zulu*

The war epic, *Zulu* (Cy Endfield, 1964), which depicts the 1879 Battle of Rourke's Drift, functions as both a vehicle for, and passion project of Stanley Baker, leading Shail to Christen the film, "Stanley Baker's Welsh Western."[81] Baker was attracted by what he saw as the "Welsh" dimension of the script by John Prebble: several of the soldiers in the real-life battle were from Wales, and the script, at several points foregrounds the "Welshness" of the text. This prompted Baker to step behind the camera to act as the film's producer as well as its star.[82] The presence of Baker in the role of Lieutenant John Chard of the Royal Engineers, combined with the elision and hybridisation of generic codes- British Empire Film/War Film/Western-helps to subvert notions of certainty and stability. Early in the film, for instance, we are introduced to Chard as he oversees the construction of a bridge next to the Rourke's Drift command post. Despite his seniority, Chard is unafraid to "get his hands dirty". When one of the floating rafts which make up the bridge comes loose and begins to drift downriver, he leaps into the water and steadies the raft, before stripping off his tunic and continuing to help his fellow soldiers build the bridge. This places Chard in stark contrast to his counterpart Lieutenant Gonville Bromhead (Michael Caine). The nominal commander at Rourke's Drift, he is an arrogant, upper-class Englishman who, it is implied, who owes his military rank to his social status as

[79] Stead 1989 op. cit.
[80] Shail in Murphy, ed. p.98
[81] Shail 2002 (2) p.11
[82] Robert Shail *Stanley Baker: A Life in Film* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2008) pp.68-71

a gentleman. Chard, despite his officer status, is *not* a gentleman, rather, as an engineer, he embodies a form of industrial masculinity which requires both physical prowess and mental acumen. Indeed, Chard asserts that he is simply in Rourke's Drift to do a job and hints that he has a distaste for killing.

Zulu's subversion of straightforward depictions of the British Empire which have already begun to emerge through the disparities and antagonisms between Chard and Bromhead, are consolidated with the introduction of another piece of visual and narrative vocabulary, namely the Western. Shail was not being frivolous when he described *Zulu* as a Welsh Western. He identifies that the British soldiers and Zulu warriors can be seen as "taking on the roles of cavalry and 'Indians'."[83] Furthermore, "the South African veldt becomes a majestic backdrop to the characteristic generic development" which is not dissimilar to the way Monument Valley is used in the Westerns of John Ford.[84] One of the features of the Western genre is the conflict between "wildness" and "civilisation." The command post at Rourke's Drift can be read as symbolising the frontier of "civilisation." The central, mythologised figure of the Cowboy is an outsider who exists in a liminal space between the two poles and can move in and out of each of them. The Cowboy, however, frequently exhibits an antipathy to towards figures who sit atop the social hierarchy in the "civilised" world. Baker/Chard is depicted as an outsider; he does not belong to the 24th Regiment of Foot and ultimately expresses regret over the slaughter of the "wild" Zulu warriors. This specific combination of various generic modes which both overlap and act as counterpoints to one another, help Baker to construct a "celebratory myth around Welsh masculinity" which he hoped would possess an emotional force within the national consciousness.[85] As the film progresses, the class antagonism, and therefore the conflict between proletarian, Welsh masculinity and officer class, English masculinity begins to alter. During the climactic battle sequence, a badly wounded Chard

[83] Shail 2002 (2) p.22
[84] Ibid
[85] Ibid p.23

relinquishes his command to Bromhead, who "by now is almost his protégé."[86] The relationship between the two men has become one of mutual learning and understanding, whereby Chard relinquishes some of his earlier rigidity which led to needless deaths and Bromhead is now trusted enough to take command of the unit, in contrast to the dilettantish behaviour he exhibited at the film's opening. The ability of the working-class outsider to inhabit a role traditionally reserved for members of the upper classes, as well as his ability to tame and dominate the "wild" space of South Africa, suggests a form of Welsh masculine identity which can, for the first time, traverse social and geographical boundaries with relative ease.

Masculinity, Mobility, Celebration and Parody: *Grand Slam*

Grand Slam (John Hefin, 1978) also uproots Welsh cultural signifiers and places of them in an environment which is "other", which affords those signifiers an increased visibility. *Grand Slam* also uses the geographical and cultural displacement of Welsh characters to explore and construct forms of masculine mythology, albeit in a rather different way to *Zulu.* The film concerns a group of Welsh rugby fans who travel to Paris for the weekend to watch Wales play France in the Five Nations Championship as both teams compete for the Grand Slam title. Peter Jachimiak describes *Grand Slam* as "not only a film of Welsh origin primarily aimed at a Welsh audience, but - in relation to the reproduction of Welshness and Welsh masculinity in particular - is often seen as a celebratory cultural event."[87] In films such as *A Run For Your Money* the tough, heroic masculinity represented by the coal miners is linked to the sporting prowess of the Welsh rugby team. *Grand Slam* constructs Welsh masculinity in a similar fashion, although the three decades that separates the two films has seen the collapse of the post-war consensus and the widespread closure of the coal mines. In *Grand*

[86] Berry p.266
[87] Peter Jachimiak '"Coll Gwynfa, Adferiad Gwynfa'- Grand Slam, Gwrywdod ac Adennill y Gymru a Gollwyd." *Cyfrwng Welsh Media Journal* 3(1) 2006 p.91 quoted in Woods 2007 p.192 Author's translation.

Slam, therefore, rugby is used as a form of sublimation. The demise of coal mining and its associated markers of dominant masculinity such as physical prowess and homosocial bonding leave a social and cultural lacuna which must be filled with new activities such as rugby field trips and the opportunity for drunken partying, away from the "domesticating" presence of women. Indeed, as Woods suggests, travelling away from Wales allows the characters the freedom to enact certain masculine fantasies that they would have been unable to realise at home.[88]

The organiser of the trip, Mog Jones (Windsor Davies) is himself a former rugby player who never got the chance to represent his country on the field. The temporary mobility that Mog enjoys allows him to indulge in a fantasy where his bodily skill would have been sufficient for him to play for Wales. At the same time, Mog can liberate himself from the responsibility of the "fatherly" role he has to play in organising their trips away and behave in a misogynistic fashion which treats women as no more than sexual objects. Meanwhile, a fellow member of the group, funeral director Caradog Lloyd-Evans (Huw Griffith), travels to Paris with the intention of rekindling a love affair with a Parisian woman whom he met at the end of the Second World War. Caradog's description of his journey as a form of pilgrimage lends it quasi-religious significance. Indeed, Woods describes the character as "the incarnation of the Gothic Welsh Chapel minister or deacon."[89] However, Caradog hints throughout that he desires to rekindle the sexual dimension of the relationship with his lost love. The juxtaposition of Caradog's chapel respectability and his implicit lascivious desires serves to both eulogise and undercut traditional Welsh signifiers.

Mog's freedom from the constraints of responsibility permits him not just to indulge in casual misogyny, but also drunkenness and outlandish behaviour. During the extended sequence in a Parisian strip club, Mog decides to enact his own parodic version of a strip show He removes his "sensible" suit and tie and is left in a red vest and underpants. The transplanting of Mog to a

[88] Woods p.196
[89] Ibid p.197

different environment permits him to enact a form of bodily display that he may be frowned upon for a man in his position in Wales. The display though, with Mog's uncoordinated dancing and ridiculous attire- garish underclothes and a stocking used as a "bandana", has the effect of stripping him of his dignity. This is compounded as his drunken antics lead to a mass brawl which ends with Mog being arrested and forced to spend the rest of the night in a cell, still in a state of semi undress. Mog is reduced to begging for his freedom, desperate not to miss the rugby match and the opportunity to vicariously enjoy his original masculine fantasy of rugby stardom.

Upon Mog's release, he is forced to make his way to the Parc Des Princes stadium still clad only in his undergarments. - red vest, white boxer shorts, red socks- perfectly mimic the Welsh rugby team's kit. Mog straightens his back and puffs out his chest and breaks into a brisk jog. Momentarily, the geographical displacement of Welsh masculinity permits him to enact his long-held fantasy of bodily superiority. However, the film again undercuts Mog's masculinity by exposing his body's inability to conform to the idealised physical standards embodied by the Welsh rugby team. Mog arrives in the stadium just in time to see Wales lose the match 16-9 and he promptly collapses from exhaustion, his bodily failure and parodic rugby kit humorously mirroring the Welsh team's failure on the international stage.

Another member of the travelling party, Maldwyn Novello-Pughe (Sion Probert) is a gay man and therefore, through his flamboyant manner and dress sense, is coded as feminine. Back in Wales he is the owner of a clothing boutique. The inclusion of a gay character helps to further destabilise traditional signifiers of Welsh, heteronormative masculinity, whilst the depiction of of a trendy clothes shop in a former pit village does seem comically incongruous and perhaps indicates the increasing feminisation of formerly masculine spaces.

Jachimiak theorises that the enduring popularity of *Grand Slam* and its repeated viewership over the years since its release is in part a reaction to the post-industrial society that viewers now find themselves in: "The desire to re-watch such films can also be recognized as a key aspect of a wider

move towards the attempt to regain a nation-specific masculine past that is thought lost."[90] *Grand Slam* can function as a comforting piece of nostalgia with easily recognisable elements of Welsh culture and masculine identity which are foregrounded and celebrated. At the same time the film can subvert and destabilise those very same elements which is not only highly comical but indicates that the construction of the "traditional" forms of masculinity are particularly fragile.

Conclusion

For much of the first half of the twentieth century, screen depictions of masculinity in industrial Wales were largely predicated upon depictions of men as integral to the closed, endogamous communities in which they lived. This means that any potential threats to social cohesion, which are typically depicted as exogenous, must be overcome. While a small number of the films that I have surveyed espouse the value of the civilising effects of the hegemonic, core culture, most of the films dismiss it as inauthentic and privilege Wales's own peripheral culture.[91] Klaus Theweleit's *Male Fantasies* (1987, 1989), a dual volume study of the construction of fascist masculinities in the aftermath of the First World War can be instructive here. This is not to suggest, of course, that any of the films I have analysed are fascist in nature[92], however the pastoral evocations that exist in several of them which express a clearly stated love of landscape and community can be read as analogous to what Theweleit finds in the fascist imagination, namely "a two-fold love of homeland soil and of the community-of-blood (*Blutsgemeinschaft)"*[93] (Author's emphasis). These blood and soil sentiments are now closely associated with Nazism, but the concept of a racially homogenous *volk* can find some commonality with the *Gwerin* of Wales. The *Gwerin* represent "the mass of the

[90] Jachimiak in Woods p.195 (Author's translation)
[91] While *The Corn is Green* values and anglicised education, *How Green Was My Valley* violently rejects it.
[92] Aidan Byrne, in his analysis of the novel *How Green Was My Valley* makes a convincing case for it being a fascist text- (Byrne, 2007 pp.155-214)
[93] Klaus Theweleit *Male Fantasies* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987) p.59

common people in contrast to the aristocrats or clergy"; a people who view themselves as hardworking and morally upright.[94]

The effect of this is that while Welsh industrial society is often depicted as unusually tolerant- John Cunningham, for instance, describes *The Proud Valley* as "a remarkable film for its portrayal of what a world of racial harmony might look like"[95] -the construction of the Black body in this film is far from unproblematic. Despite his star billing, Robeson as David is never permitted to function as an active agent for change within the narrative. Franz Fanon states that "Blackness", as a racial category, is a construct of white supremacy[96] which constructs Blackness absolutely as the not-self, that is the unidentifiable, the unassimilable."[97] This absolute "Otherness" poses a danger to the boundaries of white male subjectivity which threatens the fragmentation of the subject.

Similarly, the threat of unconstrained femininity in these films must also be dealt with. Here we can return to Dierdre Beddoe's assertion that "Welsh women are culturally invisible"[98] Indeed, the women in these films are relegated to the domestic sphere, chiefly in enduring figure of the Welsh Mam[99]. Despite her functioning as the "moral custodian of the home" she has little to no influence outside of it. Any narrative agency that they do display is typically in service of the patriarchal community.[100] Even incomer Ms. Moffatt in *The Corn is Green* ends the film fulfilling the 'Mam' role

[94] Prys Morgan 'Keeping The Legends Alive' in Curtis, ed. pp.19-41 (p. 35)
[95] John Cunningham 'A SECOND LOOK: The Proud Valley' *Cinéaste*, 1996, Vol. 22, No. 2 (1996), pp.40-41 (p.40)
[96] Frantz Fanon *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952) (London: Penguin Classics, 2021) p.93
[97] Ibid p.161
[98] Dierdre Beddoe 'Images of Welsh Women' in Curtis, ed. pp.227-238 (p.227)
[99] Gwenno Ffrancon 'An Angel in the Home? Rachel Thomas, Sian Phillips and the On-Screen Embodiment of the Welsh Mam' in *Transactions of the Honourable Society of the Cymmrodorion 2009* New Series, Volume 16 2010 pp.110-122 (p.110)
[100] This is apparent in films such as *How Green Was My Valley* and *The Last Days of Dolwyn*

as she offers to take care of Morgan's infant child so that he can pursue his academic career. Other female figures fall broadly into two categories: virtuous and dutiful[101] or wayward.[102]

However, certain films do afford their female characters some narrative agency. *Blue Scar,* for instance, in part focuses on the experiences of Olwen Williams (Gwyneth Vaughn). Hollie Price lauds *Blue Scar* for negotiating "young women's lives and individual aspirations [and] working-class women's subjectivities and identities."[103] This is undercut at the film's climax, however, as we see Olwen's life in her cramped London flat as shallow and unhappy. *Bitter Harvest* (Peter Graham Scott, 1963) also privileges Welsh female subjectivity as it tells the story of a young Welsh woman, Jennie Jones (Janet Munro), who leaves her economically depressed former mining town for the "glamour" of London. Moya Luckett situates the film in the Swinging London cycle of the late 1960s. She states that, "the narratives of these films heralded a new feminine perspective marked by the importance of sexual expression to self-identity," as well as individualised forms of glamour, with London having a "structural role in enabling and authorising this glamour and agency."[104] Like *Blue Scar,* the film ends unhappily as Jennie descends into psychosis and commits suicide. Nevertheless, the film affords its female protagonist a narrative agency and social and geographical mobility which had previously been absent from the screen.

The changing nature of British society in the second part of the twentieth century posed challenges to received notions of the ways masculine identity could be depicted onscreen. Stanley Baker's ability to "carry something of his [working class] background into the wider world"[105] tracked with

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[101] Angharad (Maureen O'Hara) and Bronwen (Anna Lee) in *How Green Was My Valley*, Dilys (Dilys Thomas) in *The Proud Valley,* Margaret (Andrea Lea) in *The Last Days of Dolwyn,* Glenis (Dilys Jones) in *Blue Scar* and Olwen (Maureen Swanson) in *Valley of Song* fit into this category.
[102] Wayward characters include Bessie (Joan Lorring) in *The Corn is Green,* Olwen in *Blue Scar,* Jo (Moira Lister) in *A Run For Your Money* and Bessie (Rachel Roberts) in *Valley of Song*
[103] Hollie Price 'Post-war girlhoods: Jill Craigie, British social realism and local stardom' in *Screen*, Volume 63, Issue 1, Spring 2022 pp.22-46 (p.23)
[104] Moya Luckett 'Travel and Mobility: Femininity and national identity in Swinging London Films' in *British Cinema Past and Present* ed. by Justine Ashby and Andrew Higson (London: Routledge, 2000) pp.233-248 (p.233)
[105] Stead p.190

wider social changes and the "proleatarianisation" of popular culture and rebellion against the class-based rigidities of earlier decades.[106] While later films such as *Grand Slam* function as both parody and celebration of traditional Welsh masculinities, the overseas setting suggests that the performance of these masculinities is now only permissible on a temporary basis, outside of Wales. The continuing deindustrialisation of Britain and the changing nature of male employment means that the apparent stability of male dominated, Welsh industrial communities depicted in earlier films. is under threat. This will have profound effects of the construction and performance of masculine identities.

Chapter Two: Changing Masculinities in Wales

Introduction

[106] Shail (1) p.33

In this chapter I shall attempt to present an overview of the ways in which masculine identities in Wales have shifted in part because of the evolving needs of global capital which have led to the disappearance of jobs based upon bodily skill and physical endurance. I will place these arguments within a broader analysis of the relationship between Wales, the Welsh language and the British state.

The destruction of large swathes of traditional heavy industries which were largely concentrated in the South Wales valleys, namely coalmining and steelmaking, has "profoundly shaped the lives of working-class people in the area"[1] As we have seen throughout several texts already examined, breadwinning and masculine identity are intrinsically linked. Victor J. Seidler posits that "men are brought up to identify themselves with their work, rather than fulfilling individual needs and wants."[2] The subsequent loss of earning capability through the exercise of skilled bodily performance and the reorientation of the economy towards the tertiary and service sectors, which in turn brought a "far greater percentage of women into the workforce, who begin to undermine the strict demarcation of women and men's 'worlds'"[3] has led to the common refrain that masculinity is in "crisis".[4] The post-war consensus which, in the 1950s and 1960s, brought about full employment, increased living standards and good quality housing was thought to have banished the spectre of the mass poverty which had haunted Wales in the 1930s. However, the various economic crises that emerged throughout the 1970s, culminating in the wholesale rejection of Keynesian economic policies by the Thatcher government of 1979 meant that the threat of idleness and destitution stalked Wales once more. The Thatcher government's implementation of monetarism as a means of

[1] Richard-Michael Dietrich, *You Can't Beat Us: Class, Work and Masculinity on a Council Estate in the South Wales Coalfield* PhD Thesis, University of Hamburg, 2000 p.1
[2] Victor J. Seidler *Recreating Sexual Politics: Men, Feminism & Politics* (London: Routledge, 1991) p.111
[3] Chris Williams *Capitalism, Community and Conflict: The South Wales Coalfield 1898-1947* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 1998) p.77
[4] Michael Kimmel 'The Contemporary "Crisis" in Masculinity in Historical Perspective' in *The Making of Masculinities: New Men's Studies,* ed. by Harry Brod (Boston: Allen & Unwin,1987) pp.121-154

controlling spiralling inflation came at the cost of mass unemployment. The coal and steel producing industries were some of the first in line when it came to large-scale redundancies. [5]

Deindustrialisation and the worklessness and poverty which follow in its wake are not, of course, issues peculiar to Wales. There are, after all, numerous English regions which are similarly blighted by the loss of heavy industry. Wales, though, is a nation and not simply a region. If we take the Welsh economy as a whole, then the economic prosperity of Wales had an over dependency upon primary production.[6] This meant that throughout much of the 1980s, the rate of unemployment in Wales was twice the British average. By 1991 areas of the post-industrial South Wales valleys saw levels of male unemployment reach 51 percent.[7] The fact that industrial Wales was a particularly acute casualty of Thatcherite economics ties into the nationalist arguments around Wales's status, along with Scotland and Ireland, as British "colonies."[8]

'Colonised Wales'

Simon Brooks argues in *Why Wales Never Was,* a thoroughgoing and devastating analysis of the historic failure of Welsh nationalism, that:

"In a proletarian coalfield…opportunities for an indigenous bourgeoisie to develop were more limited than they would have been in a more balanced economy. Without a doubt this held back nationalism. Wales occupies a strangely liminal place in the British economy: it is central to the

[5] David Adamson 'Poverty and Social Exclusion in Wales Today' in *Wales Today,* ed. by David Dunkerly and Andrew Thompson (Cardiff: University of Wales Press,1999) pp.41-55
[6] Michael Hechter *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development* (New Jersey: Transaction Press, 1999) pp.127-163
[7] Adamson in and Dunkerley and Thompson, eds. op. cit.
[8] Katie Gramich 'Cymru or Wales: Explorations in a Divided Sensibility' in Susan Bassnett, ed. *Studying British Cultures* (London: Routledge,1997) pp. 97-112

industrial revolution and yet possessed little of the capital required to develop its own territory with its own resources."[9]

Brooks is, of course, at pains to point out that the situation in the coalfields was only one factor among many that stymied the nationalist movement, although he does give tacit acknowledgement to the status of the industrial valleys as a frequent synecdoche for Wales. R.M Dietrich suggests that miners "are perhaps *the* symbolic incarnation of the working class […] the political as well as academic representations of coal miners have for a long time swayed between 'archetypal proletarian' and 'primitive villain'"[10] As I have attempted to demonstrate in the previous chapter, cinematic depictions of coal miners have also tended to oscillate between these two constructions. In the former representation, the miner, as the heroic proletarian man, puts up a valiant fight against the threat of unemployment and destitution. The "revolutionary class consciousness" which academia and politics sometimes ascribes to the miners, and which stands in opposition to the hegemony of the "core" culture, is, at best, hinted at in several of the films I have examined and entirely absent from others.[11] Nevertheless the miners, particularly those of South Wales have long been associated with radical left wing politics.[12] Perhaps the irony of this left-wing radicalism, from a nationalist perspective, is that it is constructed along the lines of class rather than nationality. Welsh nationalism in industrial Wales, by the mid-nineteenth century, was the domain of Nonconformism which "provided at times the ideological cement" between the "nascent working and bourgeois classes" two classes which may, objectively, be antagonistic to one another.[13] David L. Adamson

[9] Simon Brooks *Why Wales Never Was: The Failure of Welsh Nationalism* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2017) p.22
[10] Dietrich p.15
[11] Ibid
[12] Hywel Francis and David Smith, *The Fed: A History of the South Wales Miners in the Twentieth Century* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1980) pp.52-69
[13] David L. Adamson *Class, Ideology and the Nation: A Theory of Welsh Nationalism* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1991) pp.112-113

finds that this meant that "in the last two decades of the nineteenth century the working class increasingly looked to socialism for its salvation rather than Nonconformism."[14]

Adamson's analysis does problematise the coloniser/colonised, exploiter/exploited binarism in certain strains of nationalist and postcolonial thought. This is not to say, of course, that arguments around Wales's status as a colonised or postcolonial nation are without merit. One the central elements of the colonial/postcolonial discourse in Wales is the fate of the Welsh language. A prominent example of this is Plaid Cymru co-founder Saunders Lewis's famous 1962 BBC Wales radio broadcast *Tynged Yr Iaith/ The Fate of the Language* which predicted that Welsh could cease to exist as a living language by the early twenty first century.[15] Lewis's gloomy prediction, however, failed come to fruition and Welsh continues to exist as a living language.[16] However, even taking the most optimistic figures for the number of Welsh speakers in Wales, it remains that case that the majority of people living in Wales cannot speak Welsh.[17]

Adamson does concede that the influx of English-speaking labourers into industrial Wales during the nineteenth century led to the decline of the Welsh language and in turn put significant pressure on the exclusively cambrophone nature of Nonconformist worship.[18] Michael Hechter also finds this to be the case, although, despite the overall assertions in his work, he admits that he is unable to say

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[14] Ibid pp.117-119

[15] Dylan Phillips 'The Welsh Language and Postcolonial Wales' in Jane Aaron and Chris Williams, eds. *Postcolonial Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005) p.100

[16] The most recent available data from the Annual Population Survey, which is conducted by the Office for National statistics shows that 906,800, 29.7 percent of the population, in Wales over the age of three can speak Welsh, reflecting a general upward trend since 2010. However, the figures from the 2021 Census records the number of Welsh speakers in Wales as being significantly lower: 538,300- a decrease of more than 40,000 speakers since 2001: *Welsh language data from the Annual Population Survey*- https://www.gov.wales/welsh-language-data-annual-population-survey-2023. Accessed 24/07/2024. The reasons for the disparity in the two sets of figures are multiple and highlight the differences in the ways in which the respective surveys are carried out- *Chief Statistician's update: a discussion about the Welsh language data from the Annual Population Surve*y: https://digitalanddata.blog.gov.wales/2019/03/27/chief-statisticians-update-a-discussion-about-the-welsh-language-data-from-the-annual-population-survey/?_ga=2.56127531.1851139300.1705072011-163263112.1705072011. Accessed 02/02/2024.

[17] The Welsh Government's strategy, *Cymraeg 2050*, which aims for one million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050, will use census data to monitor progress towards this target. Op Cit.

[18] Adamson pp.117-118

definitively whether the diminution of the Welsh language in industrial areas is the result of colonialism or of cultural diffusion.[19] Brooks however, aims much of the blame for the decline of the Welsh language squarely at the Liberalism which had emerged from Nonconformism. By the end of the nineteenth Nonconformists were experiencing a crisis. The decline of the Welsh language was causing Nonconformism to lose its hegemonic grip over society. This was exacerbated by the increasing attraction of the Welsh working class to (anglophone) socialist ideologies.[20]

The historian Gwynfor Evans bitterly opined in *Diwedd Prydeindod/ The End of Britishness* that Britishness "is another word for Englishness; it is a political word which arose from the existence of the British state, and which extends Englishness over the lives of the Welsh, the Scots and the Irish."[21] While discussions of Wales as a colonised or postcolonial space appear tangential to issues surrounding masculinity, it is perhaps worth noting that the above quotes by Evans and Lewis make explicit the coterminous relationship between the diminution of language and the loss of identity. It is worth briefly considering the 1847 publication of *Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales*, more commonly known as the Blue Books. They were commissioned by businessman and radical Welsh MP William Williams who felt that monoglot Welsh speakers were at an educational and linguistic disadvantage and that the learning of English would help to "civilise" an essentially backwards and servile people.[22] While Williams's intentions were apparently noble, the final reports described the Welsh people and their language in nakedly colonial terms. The Welsh, particularly Welsh women, were depicted as a licentious and immoral people; only by becoming anglicised in both language and behaviour could they ever hope to achieve progress.[23] This ostensibly "progressive" nature of this mission indicates two things: firstly, that the "British" civic nationalism as espoused by liberal policy is, per Gwynfor Evans, little more than a mask for a

[19] Hechter pp.164-207
[20] Adamson op. cit.
[21] Gwynfor Evans *Diwedd Prydeindod* Y Lolfa, Talybont, 1981 p.13 quoted in Gramich pp.116-117 (Author's translation).
[22] John Gower *The Story of Wales* (London: BBC Books, 2012) pp.184-185
[23] Ibid pp.186-188

dominant Englishness. Secondly, the colonialist language used in the reports constructs the non-anglicised/anglophone Welsh as radically "other." It is worth briefly noting that Kirsti Bohata's study of Anglophone Welsh literary fiction, *Postcolonialism Revisited,* outlines numerous examples of Welsh writing in English where Welsh authors can be found "participating in and perpetuating the dominant images of pathological alterity in their work" especially in terms of "racial, gendered and sexual otherness."[24] This divided subjectivity on the part of the Welsh people (let us not forget that the Blue Books were commissioned by a Welshman) perhaps imbues the term "internal colonialism" with a double meaning.

The "mildly pornographic" tales of waywardness and hypersexuality in the Blue Books[25] and subsequent racialised depictions of Welsh characters in certain Anglo-Welsh writings recalls Bram Dijkstra's analysis of figures contained in more overtly colonialist literature as representing a threatening and "feminised" sexuality.[26] Moreover, it is possible to link the loss of language and community to a loss of identity, which Brooks describes as having been "digested until dissolved."[27] This fear of fragmentation and dissolution, note the metaphor of dissolution through a function of a larger, devouring body, can perhaps put one in mind of Theweleit's writings on fascist masculinities[28]. Indeed, Saunders Lewis the second president of *Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru* (later shortened to Plaid Cymru), the first nationalist party in the history of modern Wales[29] has long attracted accusations of fascism and antisemitism.[30] Although these charges have been hotly contested among academics.[31] Accusations of Lewis's antisemitism stem in part from his poem *Y*

[24] Kirsti Bohata *Postcolonialism Revisited: Writing Wales in English* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004) pp.29-58.
[25] Brooks p.76
[26] Bram Dijkstra *Evil Sisters: The Threat of Female Sexuality and the Cult of Manhood* (New York: Random House, 1996) pp.96-99
[27] Brooks p.139
[28] Klaus Theweleit *Male Fantasies: Volume One* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987)
[29] Kenneth O. Morgan *Rebirth of a Nation: Wales 1880-1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980s) p.206
[30] Ibid p.256
[31] Kenneth O. Morgan, find that the charges of Lewis's apparent sympathies for fascism to be broadly justified. Lewis was a deeply conservative figure who, according to Morgan, was highly attracted to the right-wing Catholic nationalism as espoused by Maurice Barres and Charles Maura's of *Action Francaise*.

Dilyw/ The Deluge which depicts Welsh life in the wake of the Great Depression. The opening stanza reads:

"The tramway climbs from Merthyr to Dowlais,
Slime of a snail on a heap of slag;
Here once was Wales, and now
Derelict cinemas and rain on the barren tips"[32]

He goes on to blame the industrial and economic devastation on the Jewish financiers in Wall Street with their "Hebrew snouts in the quarter's statistics." The construction of the stereotype of the Jewish man in European antisemitic thought, not only constructs him as avaricious, rootless and itinerant but also as a feminised figure who traverses or collapses gender boundaries.[33] Lewis's use of language is instructive here. His description of the despoilment of the landscape is highly evocative; the use of the words "slime", "slag" and "tips" which all refer to waste products which must be expelled, all within the first four lines, render the scene he witnesses as abject. The abject, to recall Kristeva, is the debased "Other" which demarcates the boundary between the inner and outer and therefore a coherent identity[34]. Lewis, in focusing on images of Wales as a giant slag tip, stripped of its natural resources in the service of voracious capitalism, appears to collapse the boundaries between what is of use and what must be expelled or excreted, in turn rendering the landscape incoherent. He adds to these images with a description of Wales being filled with "derelict

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However, he finds that accusations of Lewis's supposed overt support for Hitler to be without merit- Morgan pp.206-207
Tim Williams, on the other hand, is excoriating in his criticism of Lewis and Plaid Cymru more broadly, charging him, and by extension the party, with not only being sympathetic to Nazism, but of full-throated antisemitism- Tim Williams, *Know a Hero By His Heroes: Saunders Lewis Beyond Apologetics*, 29th September 2014: https://www.iwa.wales/agenda/2014/09/know-a-hero-by-his-heroes-saunders-lewis-beyond-apologetics/. Accessed 25/01/2024.
Jasmine Donahaye rebuts Williams's assertions, calling them "intemperate and ill sourced," finding that while Wyn Jones rejects claims that *Plaid Cymru* was fascist or antisemitic, this in no way exculpates Lewis's own problematic statements about Jewish people- Jasmine Donahaye *Using the 'Antisemitism' Charge* 28th October 2014: https://www.iwa.wales/agenda/2014/10/using-the-antisemitism-charge/. Accessed 25/01/2024.

[32] Reproduced in Raymond Williams 'Remaking Welsh History' (1980) in *Who Speaks for Wales: Nation, Culture and Identity*, ed. by Daniel G. Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003) p.69

[33] Mosse pp.68-69

[34] Julia Kristeva *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Trans. by Leon S. Roudiez. (New York: Columbia UP, 1982)

cinemas", which are symbolic of the "feminising" effects of mass culture, all of which, he claims, is being perpetrated by the feminised figure of the Jew. The poem's title is also highly telling. The danger of a deluge or flood is featured heavily in the fascist writings which Theweleit has analysed. To reiterate, flooding is once again representative of a collapse in individual identity and the threat of being subsumed into an undifferentiated mass. The inclusion amongst these images of the statement "here once was Wales" appears to function as a lament or yearning for an older version of Wales, one which is untouched by the destructive hand of industry. The evocation of an idealised earlier period is redolent of the opening scenes of *How Green Was My Valley* which, as I have attempted to demonstrate in the previous chapter, has its own associations with fascist masculinities although not as overt as those which Aidan Byrne has ably demonstrated exist in the original novel[35]. None of this is to say that Saunders Lewis was a fascist in any practical sense as much of the scholarship cited above makes clear. However, that does not preclude him from deploying language and ideas that could be associated with fascism and admiring others who do the same. Fascist masculinities, to reiterate, are deployed as a bulwark against a supposed loss of identity, something to which Lewis dedicated his political life.

In the next chapter, I shall attempt to show that certain film texts explore issues of the Welsh language, national identity and post-industrial Wales through the lens of masculinity. The launch of the Welsh language television channel, S4C, in 1982 one day before its sister station, Channel 4, meant that, as Elain Price explains, the interests and tastes of "minority interests and groups could be catered for."[36] As I tried to show in the previous chapter, by the 1960s, certain "Welsh" texts explored issues of Welsh national identity and its place within the broader definitions of Britishness and the political construct which Raymond Williams mockingly calls the 'Yookay'.[37] Several Welsh

[35] Byrne op. cit
[36] Elain Price 'A Cultural Exchange: S4C, Channel 4 and Film' *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 2013 Vol. 33, No. 3 pp.418-433 (p.418)
[37] Williams uses this term frequently. Several instances of his usage can be found in Daniel G. Williams's compendium of Raymond Williams's essays. Op. Cit.

language films, produced from the 1980s onwards, deal with issues of masculinity in a post-industrial context in a variety of ways. Films such as *Yr Alcoholig Llon* (Karl Francis: 1983) and *Aderyn Papur* (Stephen Bayly: 1983) were both were both shown on Channel 4 with English subtitles and drew positive notices from broadsheet newspapers[38], whilst and *Milwr Bychan* (Karl Francis: 1984), *Rhosyn a Rhith* (Stephen Bayly: 1986), and *Gadael Lenin* (Endaf Emlyn: 1993) received theatrical releases[39], suggesting that that a diversity of depictions of masculine identity could be transmitted to an wide audience outside of Wales.

Wales and the British State

In Tom Nairn's view, a prominent feature of the Welsh nationalist movement, at least as it was in 1977, was "a battle for the defence and revival of rural based community and traditional identity."[40] Despite finding that Wales has historically suffered from forced underdevelopment, which includes the depopulation of rural communities, Wales finds itself in the anomalous position of having once led the world in the development of modern iron and steel manufacturing techniques. Despite this, the industrialisation of Wales was largely guided externally, meaning that "Wales now acquired an English or at least highly Anglicised bourgeoisie."[41] So far, this argument sounds like Nairn is making the case that Wales is an "internal colony". However, he rejects Hechter's arguments, finding that they are far too essentialising in nature and elide too many disparate factors.[42] Adamson concurs with this rejection, finding that Wales by the late nineteenth century was "characterised by significant class divisions and cannot be envisaged as a homogeneous, culturally defined region, permanently held in a state of underdevelopment and 'backwardness.'"[43] Graham Day also takes

[38] Price pp.425-426
[39] Berry pp.466-468
[40] Tom Nairn *The Break-Up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism* (Illinois: Common Ground Publishing LLC, 2015) p.174
[41] Ibid
[42] Ibid pp.167-171
[43] Adamson p.183

issue with Hechter's analysis as well as those of other scholars who argue for Wales's status as a colonised/postcolonial nation. Like Nairn and Adamson, he finds the definitions and parameters too fuzzy and imprecise.[44] The colonial arguments hinge partially on the notion that Wales has, as a "peripheral" region, been subject to deliberate underdevelopment by the oppressive "core." Once again, Day finds that while these theories may sound politically attractive, and it certainly makes sense that nationalist sentiments would be provoked by a perception of external exploitation, the methodology used to arrive at them involves a "set of pick-and-mix attributes, rather than a coherent syndrome"[45]. In other words, the arguments deployed are based upon models and concepts which were not originally intended for use in such a context.

The Erosion of 'Traditional' Masculinities

This is not to say, of course that Wales does not have an historically distinct culture and that some of the contemporary issues that it faces have a specifically Welsh dimension, including forms of masculinity. Whichever side of this argument around postcolonial Wales one chooses, it is undeniable that the economic changes in the industrialised areas which gathered speed during the 1980s had a significant effect, as described above, on patterns of employment and perceptions of masculinity. Skilled manual labour was, and continues to be, dominated by men[46] The removal of these jobs and their replacement with semi or unskilled work which, according to Doreen Massey, attracted a mostly female workforce[47] which led to the "weakening or disappearance of older forms of skilled manual employment."[48] It is possible to argue, therefore, that this equated to the

[44] Graham Day *Making Sense of Wales: A Sociological Perspective* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2002) pp.61-63.
[45] Ibid p.71
[46] Alison Parken, Eva Poacher and Rhys Davies *Working Patterns in Wales: Gender, Occupation and Pay* Cardiff University, March 2014 pp.1-63
[47] Doreen Massey 'The Shape of Things to Come' in *Marxism Today* 1983 pp.18-27, quoted in Day p.88
[48] Day p.88

destruction or at least marginalisation of more "traditional" forms of masculine identity. These changes- the "feminising" of the workplace and the increasing casualisation of labour had a highly deleterious effect on community stability. Ralph Fevre's 1989 study of the drastic reduction in employment at the Port Talbot steelworks outlines the outlines not only the social but psychological devastation wrought by such a sudden economic shock. *Wales is Closed*, named after a piece of graffiti on the Severn Bridge, is both an apt title and a shrewd encapsulation of the sort of existential crisis that Wales found itself in during that period. The phenomenon of a large settlement being (over) reliant on a single employer or industry is by no means unique to Wales, its shedding of jobs does, on the face of things, contribute to the ongoing fracturing of class solidarity, which is associated with industrial Wales, at least in the popular imagination. Fevre describes the shame some of the financially desperate workers feel in being forced to accept casual "off the books" in the steelworks in betrayal of their class-based ideological principles.[49]

Following the displacement of traditional forms of "masculine" employment and the increasing "feminisation" of workplaces, it is possible to argue that new forms of masculinity began to emerge because of the changing nature of capital relations.[50] The economic contraction and mass unemployment of the 1980s, which during its peak saw 11.9% of the workforce on the dole meant that the loss of breadwinning ability, coupled with the social and economic changes that had already begun to emerge over the previous two decades, were "beginning to call masculinity into question."[51] Hegemonic and dominant masculine forms, as demonstrated in previous chapters, have been historically predicated on authority, control and mastery, not only of one's social and

[49] Ralph Fevre *Wales is Closed: The Quiet Privatisation of British Steel* (Nottingham, Spokesman,1989) pp.89-90.
[50] The overall aim of Fevre's study was to make that case that British Steel was being privatised by stealth. His thesis has, of course, been totally vindicated. After privatisation and various mergers, Port Talbot steelworks is now owned by the multinational company, Tata Steel. At the time of writing, the company, despite a large injection of capital by the UK government, has announced the closure of the two blast furnaces at Port Talbot at the cost of 2800 jobs- Paul Pigott and Ben Price, 'Port Talbot: Tata Steel's blast furnaces to close with 3,000 expected job losses', 18th January 2024 https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-68022901. Accessed 05/02/2024.
[51] Rowena Chapman and Jonathan Rutherford 'The Forward March of Men Halted' in *Male Order: Unwrapping Masculinity* (London: Lawrence and Wishart,1988) p.11

economic environment, but also of one's emotions. Any overt or "excessive" display of feeling or emotion was deemed to be feminine in nature. The loss of earning capacity and the prospect of either long term employment or low skilled, feminised work led to an erosion of that authority and a "widespread sense of disempowerment"[52].As already seen in Fevre's work, this had a devastating psychological impact on workers. A coalminer, who lost his job after the Cwm Colliery at which he worked shut down in 1986, recalls that sudden unemployment "felt like bereavement."[53] This extreme emotion, whether outwardly expressed or not, coupled with a diminution of power helped to give rise to a "considerable departure from traditional discourses of masculinity."[54] The so called 'new man' who emerged in the mid-1980s was defined as "sensitive, emotionally aware, respectful of women and egalitarian in outlook"[55]

Dominant, Emergent and Residual Masculinities

Raymond Williams provides a useful cultural framework for analysis of these differing forms of masculinity. Williams suggests that the complexity of culture needs to be understood "not only its variable processes and their social definitions- but also in dynamic interrelations […] of historically varied and variable elements."[56] Any culture has a set of ideologies at its core which can be viewed as part of an ever shifting, continuous system that involves three processes: dominant, residual and emergent. Dominant refers to an ideology that is held or adhered to by most people a particular culture. In this way it performs a similar ideological function to that of hegemony.[57] Residual refers to an earlier social or cultural formation although, as the name suggests, elements of it- a residue-

[52] Sarah Godfrey *Nowhere Men: Representations of Masculinity in Nineties British Cinema* PhD Thesis, University of East Anglia, 2010 p.50
[53] Sian Burkett 'Unemployment in the 1980s: 'It felt like a bereavement. I didn't know what was going on' 1st November 2020- https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/unemployment-1980s-it-felt-like-19149970. Accessed 25/01/2024.
[54] Godfrey op. cit.
[55] Rosiland Gill 'Power and the Production of Subjects' in *Masculinity and Men's Lifestyle Magazines* ed. by Bethan Benwell (London: Blackwell, 2003) pp. 34-56 (p.37)
[56] Raymond Williams *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,1977) p.121
[57] Ibid p.123

still exist within the nexus of the dominant culture. Emergent is a new ideology or cultural practice which goes against the dominant culture. The continuous tension and conflict between these modes can lead to social change or revolution.[58] This concept can be mapped quite neatly onto discussions of shifting expressions of masculinity.

The new man phenomenon can be described as an emergent form of masculinity in that it challenges dominant constructions of masculinity which themselves contain residual elements such as the marginalisation of women. The popular image of the new man related to his increasing domesticity and his supposedly more egalitarian attitudes to things like child raising and housework. Jane Pilcher's 1994 study of three generations of Welsh women finds that the middle cohort were broadly accepting of the idea of men participating in household chores, while the youngest generation were emphatically in favour of it.[59] The breaking away from traditional (or residual) ideas of gender-normative activities amongst younger women points to a change in expectations around the performance of masculinity. Cultural events from around this period, such as film and music "witnessed a new generation of young men versed in the language of female equality and gay sensibilities, willing to sustain differing and more democratic expressions of masculinity."[60] However, several scholars have expressed scepticism about how much this emergent form of masculinity resembled real-life masculine practices. Sean Nixon, for instance, finds that there is an interdependence between "economic cultural practices and their relations of reciprocal effect in the sphere of cultural production."[61] In other words, images of the new man, during the 1980s and early 1990s, were bound up with corporate strategies of marketing and fashion which influence the ways in which popular images of masculinity are constructed. Indeed this emergent form of masculinity was fairly short lived and by the 1990s had been displaced by the "new lad culture". This culture,

[58] Ibid pp.124-127
[59] Jane Pilcher 'Who should do the dishes? Three generations of Welsh women talking about men and housework' in *Our Sisters' Land: The Changing Identities of Women in Wales,* ed. by Jane Aaron, Theresa Rees, Sandra Betts, and Moira Vincentelli (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1994) pp.31-47
[60] Chapman and Rutherford p.17
[61] Sean Nixon *Hard Looks: Masculinities, Spectatorship and the Contemporary Consumption* (London: Palgrave Macmillan,1996) p.69

which Jonathan Rutherford asserts emerged as a reaction against the new man trend represented a "retreat into the chauvinism of male exclusivity and its parodies of sexism and male craziness."[62] The term "lad" (as opposed to "man") suggests not only boisterousness and high-spirited behaviour, but also points to a youthfulness free from social the responsibility that may have been expected of earlier constructions of masculinity. Imelda Whelehan describes "laddism" as an exclusively male domain defined by "sport, pop, alcohol, soft drugs, heterosex and soft porn."[63] Bolstered by the rise of men's lifestyle magazines such as *Loaded* and *FHM,* laddism became the "reigning cultural model."[64]

Several British film texts of the period foreground or even celebrate lad culture, although the masculine signifiers in these films are usually sufficiently extreme to render them if not parodic, then certainly ironic which in turn has the effect of "foreclosing the potential for serious political critique."[65] However, the ways in which lad masculinities are presented in certain of these films is far from a straightforward celebration or endorsement. Two "Welsh" films which I shall be examining in the next chapter, *Twin Town* (Kevin Allen 1997) and *Human Traffic* (Justin Kerrigan 1999) problematise the concept of laddism in various ways. Despite the difficulties faced by the characters in each film, Claire Monk states that both texts encourage "a knowing, empathetic complicity between audiences and the films' young male inhabitants. These films address the anxieties of young male viewers by portraying the young male underclass in terms of an appealing subculture of dissent from the demands of adulthood, women and work."[66] Monk goes on to explain, narratives of male anxiety and crisis and the ways in which films can explore and resolve those crises, particularly within a post-industrial, working class milieux, is reflective of a broad trend within 1990s British cinema which "to an almost unprecedented extent […] seemed preoccupied with men and

[62] Chapman and Rutherford op. cit.
[63] Imelda Whelehan *Overloaded: Popular Culture and the Future of Feminism*, (London: The Women's Press Ltd. 2000) p.58
[64] Ibid p.166
[65] Godfrey p.94
[66] Claire Monk 'Men in the 90s' in *British Cinema of the 90s* ed. by Robert Murphy (London: British Film Institute, 2000) pp.156-166 (p.160)

masculinity in crisis."[67] As such, new laddism, it can be argued, functions as part of a broader backlash against earlier, "feminised" constructions of masculinity and a reassertion of residual masculine forms.

Studies undertaken by R.M Dietrich (2000) and Stuart Jones (2001), which focus on the performance of working-class masculinities in post-industrial South Wales, also find features and behaviours which are like those discussed above. Both studies are framed in terms of men's social and economic marginalisation as the result of the disappearance of traditional masculine professions. Dietrich's work focusses on an older group of ex-miners who struggle to maintain the "respectability" of their community in the face of negative media reporting as well as their attempts to continue to be the bearers of hegemonic masculinity.[68] Jones, meanwhile, takes a far younger group of men whose community, by the time they had reached working age, had already been blighted by years of economic decline. Their lives are defined by perennial worklessness, drug use and delinquency.[69] Despite the seemingly wide disparity between the respective groups of men, certain common attitudes and masculine performances can be detected. Both groups, for instance, have created masculine hierarchical structures. Whilst the hierarchies in Jones's study remain highly specific to the young men due to their marginal status[70], and those observed by Dietrich have a prominent place in the community, they are both based upon masculine notions of dominance, subordination and control as well as the exclusion of women.[71] Additionally, while the behaviour of the group of young men can be said to be more overtly laddish- their use of drugs and engaging in casual sex, for instance[72]- the social consumption of alcohol amongst the older group of men, an activity which is valorised in lad culture, fulfil an important social function. Drinking, particularly in specifically

[67] Ibid p.156
[68] Dietrich p.107-138
[69] Stuart Jones *An Ethnographic Study of Young Men's Social Exclusion on a Hilltop Estate in the South Wales Valleys* PhD Thesis, University of Glamorgan 2001
[70] Jones p.220
[71] Dietrich op. cit.
[72] Jones p.234

designated spaces, has been described as "one of the main rituals of male sociability."[73] Drinking cultures and the homosociality that they engender form part of the residual masculine behaviours that have been incorporated into laddism. Drug use, particularly smoking cannabis, in Jones's study is also organised features a strong homosocial element as the young men tend to buy and use it as a group.[74] Despite some of the ex-miners in Dietrich's study expressing concern that they have little in common with the younger generation which in turn weakens their hegemonic grip over community life[75], it is possible to identify certain patterns of masculine behaviour, namely homosocial bonding through the use of intoxicants, whether legal or illegal, reflected in both generational groups. This indicates that types of masculine behaviour, elements of which can be found in both dominant and residual forms, reoccur among different male age groups in various ways.

Mike Ward's (2013) study of the performance of young working-class masculinities in the South Wales Valleys, uses a secondary school and the subjects' relationship to education as the basis for his study, although he also broadens out his study to assess masculine behaviours outside of an educational setting.[76] Ward finds that the performance of masculinities amongst the young men he comes into contact with are multifaceted and prone to changed based on audience and setting. Ward identifies three distinct friendship groups. The first of these, *The Valley Boiz,* engage in behaviours which most closely resemble laddish masculinities which incorporate residual behaviours such as drinking, sexism and disdain for education in a process which Ward describes as the "re-traditionalization" of working-class masculinity[77] However, some of the *Valley Boiz* opt to remain in post-GCSE education which, despite their professed hostility to school, which suggests the shifting nature of even the most "traditional" expressions of working-class masculinity. The second group,

[73] Dietrich op. cit.
[74] Jones p. 217
[75] Dietrich p.126-127
[76] Mike Ward *The Performance of Young Working-Class Masculinities in the South Wales Valleys* PhD Thesis, Cardiff School of Social Sciences 2013
[77] Mike Ward 'Placing Young Men: The Performance of Masculine Identities in the South Wales Valleys' in *Our Changing Land: Revisiting Gender, Class and Identity in Contemporary Wales* ed. by Dawn Mannay (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2016) pp. 88-107 (pp.91-92)

The Geeks, base their expressions of masculine identity around educational attainment in the hope of securing future employment based upon mental acumen in jobs traditionally inhabited by the middle-classes.[78] They also broadly eschew sexism and drunkenness that the *Valley Boiz* indulge in. This type of masculinity could be characterised as one which is emergent. However, during an 18th birthday celebration, members of the group get drunk and later attend a strip club, indicating that their behaviour has the potential to be inflected by residual forms of masculinity.[79]

The final group, *The Emos,* represent an alternative or marginalised form of working-class masculine performance.[80] This identity is derived from the 'Emo' subgenre of rock music which originated in the United States and rose to international prominence in the first decade of the twenty first century. The music is characterised by melodic vocals and poetic lyrics expressing emotional vulnerability.[81] Like other musical genres, Emo has its own 'scene' which transcends the music itself and extends to codes of appearance, as well as types of masculine performance- supposed emotional openness and sensitivity- which is distinct from the "tough" or unemotional character of other types of masculine performance. However, the embracing of this form of masculinity, which runs counter to the locally dominant/hegemonic masculine behaviours, has led to bullying and marginalisation of the *Emos* in both school and the local community.[82]

Paradoxically, despite the marginal status of the young men within their school and community, the Emo scene to which they belong, due to its global prominence, represents a form of transnational or non-territorial identity which John Agnew describes as having "risen to importance at the very moment when national identities have ceased to have the inclusive hold over large populations that they once had."[83] The self-conscious performance of this type of masculinity also has an effect on

[78] Ibid p.96-97
[79] Ward 2013 158-163
[80] Ward 2016 p.99
[81] Peter C. Baker 'When Emo Conquered the Mainstream' in *The New Yorker* 28th July 2023
[82] Ward 2016 p. 100-102
[83] John Agnew 'The Limits of Federalism' in *Transnational Democracy: Political Spaces and Border Crossings*, ed. by James Anderson (London: Routledge, 2002) pp.56-72 (p.59)

the educational choices that they make. The young men in this group choose to study music and arts-based courses at the local further education college.[84] This type of reflexive identity construction is, as Anthony Giddens describes, a symptom of the erosion of tradition and means that "daily life is reconstituted in terms of the dialectical interplay between the local and the global […] individuals are forced to negotiate lifestyle choices among a diversity of options."[85] Homi Bhabha finds that ultimately this can lead to the construction of hybrid identities which have the potential to produce counternarratives of masculine identity.[86]

Richard Grater's 2023 study which also focusses on a group of young men in a secondary school in post-industrial South Wales, finds that the performance of masculine identity has shifted once again. He identifies in the group that he studies elements of traditional macho behaviours such as an attraction to manual work and an antipathy to school learning, he also finds, among some of them, increased physical tactility, emotional sensitivity, egalitarian attitudes towards gender and an attempt amongst some of them to distance themselves from homophobic attitudes.[87] Despite some of the young men using sexist and homophobic language, an equal number of them "are assimilating ideas of manhood and masculinity beyond their immediate community and internalising softer masculine ideals through popular culture and media."[88] Once again this points to the construction of a hybrid masculinity formed along formed along increasingly transnational and non-territorial lines.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to explore the ways in which masculinities are performed in a post-industrial Welsh context. These masculine identities are multitudinous and in a constant state of (re)

[84] Ward 2016 op. cit.
[85] Anthony Giddens *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* Polity Press, Cambridge 1991 p.5
[86] *Gender and Nation*, ed. by Nina Yuval-Davis (London: Sage Publications, 1997) p.18
[87] Richard Gater 'Amalgamated Masculinities: The Masculinity of Contemporary Marginalised Working-Class Young Men' *Sociology 0 (0)* June 2023 p.7-12
[88] Ibid p.15

negotiation with one another as well as with forces which are both local and global. It would of course be stretching credibility to claim that many of these factors are in any way unique to Wales. As Manuel Castells finds, the erosion of the patriarchal society and the masculinities associated with it through, in part, the reorganisation of capital and patterns of employment is a global phenomenon. At the same time feminist movements, in various countries, have placed more social and economic power in the hands of women.[89] However, I have tried to show that postcolonial discourse around the status of Wales within the larger "Yookay" political construct and the fate of the Welsh language is sometimes couched in terms of dominance and submission which can be linked, albeit perhaps tenuously, to discussions around masculinity which is also often framed in similar terms.

Furthermore, the changes in sexual and gender relations have, according to Castells, led to a crisis of patriarchalism due to the shrinking of the (male dominated) nuclear family through the increasing diversity in partnership arrangements and the raising of children[90]. While, once again, this is not peculiar to Wales, popular images of Welsh life and social organisation in the films I have explored so far have tended to present a highly patriarchal society. The erosion or collapse of patriarchal authority has precipitated narratives of masculinity in crisis which, according to Clair Monk and John Beynon, became ever more prevalent during the 1990s and beyond.[91] These crises, however, as shown in the studies of both Ward and Gater the collapse of traditional patriarchal masculinities has allowed certain groups of young men to imbricate both local and global masculinities. Additionally, a 2016 news report stated that some forty percent of the now sadly doomed Port Talbot steelworks are women. While many of the jobs done by women are still largely segregated along gendered lines, with women largely working in administrative or health and safety roles, one of the senior union representatives is a woman. Another female worker is part of the engineering department.

[89] Manuel Castells *The Power of Identity* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers,1997) pp.134-242
[90] Ibid pp.221-227
[91] John Beynon *Masculinities and Culture* (Buckingham, Open University Press, 2002) pp.76-77

Despite being the only woman in a team of thirty, showing that it is still a profession dominated by men, she explains that she has been accepted by her male peers and that it she does not find it to be a misogynistic environment.[92] These apparently harmonious working relationships, in a profession which can be seen to be associated with the most traditional "hard" masculine behaviours points to the shifting nature of masculinity across various sections of society.[93]

[92] Abbie Wightwick 'It isn't just the men...meet the women of Port Talbot's steelworks' in *Wales Online* 24th April 2016 https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/isnt-just-men-meet-women-11233845. Accessed 09/02/2024.

[93] The bitter coda to this seeming increase in equality is that the large scale job losses at the steelworks will mean that female workers will be just as anxious about their loss of earning capacity as their male counterparts.

Chapter Three: Screen Depictions of Masculinity in Post-Industrial Wales

Introduction-An Overview of Masculine Identities in the Films of Post-Industrial Britain

The cinematic representation of industrial/post-industrial masculine identities, as I have attempted to show, are explicitly linked to working-class or proletarian identities. The transition from an industrial to a post-industrial society, or from Fordism to Post Fordism, has had a profound effect on constructions of masculinity. While Post Fordism and post-industrialism are not entirely synonymous, they do overlap in several key areas. While Post Fordism does allow for the continuation of some skilled manual labour, it also signals the reorganisation of that labour. Collectivised working practices, with strong union representation to uphold workers' rights have been replaced by less secure "flexible" working conditions, while the economic goals of industry have shifted from full employment and nationalisation or public investment to the privatisation of profits.[1] As explored in the preceding chapter, but neatly encapsulated by Siedler, this means that "work does not allow men to *validate* themselves as they once did."[2] The increasingly individualistic nature of work, and society in general leads, as we have seen, to a fragmentation of identity which must find validation outside of the workplace. As Simon Taylor states, although Post Fordism/post-industrialisation began in the 1970s, the Thatcher government of the 1980s enacted policies which pushed through wholesale economic change. [3] In this chapter I will briefly outline the general trends in the depictions of masculinity in British cinema of the post-industrial period. I shall then move on to an analysis of the ways in which masculine identity in post-industrial Wales is depicted on screen.

[1] Simon Peter Taylor 2019 'Fordism to Post Fordism in the UK' in *Journal of Housing and Human Settlement Planning* 5 (1) pp.23-27.
[2] Victor J. Seidler *Recreating Sexual Politics: Men, Feminism & Politics* (London: Routledge, 1991) p.118
[3] Taylor op. cit.

I will refer to the screen depictions of Welsh masculinity and the recurrent thematic concerns which I identified in the opening chapter to analyse whether these earlier elements persist in more recent films, whether they have been altered, or removed altogether.

Thomas Elsaesser theorises that the actions of the UK government during the 1980s and the concomitant break-up of social consensus, which gave rise to different political styles and voices of dissent, meant that "the Thatcher era, implicitly and explicitly, asked what it meant to be British- or English, Scottish, Irish, or Welsh."[4] The creation of both Channel 4 and S4C, which helped to foster a closer relationship between film and television and in the process bolstered "indigenous" film production, also meant that an growing number of authorial voices were able to reflect the plurality of the British experience.[5] However, cinematic representations of a fragmented or fissiparous set of identities and masculinities, as outlined in the opening chapter, predate the fourth television channel(s) by some decades. Stanley Baker's "Welsh proletarian" star persona, shortly followed by the New Wave cycle of films, which altered the way in which British cinema presented masculinities, showed a Britain which was already in the process of breaking apart. Indeed, as Elsaesser goes on to state, for a long time British cinema has functioned around a polarity between what he describes as "an "official" cinema and an "unofficial" cinema; a respectable cinema and a disreputable one."[6] The official/respectable films may feature the performance of mainstream (hegemonic/dominant) masculinities whereas the unofficial/disreputable films would often feature non-mainstream (emergent, subordinate, aberrant) masculine forms. Any so-called renaissance in British cinema, for Elsaesser, was simply a matter of unofficial/disreputable cinematic representations moving into the mainstream. Previously, the differences between official and unofficial cinema would always remain

[4] Thomas Elsaesser 'Images for Sale: The "New" British Cinema' in *Fires Were Started: British Cinema and Thatcherism,* ed. by Lester Friedman (London: UCL Press, 1993) pp.53-54.
[5] John Hill *British Cinema in the 1980s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) pp.53-58
[6] Elsaesser in Friedman p.64

strictly demarcated. One of the main changes in 1980s cinema was the erosion of this demarcation, leading to a new dialectic in British film forms.[7]

Official/respectable films continued to be produced in the form of the "prestige" cinema of the heritage cycle which proliferated during the 1980s and functioned as part of a wider British heritage industry.[8] Corner and Harvey suggest that, from an ideological standpoint, heritage acts as a retreat into the past which can compensate for the "destabilisation and fragmentation" brought about by de-industrialisation.[9] It is perhaps paradoxical then that some of these films, despite being primarily set within an upper class milieux, can be read as a symptom of post-industrial angst. Andrew Higson attributes this to a desire to present "national identity as pure, untainted, complete."[10] However, several heritage films offer more than simple nostalgia. *Chariots of Fire* (Hugh Hudson, 1981), for instance, despite its ostensible jingoism and its celebration of an idealised form of masculine bodily performance through sporting prowess, can be read as an attack upon on the sclerotic social structures of Edwardian Britian and, as Paul Dave describes, an "assault on a complacent and unpleasant elite."[11] The films *Another Country* (Marek Kanievska, 1984) and *Maurice* (James Ivory, 1987) foreground gay masculinities in a heritage setting whilst *A Room With A View* (James Ivory, 1985) "can be read as a satire on the repressions of the middle classes."[12] During this period, several "unofficial" heritage texts were also produced which focussed on the lives of marginalised groups such as working class women in *Dance With A Stranger* (Mike Newell, 1985) and *Distant Voices, Still Lives* (Terence Davies, 1988) and the inhabitants of rural Welsh farming communities in *On The Black Hill* (Andrew Grieve ,1987) and *Hedd Wyn* (Paul Turner, 1992). The latter two films explore the

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[7] Ibid pp.64-65
[8] Films such as the multi–Academy Award winning *Chariots of Fire* (Hugh Hudson, 1981), as well *A Passage to India* (David Lean, 1984), *A Room With a View* (James Ivory, 1985) and *Maurice* (James Ivory, 1987) can be described as "prestige" heritage cinema.
[9] John Corner and Sylvia Harvey 'Mediating Tradition and Modernity: The Heritage/Enterprise Couplet' in *Enterprise and Heritage* ed. by John Corner and Syliva Harvey (London: Routledge, 1991) pp.44-74
[10] Andrew Higson 'Re-Presenting the National Past: Nostalgia and Pastiche in the Heritage Film' in Friedman, ed. pp.109-129 (p.123)
[11] Paul Dave *Visions of England: Class and Culture in Contemporary Cinema* (Oxford: Berg, 2006) p.32
[12] Higson in Friedman, ed. p.120

tensions and conflicts between Wales-England-Britain and feature masculinities which depart from the normative or idealised masculinities on display in films such as *Chariots Of Fire.* In *On The Black Hill* the protagonist, Amos (Bob Peck) is a tenant farmer who is depicted as abusive and tyrannical towards his family whereas in *Hedd Wyn,* the poet Ellis Humphrey Evans (Huw Garmon) is the "feminised" pacifist in the face of the hegemonic, jingoistic masculinity of the First World War.

If heritage cinema of the 1980s and 1990s had the ability to help audiences deal with the bewilderment of social change, albeit in an oblique fashion, other films produced during this period dealt with the changes head-on. Films such as *Letter to Brezhnev* (Chris Bernard, 1985), *My Beautiful Laundrette* (Stephen Frears, 1985) and *High Hopes* (Mike Leigh, 1988) are "set firmly in the present […] in an unstable and socially divided post imperialist and/or working-class Britain where identities are shifting, fluid and heterogenous."[13] Several films produced during this period also privilege the experiences of working-class women who attempt to escape or transcend the drudgery of working-class life.[14] Films such as *My Beautiful Laundrette* and *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* (Stephen Frears, 1987) examine non-white masculinities as well as queer identities. In former film, the boundaries of classed/ racialised masculinities are subverted even when the "traditional" white working-class racist Johnny (Daniel Day Lewis) forms a sexual relationship with the British-Pakistani "new meritocrat" Omar (Gordon Warnecke).[15] This also serves as a riposte to the increasingly homophobic rhetoric and polices of the Thatcher government. *High Hopes* in part deals with the ways in which Phillip Davis's "socialist man", Cyril, copes with the shifting nature of class identity within his family and community. The film, which features a "strong sense of the passing of a traditional working-class culture rooted in manual labour and a sense of place"[16] positions Cyril as feeling increasingly cut off from a sense of class solidarity which characterised earlier industrial masculine identities. Despite

[13] Higson in Friedman, ed. p.110
[14] Examples of these films include *Letter to Brezhnev* (Chris Bernard, 1985) *Educating* Rita (Lewis Gilbert, 1983) and *Rita Sue Bob Too* (Alan Clarke, 1987)
[15] Susan Torrey Barber 'Insurmountable Difficulties and Moments of Ecstasy: Crossing Class, Ethnic and Sexual Barriers in the Films of Stephen Frears' in Friedman, ed. pp.221-236 (pp.223-224)
[16] Hill 1999 p.197

certain British films of the 1980s centring on masculinities in a state of deep crisis as a reaction to post-industrialism/post Fordism, the 1990s became the decade that saw a proliferation of film texts which foregrounded masculine crises.

Popular British films such as *Brassed Off* (Mark Herman, 1996) and *The Full Monty* (Peter Cattaneo, 1997) explicitly deal with the effects of post-industrial male unemployment. Both films, as Monk states, define working class communities as "communities of *men*"[17] in which women can be seen as unwelcome interlopers. Nevertheless, both films afford their male characters a Hollywood style "feel-good" ending. *Brassed Off* ends with the Grimley Colliery band triumphing at the national brass band finals in London, while *The Full Monty* ends with the men overcoming their insecurities to put on a strip show and display their bodies to a cheering female crowd. The climax of each film can be read as the skilled labouring body fighting against obsolescence by transposing its abilities into other areas while at the same time obscuring more widespread social and economic problems, which leads Monk to intimate that the endings of both films are "fraudulently upbeat".[18] Similarly, the popular coming of age drama *Billy Elliot* (Stephen Daldry 2000), set against the backdrop of the 1984-85 miners' strike, sees its titular protagonist, played by Jamie Bell, use his bodily skill-in the form of ballet- to transcend his tough circumstances, in the face of a homophobic backlash from his own father and brother who are both striking miners. However, his family eventually come to accept Billy's "feminine" career choice, although the film insists upon Billy's heterosexuality. Due its setting, the film is critical of Thatcherism, although its happy ending- a flash forward to an adult Billy as the lead dancer in Matthew Bourne's Swan Lake on the London stage, watched with approval by his father and brother- unmasks its actual politics, which Paul Dave states tracks with the Blairite ideology of the period in which it was produced. The film stands as a "representation of the

[17] Claire Monk 'Men in the 90s' in *British Cinema of the 90s* ed. by Robert Murphy (London: British Film Institute, 2000) pp.156-166 (p.161)
[18] Claire Monk 'Billy Elliot' *Sight and Sound*, vol. 10, 10, October 2000 quoted in Steve Blandford *Film, Drama and the Break-Up of Britain* (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2007) p.28

glittering trajectory of individual talent and success as an answer to structural social problems."[19] Films such as *Trainspotting* (Danny Boyle, 1996) and *Twin Town* (Kevin Allen, 1997) both "provide their own brand of post-industrial iconography"[20] which also focus upon the working-class masculine experience. The difference here is that characters eschew gainful employment and deliberately "opt out" of mainstream society. Renton's (Ewan McGregor) well known "Choose life…" monologue during the opening of *Trainspotting* sees him rail against the "feminising" effects of consumer culture. The speech can be read as a call back to the Angry Young Man films of the 1950s and 1960s where characters such as Arthur Seaton (Albert Finney) in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (Karel Reisz, 1960) express similar distrust of consumerism indicating that, despite their sub/countercultural ethos these films also display a residual form of masculinity which tends to construct femininity as a threat. Indeed, in both *Trainspotting* and *Twin Town*, the cycles of drug taking/drinking/crime are presented as largely homosocial activities. Both films utilise dark humour, non-realism and hedonism to explore post-industrial masculine identities which tends to place the issues of addiction and social collapse at an ironic distance, making the characters' behaviours appear as a deliberate and attractive lifestyle choice.

Other films of this period avoid depictions of post-industrial men striving to overcome their circumstances. Rather, films and such as *Naked* (Mike Leigh 1993) and *Nil By Mouth* (Gary Oldman 1997) feature damaged masculinities in which the male protagonists are capable of violence and rape against women.[21] Ken Loach, whose film career stretches back to the 1960s, has produced several films which depict post-industrial masculinities. Despite some of these films featuring humorous scenarios and positive endings, Loach's commitment to the use of "documentary realist strategies to explore the inequalities and conflicts in society"[22] means that he tends to avoid the

[19] Dave p.75
[20] Blandford 2007 p.95
[21] Sarah Godfrey *Nowhere Men: Representations of Masculinity in Nineties British Cinema* Doctoral Thesis, University of East Anglia, 2010, p.296
[22] Tongyun Shi *Working Class in British Films 1950s-2000s: Identity, Culture, and Ideology* Doctoral Thesis, University of Louisville, 2011, p.212

Hollywoodized narrative structures of *Brassed Off* and *The Full Monty* and the attractive hedonism of *Trainspotting* and *Twin Town.* The films of Shane Meadows, meanwhile, apart from two documentary features, focus exclusively on post-industrial Britain. According to Clair Schwarz, Meadows's work "overwhelmingly depicts homosocial relationships within an under-class milieu" which have become "the standard foci of the British social realist film" and yet he combines these elements with "older and more universal traditions whether myth or folk culture"[23] indicating that certain masculinities transcend time and place.

The Case of Wales

As I have attempted to demonstrate, the cinema of the post-industrial Britain points to an increasing number of viewpoints about, and responses to, the changing nature of the social and economic make-up of the UK. The "Break-up of Britain" which Nairn spoke of in 1977 shows little sign of slowing, leaving the "Yookay" political construct looking increasingly fragile and contingent. This splitting of the British "nation" into its constituent parts, however, does permit increased scope for the identification of film texts which attempt to elucidate concerns which are nationally or regionally specific. In the next section of this chapter, I shall examine a diverse set of films and attempt to constellate common thematic concerns which either locate them as specifically "Welsh" in nature or the ways in which they display similarities to, or differences from, previous popular images of masculine identity in Wales. Due to the somewhat restricted scope of this exegesis, I am unable to provide an exhaustive survey of all of the films which fit into the various thematic categories which I have identified. I shall therefore confine myself to the analysis of the strongest and most prominent examples of the thematic concerns I have identified per section. I will provide a list of other films which exhibit similar thematic concerns in the footnotes.

[23] Clair Schwarz *Shane Meadows: Representations of Liminality, Masculinity and Class* Doctoral Thesis, University of the West of England, 2013, p.15

Fatherhood

Despite the different approaches the films mentioned above take to the construction of post-industrial masculine identities, a recurrent theme across many of these texts is the changing nature of fatherhood. As I have already outlined, the erosion of traditionally masculine professions and the subsequent "feminising" of workplaces has led to what Castells terms "the end of patriarchalism"[24] which is depicted often onscreen as having a deleterious effect on post-industrial fatherhood.

Older cinematic depictions of industrial Wales depict fathers as stoic and hardworking, as in *Today We Live* (Ruby Grierson/Ralph Bond,1937)*, Y Chwarelwr* (Ifan ab Owen Edwards, 1935)*, How Green Was My Valley* (John Ford, 1941)*, The Proud Valley* (Pen Tennyson, 1940); as martyrs in *Y Chwarelwr, How Green Was My Valley, The Proud Valley* and *Blue Scar* (Jill Craigie, 1949). With the depictions of suffering and self-sacrifice of the fathers in *The Proud Valley* and especially *How Green Was My Valley* bordering on saintliness.[25] The Welsh mining/quarrying films of the 1930s-1950s typically feature sons following their fathers into their skilled manual professions, suggesting an unbroken continuity of community and masculine bodily performance. Even those films which do not feature an actual father tend to at least insert a father *figure.* These figures can take the form of pastors and ministers as in *The Last Days of Dolwyn* (Emlyn Williams, 1949)*, Valley of Song* (Gilbert Gunn, 1953) and *How Green Was My Valley* (which also features an actual father); older men and pit managers in *A Run for Your Money* (Charles Frend, 1949)*;* and various agents of the patriarchal state including a doctor in *The Citadel* (King Vidor, 1938) *;* a teacher in *The Corn is Green* (Irving Rapper, 1945) and military officers in *Zulu* (Cy Endfield, 1964). The father, or father figure, therefore, represents a sense of stability and coherent identity. Films depicting post-industrial Wales explore the increasing

[24] Manuel Castells *The Power of Identity* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, Ltd. 1997) pp.134-242
[25] Elizabeth Dilys Jones *Changing narratives of minority peoples' identities in Welsh and Basque film* Doctoral thesis, University of Wales Trinity Saint David, 2013 pp.45-47

disempowerment and marginalisation of men in a variety of ways and often serve to subvert the stability and coherence embodied by earlier depictions of fatherhood.

Violent or Tyrannical Fathers

Yr Alcoholig Llon/The Happy Alcoholic (Karl Francis, 1983), a film which Berry describes as "intimidatingly, relentlessly downbeat"[26] charts the struggle of alcoholic miner Alun (Dafydd Hywel) to overcome his addiction. In an early part of the film, we see Alun in the homosocial space of the local working men's club, drinking with his friends. His wife Gwen (Eluned Jones), frustrated that Alun has not returned home for dinner, enters the club, with their young daughter El (Eleri Evans) in tow, and throws a tray of food at him. Humiliated, Alun manhandles Gwen off the premises while El looks on, terrified. Like other post-industrial films, *Yr Alcoholig Llon* begins with an expression of male frustration at the female encroachment upon a masculine space. Later, Alun gets black-out drunk, after which we learn that he has beaten and raped Gwen. Despite Alun's remorse and professed inability to recall his actions, Gwen leaves with their daughter and goes to a women's refuge. The set-up mirrors and subverts traditional images of Welsh industrial communities: the "breadwinning" miner is reduced to a hopeless drunk who violently lashes out; the Mam quickly escapes the domestic space which has become intolerable. Together, these things could be taken as symbolic of the wider destabilization of social identity. The mise-en-scene of the exterior shots frequently place Alun against scenes of industrial decay, Alun's bodily and psychological disintegration reflecting that of his surroundings. Alun's status as a former coalminer who has succumbed to the humiliation of worklessness and addiction, which apparently feeds his violent and

[26] Dave Berry *Wales and Cinema: The First Hundred Years* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1994) p.387

tyrannical behaviour, subverts earlier Welsh images of the heroic, industrial man whose status as breadwinner ensured familial stability and community cohesion. [27]

Absent Fathers

Several films depicting post-industrial Welsh communities, while they may not feature fathers or father figures who are violent or tyrannical, depict fathers/father figures whose absences are remarked upon within the narrative. In *House of America* (Marc Evans 1997) and *High Tide* (James Gillingham and Jimmy Hay 2015) the absent father becomes a central narrative focus. In *House of America* the siblings Sid (Steven Mackintosh) Boyo (Matthew Rhys) and Gwenny (Lisa Palfrey), who live in post-industrial Wales with their Mam, Marlene (Sian Phillips), cope with their father's absence by constructing an elaborate fantasy in which he left their poverty-stricken valley to seek his fortune in an idealised American West.[28] While in *High Tide* the father is not absent from the characters' lives, his absence from the narrative allows Bethan (Melanie Walters) and her teenage son Josh (Sam Davies) to discuss their individual relationships with their offscreen husband and father and in turn resolve the difficulties in their own relationship. The two films end with the revelation that both Marlene and Bethan murdered their husbands after suffering years of emotional and physical abuse.

In *Human Traffic* (Justin Kerrigan, 1999) the absence of Jip's (John Simm) father is also suggested to be the cause of the subversion of the Mam figure. Jip's (single) mother (Helen Griffin) is seen to be earning money as a sex worker. The film implies that the absence of a father/husband has left the "Mam" vulnerable to the predatory forms of masculinity. This is depicted as a source of consternation for Jip, who fantasises about angrily confronting one of his mother's "punters." Matt Glasby suggests that Jip's inability to perform sexually, an issue which is remarked upon throughout

[27] Other examples of Welsh films featuring tyrannical fathers/father figures include *Milwr Bychan/Boy Soldier* (Karl Francis, 1986); *Twin Town* (Kevin Allen, 1997); *Human Traffic* (Justin Kerrigan, 1999); *Very Annie Mary* (Sara Sugarman, 2001); *A Way of Life* (Amma Asante, 2004).
[28] Steve Blandford 'Making House of America: An Interview with Marc Evans and Ed Thomas' in *Wales on Screen* ed. by Steve Blandford, (Bridgend: Poetry Press Wales, Ltd. 2000) pp.66-89 (p.85)

the film, is related to his "Oedipal discomfort" with his mother's profession.[29] While earlier screen depictions of Wales construct both father figures and the Mam figure as symbols of stability and permanence, the removal of the father from the narrative space, and as such rendering him impermanent, also shatters the stability previously offered by the Mam. [30]

Damaged or Powerless Fathers

In several films depicting post-industrial Wales, the fathers/father figures are neither absent nor typically violent or tyrannical, yet they remain diminished either by their lack of social and economic power or through physical or psychological damage. Unemployment and the deleterious effects that is has on masculine identity is a common theme among numerous films depicting post-industrial Wales.

Karl Francis's drama/documentary, *Above Us the Earth* (1977) focuses upon the closure of the Ogilvie Colliery and the "friction and anxiety attendant on the redeployment of the men to other pits."[31] The film portrays a fictionalised account of an unemployed miner (played by real life miner Windsor Rees). Unlike the images of unemployed miners in earlier films, who are typically defined by their physical prowess, Windsor's ageing body is wracked with silicosis, leaving him unable to work and on the verge of bodily collapse. In *Aderyn Papur/And Pigs Might Fly…* (Stephen Bayly, 1984), set in a former slate community, unemployed ex-quarryman Gwyn (John Ogwen) is forced to rely on the effort and ingenuity of his young son, Alun (Richard Love), to secure a future in which employment may once again be possible. Similarly, in *Twin Town,* the Lewis family patriarch, Fatty (Huw Ceredig), relies on the money his adult daughter Adie (Rachel Scorgie) makes from working in a massage parlour. Fatty's one attempt at securing employment, performing "off the books" roofing work for

[29] Matt Glasby *Britpop Cinema: From Trainspotting to This Is England* (Bristol, Intellect, 2019) p.124
[30] Other examples of narratives which draw attention to the absence of fathers/father figures include *Streetlife (*Karl Francis, 1995) and *A Way of Life*.
[31] Jones p.205

local businessman, Bryn Cartwright (William Thomas)-which points the increasing casualisation of the workforce-ends in disaster when he seriously injures himself. In *I Know You Know* (Justin Kerrigan, 2009) Robert Carlyle's Charlie convinces his son, Jamie (Arron Fuller) that he is working undercover for MI6. However, it is revealed that this is an elaborate fantasy, or delusion, on Charlie's part to compensate for his unemployment and crippling debts.

The diminution of the masculinities which are defined either by physical prowess or mental acuity, through unemployment, age, physical or emotional damage, or a combination of all of them, especially when compared to earlier, "heroic" images of the industrial man, can indicate a "failure" of masculinity and a fragmentation of masculine identity. [32]

Positive Fathers

Despite a considerable number of male figures in films depicting post-industrial Wales being portrayed as having failed in some way to live up to normative expectations of fatherhood or paternal authority, certain post-industrial films do feature more positive depictions of fathers/father figures, even if they exist alongside more negative portrayals of fatherhood.

In *Milwr Bychan,* Sergeant Crane (Dafydd Hywel) attempts to protect imprisoned Welsh soldier Wil (Richard Lynch) from the oppressive and sadistic instincts of the "tyrannical fathers" of the British state. This is partially achieved through Wil and Crane's ability to speak Welsh which allows Crane, early in the film, to impart information to Wil without the knowledge of the other, exclusively English-speaking officers. The use of linguistic code-switching to circumvent the anglophone hegemony of the state signals a potential reestablishment of the line of continuity between paternal/filial figures via the inheritance of the Welsh language. Lines of continuity can also be found

[32] Other films featuring powerless or damaged fathers/father figures include *Human Traffic; Oed Yr Addewid/Do Not Go Gentle* (Emlyn Williams, 2000); *Little White Lies* (Caradog Jones, 2006) *Submarine* (Richard Ayoade, 2010); *Just Jim* (Craig Roberts, 2015) and *Bridgend* (Jeppe Ronde, 2015)

in *Rhosyn a Rhith* (Stephen Bayly, 1986) and *The Testimony of Taliesin Jones* (Martin Duffy, 2000). In *Rhosyn a Rhith,* Tref (Dafydd Hywel), despite his unemployment, still attempts to perform the masculine role of "provider" for his estranged wife and their children. In the latter film, lonely teenager, Taliesin (John Paul MacLeod) escapes his unhappy home life when he is "adopted" by father-figure and faith healer, Billy (Ian Bannen). Taliesin, already a believer in God, is shown by Billy how to heal illnesses using the power of prayer alone. The use of the Christian faith in this manner is redolent of the anti-materialism found in earlier texts such as *How Green Was My Valley* and *Blue Scar* and is suggestive of residual forms of masculine identity. Additionally, the decision to give the name Taliesin to the main protagonist has the potential to invoke images of the legendary sixth century bard of the same name[33] which indicates an even longer line of unbroken continuity[34].

Young Masculinities

Several of the films which I have surveyed feature young people or children as protagonists. While earlier cinematic depictions of Wales, such as *How Green Was My Valley, The Proud Valley, The Corn is Green* and *The Last Days of Dolwyn* feature children or young people as protagonists, they are depicted alongside adults in stable, or to revisit Raymond Williams' term, knowable communities, which "show people and their relationships in essentially knowable and communicable ways."[35] The "knowability" of these communities means that the young people in these films have an intelligible path towards maturity, usually through work or education. These films, then, could be said to contain elements of the "coming of age" story or *Bildungsroman.* Franco Moretti defines the *Bildungsroman* as one in which the protagonist learns to overcome the "conflict between the ideal of *self-determination* and the equally imperious demands of *socialization.*"[36] This, Moretti explains,

[33] Emyr Humphreys *The Taliesin Tradition* (1983) (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press, 2000) p.8
[34] Other films in this category include *Bydd yn Wrol/Be Brave* (Terry Dyddgen Jones, 1996) and *Pride* (Matthew Warchus, 2014)
[35] Raymond Williams *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press,1973) p.165
[36] Franco Moretti *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture* trans. Albert Sbragia, (London, Verso, 2000) p.15 (Author's italics)

acts as a stabilising factor in the face of a potentially disorientating modernity[37] which, if we recall Lacan, can be associated with the subject's entry into the symbolic order. Numerous film depictions of post-industrial Wales subvert or reverse this process leading to a profound destabilization of relationships and communities. In this sense, the post-industrial can be linked to postmodernism. Jean Francois Lyotard sees postmodernism as the breaking down of "master narratives" of knowledge and the understanding of existence[38] which Frederic Jameson states can lead to "social confusion."[39]

The Inversion of Fatherhood

As I outlined in the previous section of this chapter, the "failure" of fatherhood and the breakdown in continuities of masculine identity has, in certain film texts, almost as a corollary, led to a situation where the father/son dyad is inverted, and the son ends up becoming a parental figure to the father. In *Aderyn Papur/And Pigs Might Fly…* eleven-year-old Alun must "become very old very young"[40] to rescue his recession hit community. Alun mistakenly believes that two Japanese tourists are in fact businessmen looking to open a factory which will use slate from the local quarries to manufacture snooker tables, which will revitalise the moribund economy and provide employment for his father.[41] It is Alun who takes on the active, paternal role as he tries to persuade the increasingly bemused tourists that his village is an ideal place in which to invest. Alun's actions, in defence of the continuation of an industry which is closely associated with the labouring masculine body stands in contrast to his father's passivity and lack of action.

[37] Ibid p.9
[38] Jean Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1984)
[39] Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* Verso, (London: Verso, 1991) p.416
[40] Berry p.327
[41] Elain Price 'A Cultural Exchange: S4C, Channel 4 and Film' *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 2013 Vol. 33, No. 3 pp.418-433 (p.426)

I Know You Know finds Charlie's thirteen-year-old son, Jamie, attempting to deal with his father's mental health issues: Charlie is forced to decode and navigate his father's conspiratorial fantasies. The film opens by foregrounding the generic conventions of the coming-of-age film, with Jamie and Charlie moving into a new area and Jamie dealing with the challenges of fitting in and forming friendships at his new school. However, the film quickly introduces elements of the spy-thriller as we see Charlie brandishing a handgun and later seemingy going undercover to investigate an apparent conspiracy involving an international satellite company. Charlie, however, involves his son in the conspiracy and allows Jamie to accompany him and help him out on his "missions". One potential facet of the coming-of-age genre, which Philippa Maslin identifies, is the presence of an adult mentor whom the subject learns from on their path to self-realisation.[42] The film, then, ostensibly retains the conventions of the coming-of-age genre as Jamie is apparently tutored in art of espionage by his father. This recalls earlier cinematic images of Wales where sons learn from and follow their fathers into their profession. Throughout the course of the film, however, it becomes clear that the conspiracy is a delusion on the part of Charlie who, as described in the previous section of this chapter, has constructed an elaborate, "heroic" fantasy to compensate for his unemployment and debt. As Jones points out, Charlie's elision of fantasy and reality in which he "plays" at being a spy renders him childlike.[43] As the film goes on, his delusion becomes increasingly clear to Jamie which inverts their relationship as Jamie is forced to play along with Charlie's fantasy in the way a parent may indulge a child. As such Jamie is forced into the position of a father figure as Charlie's behaviour becomes increasingly erratic. The film ends with the fragmentation of Charlie's masculine identity as he suffers a psychological collapse. Jamie comforts and reassures his father, and it is notable that he addresses him as Charlie rather than Dad, indicating that he has fully

[42] Philippa Maslin *Contemporary British Coming-of-Age Films (1979-Present)* PhD Thesis, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2018 p.67
[43] Jones p.260

adopted the parental role. The final moments of the film indicate that Charlie has slipped further into delusion and that Jamie devoted himself to caring for him.[44]

Uncertainty, Trauma and Melancholia

The erosion of stable and coherent masculine identities and communities are shown in several of the films I have surveyed, to have a profoundly damaging effect on the psychological wellbeing of their protagonists. While some of these films offer, or hint at, strategies for coping with others feature young protagonists who suffer total emotional collapse, while at other times this manifests itself by means of violence, which the protagonists inflict upon themselves or upon others.

Wil's masculine identity in *Milwr Bychan* can be defined as one which is in a state of severe trauma. The film explicitly links the rapid deindustrialisation of South Wales, and the erosion of social and economic power with Wil's decision to join the British army. He initially admits that donning the British military uniform provides him with a sense of masculine power no longer available to him in Wales. However, in doing so, Wil soon "arrives at the point where his Welsh identity cannot deal with being part of a colonial army of occupation in a fellow Celtic country"[45] This recalls the divided subjectivity of the colonial/colonised subject whose crisis of identity, as Bhabha puts it, "threatens to split the soul and whole undifferentiated skin of the ego"[46] The seeming irreconcilable nature of Welshness and Britishness, which ultimately results in Wil's incarceration and brutalisation at the hands of the British state, remains radically unassimilable to Wil and as such threatens the fragmentation of his subjectivity.

In *House of America,* Sid has a similarly problematic relationship with his Welsh identity, although it manifests itself in a way which can be defined as melancholic. Sid conspicuously adopts an overtly

[44] *Submarine* is another example of a film set in post-industrial Wales in which the son takes on a fatherly role. Here, fifteen-year-old Oliver Tate (Craig Roberts) must care for his father, Lloyd (Noah Taylor) whose depression is threatening to break up his marriage to Oliver's mother Jill (Sally Hawkins).
[45] Blandford 2007 p.89
[46] Homi Bhabha *The Location of Culture* (1994) (Abingdon: Routledge Classics) 2004 p.107

American form of masculinity defined by "his motorbike and the mythology of the road,"[47] which is in part a response to his own expressed dissatisfaction with the "indigenous" cultural iconography of Wales. However, Sid's reliance on this Americanised fantasy, increasingly at the expense of his own grip on reality, is also a possible response to the dysfunction of his home life. Sid clings to the belief that his father is absent from the home due to his having travelled to the American West to seek his fortune. The fantasy of the "lost" father being in the USA coincides with Sid's own fantasised identity, indicating that he has taken the lost love object (the father) into his own ego, as per melancholia. The ultimate revelation that Sid's mother murdered his father leads to the collapse of Sid's fantasises masculinity and prevents him from resolving his melancholia, which leads to his suicide.[48]

Masculinity and Community

As I have attempted to demonstrate throughout this chapter, the films depicting a deindustrialising or post-industrial Wales, in common with a broader trend within films depicting post-industrial Britain, have tended to focus upon the way in which masculine identities have been forced to cope with changes in social and economic structures and the bewilderment and instability this often creates. As outlined above, the collapse of "knowable communities" which, in the case of popular images of Wales, typically centre around a male dominated society with an industry based upon skilled physical labour as its economic base. Due to the breakdown in certainties that the destruction of these community models represents, it is possible to link the post-industrial (and Post Fordism) with postmodernism. A third term can be added here, namely the post-national.

Broadly, the post-national can be defined, as per Jurgen Habermas, as a symptom of the globalising tendencies of neoliberal politics which "consist in finding the appropriate forms for the democratic

[47] Daryl Perrins 'The Cinema Has Two Tongues: The Cinema Cultures of Wales' in *A Companion to British and Irish Cinema*, ed. by John Hill (Oxford: Wiley, 2019) pp.510-531 (p.522)
[48] Other films featuring these themes include *Human Traffic*, *A Way of Life*, *Little White Lies*, *Submarine*, *Just Jim*, and *Bridgend*

process to take place *beyond* the nation state."[49] As Habermas goes on to state, global economic objectives mean that nation-states can often only increase their competitiveness through the policies designed to dismantle things such as nationalised industries or welfare provision, which in turn end up damaging social cohesion and stability. This, in turn, exposes the term "society" as merely a term that encompasses "the tensions, contradictions and ambiguities that arise from the realisation of ideals of freedom and equality."[50] As a corollary to this, in the United Kingdom, Thatcher, and Thatcherism, are seen as responsible for the unleashing of neoliberal economic policies in the country. Fittingly Habermas, citing Thatcher's famous mantra "there is no such thing as society", which encapsulates the rather arbitrary nature of the term "society", describes her as the "first genuinely postmodern politician"[51] which indicates a strong causal link between the post-industrial, the postmodern and the post-national. Despite the instabilities that have emerged because of these factors, epiphenomenal to this is the rise of "non-territorial" identities which, thanks to modern media and communications technologies, herald a set of identities which exist on both a local and global level. As John Agnew states, the erosion of local stabilities, in which "national membership no longer guarantees the status and rewards that it once could" result in new sources of globalised identity "such as gender, sexual orientation […] that have risen in importance at the very moment when national identities cease to have an *inclusive* hold over large populations."[52] The films of post-industrial Wales explore the changes or erosions of local and national communities in favour of the post-national, and the effects that this has on masculine identities in multiple ways.

Reconstructing the "traditional (racially homogenous) masculine community."

In his essay, *Labouring Under Whiteness,* Phil Cohen, using Jean Baudrillard's theory of the "habitus", presents an analysis of working-class, white, labouring communities. The habitus consists of "a set of

[49] Jurgen Habermas *The Postnational Constellation* (trans) Max Pensky, (Cambridge: Polity, 2001) p.61
[50] Ibid pp.51-59
[51] Ibid p.59
[52] John Agnew 'The Limits of Federalism' in *Transnational Democracy: Political Spaces and Border Crossings* ed. by James Anderson (London: Routledge, 2002) p.59

customary rules, rituals and invented traditions into which subjects are inducted" which informs the ways in which they behave in, and react to, the social world which they inhabit. In Cohen's analysis, this has the effect of binding subjects together in a process akin to Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, resulting in the formation of "imagined communities of labour." [53] Unlike Anderson, however, Cohen accounts for the continued binding effect not due to fealty to a concept of nationhood but rather from a compensatory desire, in the face of the subject's alienation from their own exploited labour, "for a unitary and ideally productive body-of-labour whose power no longer depends on any means outside itself."[54] Cohen's description recalls the masculine fantasies of wholeness and the subject's fear of fragmentation identified in some of the films depicting industrial Welsh masculinities. Furthermore, as Cohen goes on to state, the "initiation" into these communities is, or was, often based upon fathers initiating sons into the same occupational habitus which represents "an almost exclusive masculinism" and means that "growing up is essentially an apprenticeship into a fixed inheritance", all things which are frequently foregrounded in "industrial" films. The consanguinity that results from this "provides a template for what we might call the protoracialization of labour power."[55] Several films of post-industrial Wales feature protagonists who attempt to reconstruct or rescue these traditional labouring communities from destruction or else protect them from what they view as encroachment from outsiders. A common feature of these films, however, and one which marks out their post-industrial nature, as distinct from earlier films, is that they combine newer or emergent forms of identity with more traditional forms and in turn create hybrid identities and masculinities.

Rhosyn a Rhith/Coming Up Roses depicts an economically depressed community in the form of a former mining town in South Wales, where the closure of the Rex Cinema leaves projectionist Trefor unemployed. As Jones notes, Trefor's plight could be taken as a metaphor for Welsh miners losing

[53] Phil Cohen 'Labouring Under Whiteness' in *Displacing Whiteness: Essays in Social and Cultural Criticism*, ed. by Ruth Frankenberg (London: Duke University Press, 1997) pp.244-282 (pp.246-247)
[54] Ibid
[55] Ibid p.247-248

their jobs.[56] However, unlike characters such as Alun in *Yr Alcoholig Llon* who sinks into addiction and depression as the result of the loss of his breadwinner status, Trefor takes it upon himself, alongside the cinema's usherette Mona (Iola Gregory), to try to prevent the demolition of the cinema and transform it into a space in which to generate alternative sources of revenue. Businessman, Mr Valentine (Bill Patterson), is uninterested in the social and cultural value of the cinema building; he is only concerned with the value of the land on which it sits. This too can be taken as a metaphor for the avaricious nature of free market capitalism which Thatcherism venerates. Notably, it is Mona rather than Trefor who leads the efforts to use the cinema to generate revenue before it is sold off: she, and a group of local women use the abandoned auditorium to grow mushrooms, an enterprise which meets with some success. The mise-en-scene, featuring women labouring in the darkness, using old miners' helmets for light is, of course, a deliberate parody of the traditional image of the Welsh miner. This subversion of the iconography of Welsh masculinity suggests, paradoxically, that it is women who will protect or reconstruct the traditional masculine community by fulfilling the breadwinner role. [57]

A Way of Life (Amma Asante, 2004)*,* meanwhile, features characters who attempt to reconstruct the ostensibly lost occupational habitus through the extreme deployment of the racial exclusivity which Cohen describes in his essay. In *A Way of Life,* the young, unemployed inhabitants of the economically broken housing estate on the post-industrial Cardiff fringe form their own proto-community, which is based upon consanguinity and endogamy but, crucially, is stripped of the element of masculine "inheritance" through labour. The post-national economic order, which has led to the disappearance of jobs defined by physical strength and skill, means that "certain types of traditionally white manual work take on a hyperinflationary value […] because they require or permit the public display of masculinities which have otherwise become redundant or dysfunctional."[58] The

[56] Jones p.211
[57] Other films in which characters attempt to 'reconstruct' traditional, male centred communities include *Bydd Yn Wrol, House!* (Julian Kemp, 2000) *Pride a*nd *Save the Cinema* (Sara Sugarman, 2022).
[58] Cohen p.254

unmooring of whiteness from the concept of masculine inheritance, as Cohen explains, means that it becomes "a pure narcissism of physical difference" directed at those that do not conform to the "habitus of white male territorialism."[59] These factors mean that Turkish born Hassan (Oliver Haden), despite having lived in Wales for most of his life, becomes the cynosure of racist hatred due to his perceived " taking of things that belong 'naturally' to the unemployed, angry young people that live on his street,"[60] particularly given Hassan's status as the bearer of bodily skill.

Linguistic Communities

The use of the Welsh language and its relationship to, and conflicts with, English (as well as other languages) and the ways in which this can relate to masculine identities is something I have briefly outlined in earlier sections of this chapter. Several films which I have surveyed deploy the Welsh language in ways which either attempt in some way to reassert a traditional masculine community or else serve to construct the possibility of new, hybrid masculinities.

In *Yr Alcoholig Llon,* Alun, as a member of the local male voice choir, initially rails against the "baggage" of older forms of Welsh identity, as he refuses to sing *Sul Y Blodau,* declaring that such music "died a long time ago", despite the academic and choir master (David Lyn) insisting that the song is "as good as ever."[61] This can be seen as Alun's rejection of traditional forms of Welsh masculinity associated with the chapel in which men are the bearers and transmitters of culture. Later in the film, however, Alun walks out of an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting due to his discomfort at it being conducted in English, stating that "I can't *feel* unless it's in Welsh." For Alun, then, the "custodians" Welsh language culture can be criticised for their clinging to moribund

[59] Ibid p.255
[60] Steve Blandford '*A Way of Life:* British Cinema and New British Identities' *Journal of British Cinema and Television*, Volume 5, Issue 1, March 2009, pp.99-112 (p.108)
[61] Berry p.390

traditions and that Welsh can used as a tool for expressing emotions, in distinction to a break with older forms of masculinity characterised by stoicism and the concealment of feelings.

Milwr Bychan sees characters using Welsh as a bulwark against the abject cruelty of the (anglophone) British state. Welsh-English code switching is deliberately foregrounded from the opening scene onwards. The film begins with Wil and his fellow Welsh soldiers deliberately humiliating and threatening two unarmed Northern Irish civilians. The sequence is conducted in English, as are later scenes featuring physically punishing military drills as well as Wil's brutalisation and his encounter with a patronising and uncaring doctor. However, scenes of Wil and other members of his battalion enjoying "downtime" and indulging in homosocial bonding rituals are conducted in Welsh, as are the sequences in which an emotionally broken Wil is comforted by a member of the Salvation Army, Kevin (W.J. Phillips). It can be argued therefore that English and Welsh are deployed in the service of "official" and "unofficial" masculinities. The official, Anglophone masculinities being the language through which the business of the patriarchal state is conducted as well as the performance of tough, martial masculinities. Welsh, on the other hand, is the language of the "unofficial" masculine community of friendship and expression of emotion where the characters can "take refuge" in their language.[62]

Language and the Performance of Queer Masculinities

Gadael Lenin (Endaf Emlyn, 1994) allows for the performance of queer masculinities in a foreign location, with the film using language as a key element. *Gadael Lenin* features a group of sixth formers and their three teachers as they embark on a school trip to Saint Petersburg. Here, the teenage character, Spike (Steffan Trefor) finds that his linguistic abilities (he can speak Russian as well as Welsh and English) permit him to involve himself more fully with "the new country and

[62] Ibid p.391

create connections with its people."[63] Spike meets, and falls in love with, young St. Petersburg resident, Sasha (Ivan Shvedoff) an artist who brings Spike into his bohemian community. The film, therefore, presents a narrative of escape for Spike's character from the pressures and restrictiveness of Wales to a space where he can be open about his sexuality. As Lisa Richards points out, Spike's use of language, particularly in the context of his relationship with Sasha is a key element. Spike reveals to Sasha that he had a homosexual relationship with a boy at his school, although he called it off due to his unreadiness to express his sexuality, which caused the boy to commit suicide. Despite Sasha's ability to speak English, Spike confesses this in Russian, meaning that Spike "effectively turns his back on the connections to his life in Wales."[64] In distinction with *Yr Alcoholig Llon* and *Milwr Bychan* in which the characters use the Welsh language as a form of refuge, here Spike sees Russian as a refuge *from* his native language and a language in which he can he express a trans/post-national queer masculine identity.[65] The film, however, does not afford Spike a positive ending as, at the last moment, he opts to reject his post-national masculine identity and return to Wales which perhaps exposes the problematic nature of trans/post-national masculinities.

New and Hybrid Communities

The concept of cultural hybridity, as Kirsti Bohata describes, is a multifaceted term which derives from theories of postcolonialism and is "most often used to refer to a process of transculturation which occurs in colonial contact zones, but also extended to refer to a variety of cultural

[63] Lisa Richards *Siarad Sense (Talking Sense): Language Use in the Representation of Teenagers in Film 1990-2005* Doctoral Thesis, Aberystwyth University, 2011 p.142
[64] Ibid p.146
[65] Another film which elides language and queer masculine identity is *Dafydd* (Ceri Sherlock, 1995) which concerns the titular character, played by Richad Harrington, explore his sexual identity after the travels to Amsterdam and meets fellow Welsh emigree David (William Thomas) with whom he forms a sexual relationship. Like *Gadael Lenin*, *Dafydd* does not permit its queer characters a positive ending: it is implied that Dafydd may have murdered David in revenge for his infidelity. This leads Mark Woods to accuse the film of using a well-known homophobic trope- Mark Woods *An Evaluation of the National Cinema of Wales and Whether this Cinema Constructs or Represents a National Identity,* Doctoral Thesis, University of Glamorgan, 2007, p.164

'exchanges'".[66] Homi Bhabha's prominent use of the term is explicitly postcolonial in nature, yet his definition of hybridity rejects the notion of two or more "pure" cultures coming into contact with one another and forming a dialectical arrangement. Rather, hybridity stems from the contestation of cultural authority, which creates a "third space" from which other positions can emerge.[67] This means that hybridity represents "a release from ideas of cultural authenticity and implied fixity of the […] 'parent' cultures" and the formation of hybrid, interstitial spaces.[68]

Human Traffic situates its characters in such spaces which in turn lead to the construction of new/hybrid masculinities. *Human Traffic,* as McLoone points out, "offers up a vision of Cardiff which is 'anywhere-but-Wales' […] the main characters in the film […] are residents of Wales rather than Welsh by birth or ethnicity, emphasising the strange sense of dislocation or 'in-betweenness' that hangs over the film."[69] McLoone's assertion that there is little that is recognisably Welsh within *Human Traffic'*s vision of Cardiff means that, per Bhabha's description of hybridity, there is no "pure" Welsh culture to come into contact or conflict with a "pure" form of Englishness. Instead, the interstitial nature of the space depicted in the film allows the characters to construct new, hybrid identities which extends to the performance of masculinities. So far, the forms of masculine community identities portrayed in the films analysed in this section of the chapter are linked, often explicitly, to Welsh nationality or ethnicity whereas *Human Traffic,* whilst not being entirely devoid of Welsh cultural markers, wears its Welshness "very lightly."[70]

The characters Moff (Danny Dyer) and Nina (Nicola Reynolds) deliberately choose to be unemployed, with an early scene depicting Nina walking out of her job in a fast-food restaurant rather than suffer sexual harassment by her boss. This places her in direct contrast with Jip who

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[66] Kirsti Bohata *Postcolonialism Revisited: Writing Wales in English* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004) p.129
[67] David Huddart *Homi K Bhabha* (London: Routledge, 2006) pp.124-126
[68] Bohata op. cit.
[69] Martin McLoone 'Internal Decolonisation? British Cinema and the Celtic Fringe' in *The British Cinema Book* ed. by Robert Murphy (London: British Film Institute, 2001) pp.184-190 (p.184)
[70] Steve Blandford 'Dramatic Fictions in Postcolonial Wales' in *Postcolonial Wales* ed. by Jane Aaron and Chris Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005) pp.177-192 (p.185)

continues to suffer the indignity of menial work. The film does appear to blame Jip's sexual hang-ups in part on the "feminising" nature of this work. Similarly, Nina's confidence and independence is portrayed as a source of anxiety for her boyfriend, Koop (Shaun Parkes). However, each of the characters are able overcome their difficulties in ways which are less misogynistic than comparable films of the period.[71] Indeed, the hybrid community that the characters create affords as much autonomy and agency to its female members as to the men in the group. This egalitarianism suggests the creation of new hybrid masculine identities which display little in the way of any traits which are recognisably Welsh.[72]

The Subversion, Mockery or Absence of a Recognisable Community

Several films centred around post-industrial Wales feature masculinities which have no connection to any recognisable form of community, whether cultural or linguistic. *House of America, Twin Town, I Know You Know, Submarine* (Richard Ayoade, 2010), and *Just Jim* (Craig Roberts, 2015) all feature young protagonists who are marginalised, isolated and whose masculine identities are often inspired by or copied from, either in whole or in part, from hegemonic images from American cultural mythology. In *House of America,* Sid bases his entire persona on a fantasy of American masculinity while in *Just Jim,* the teenage connoisseur of classic American cinema, Jim (Craig Roberts), is "mentored" by an anachronistic Hollywood tough guy. *Twin Town* meanwhile "quotes" from popular US films. As Perrins points out, a scene in which the Lewis twins deliberately urinate on Bonny Cartwright (Jenny Evans) during a karaoke night is a "deliberate reworking of the pig's blood humiliation scene at the high-school prom in *Carrie,*" while a later scene in which the twins decapitate Bryn Cartwright's poodle and leave its severed head in his bed is a direct parody of the "horse head" scene in *The Godfather.*[73] *I Know You Know,* meanwhile, initially incorporates the generic tropes of the action/spy thriller. Both *House of America* and *Twin Town* mock and subvert

[71] Godfrey p.267
[72] Other films featuring new, or hybrid communities include *a, Very Annie Mary*, *High Tide* and *Bridgend*
[73] Daryl Perrins 'This Town Ain't Big Enough for the Both of Us' in Blandford, ed. 2000 pp.152-167 (p.158)

symbols of traditional Welsh masculine identity. Sid adopts an Americanised persona in part as a reaction to what he sees as moribund or absent signifiers of Welsh masculine identity. Meanwhile, Marlene (Sian Phillips), due to her mental instability, "obliterates" the popular image of the Mam figure. It is revealed at the film's climax that she murdered her husband with a coal hammer, which is not only "an iconic tool within Welsh history"[74] but a potent symbol of industrial masculinity, here transformed into a murder weapon. *Twin Town* revels in its mockery of traditional signifiers of Welsh masculinity such as rugby and male voice choirs while the Mam figure is seemingly repurposed as a sex worker, leading to Perrins criticising the film as "too caustic a letter home, providing a 'by the numbers' approach to cultural deconstruction which fails to offer any way forward."[75] *I Know You Know, Submarine* and *Just Jim,* like the films featuring hybrid masculine communities, include little which is recognisably Welsh beyond their geographical setting and so do not seek overtly mock or subvert Welsh cultural signifiers. However, each of the films surveyed in this section suggest a post-industrial Wales in which masculine identities have become unmoored from earlier forms of inheritance and continuity, rendering older symbols of Welsh masculine identity either subjects of derision or not acknowledged at all. This leaves the protagonists in search of masculine identities which often must be adopted from outside Wales altogether.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to identify several thematic concerns which occur across multiple texts depicting post-industrial Wales. These issues, and the ways in which they relate to masculine identities are by no means peculiar to Wales. However, the deployment, augmentation and subversion of popular screen images of Wales and Welsh masculinity, some which I identified in the opening chapter, can serve to differentiate these texts from films of the same period depicting other parts of the "Yookay".

[74] Jones p.267
[75] Perrins in Hill, ed. p.522

Films such as *Gadael Lenin* and *Pride* (Matthew Warchus, 2014) both subvert traditional images of Welsh masculinity. In *Gadael Lenin* Welsh schoolteacher Mostyn (Wyn Bowen Harries) passionately adheres to the Marxist/Leninist ideology of the Soviet Union to the extent that he and his wife and fellow teacher Eileen (Sharon Morgan), spent their honeymoon in the former Leningrad in 1968. Indeed, Mostyn's entire identity is built around that of the "socialist man." His experience of the new, post-Soviet Russia, as the country emerges from communism and begins to embrace capitalism is a source of bitter disappointment to Mostyn, as his "ideals and self-confidence are utterly shattered." [76] *Pride,* set during the 1984-85 miners' strike, is based upon the real-life story of the London based organisation *Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners* (LGSM) who travel to the South Wales village of Onllwyn to provide financial aid to the striking miners. Louis Bayman argues that *Pride* can be defined as a piece of "retro-heritage"; in common with heritage cinema, *Pride* deploys careful historical detail within its narrative and mise-en-scene yet at the same time the film's retro sensibilities means that it "foregrounds what the spectator knows to be outmoded and obsolete" and thus functions as "an audiovisual museum of subcultural bric-a-brac".[77] The self-conscious use of history invites the spectator to "identify nostalgically with motivations whose eventual frustration we, unlike the characters who hold them, always know will occur and encourages a wish for things to have been different."[78] In the case of *Pride*, the retro-narrative serves to obscure the Thatcher government's eventual brutal crushing of the miners with the film's "feel good" ending notable in that the pit closures and subsequent erosion of mining communities go unremarked upon. Rather, the strike is reframed as being an essential component in the struggle for gay and lesbian rights. Therefore, the retro-heritage mode in which the film is presented can offer both the nostalgic imagery of a stable, continuous, industrial community and combine it with political radicalism. It is within the figure of Cliff Barry (Bill Nighy) that these two elements intersect. Cliff, as a union leader,

[76] Kate Woodward 'Off-road and Off-beat: *Gadael Lenin*, *American Interior* and the Transnational Focus of Welsh Art Cinema' in *Journal of British Cinema and Television* 13:2, 2016, pp.292-311 (p.298)
[77] Louis Bayman 'Can there be a Progressive Nostalgia? Layering Time in *Pride's* Retro-Heritage' *Open Library of Humanities*, 5(1): 19, pp.1-30 (pp.10-11) DOI: https://doi.org/10.16995/olh.324 March 2019
[78] Ibid

represents traditional forms of industrial masculinity and collectivism, however as one of the older characters in the film, he also acts as the possessor and transmitter of far older cultural forms. When the members of the LGSM first arrive in the village, Cliff takes them to a castle which he insists predates the Norman invasion; Cliff goes on to recite a poem which describes the legendary origins of Onllwyn. Cliff, therefore, is a both symbol an unbroken cultural continuity and "normative" forms of masculinity. However, in a touching scene towards the end of the film, Cliff quietly "comes out" as gay to the chair of the strike committee, Hefina Headon (Imelda Staunton). Hefina's immediate acceptance of his sexuality suggests that Cliff can embody an imbrication of new and traditional masculine identities and deploy them in positive ways.

In *Very Annie Mary* (Sara Sugarman, 2001), meanwhile, Annie-Mary's (Rachel Griffiths) opera-loving, widowed father, Deacon Jack Pugh (Jonathan Pryce) is depicted as "overbearing [and] chapel-strict."[79] is redolent of earlier forms of Welsh masculinity, yet unlike the benevolent "pastoral shepherds" of films such as *How Green Was My Valley,* Pugh constantly infantilises and humiliates Annie-Mary. Nevertheless, in contrast to older images of Wales in which, as Dierdre Beddoe states, "Welsh women are culturally invisible,"[80] this film foregrounds Annie Mary's experiences and identity. The experiences of women, and portrayals of motherhood, feature in *Streetlife* (Karl Francis, 1995) *House of America,* and *A Way of Life.* However, unlike the Mam figure who functioned as the "moral custodian of the home"[81] and therefore embodied stability and continuity, the Mam figures in these films serve to "obliterate"[82] earlier depictions of Welsh women.[83]

It can be argued, therefore, that filmic depictions of masculine identity in post-industrial Wales, even if ostensibly there appears little to differentiate them from broader depictions of "British"

[79] Jones p.243
[80] Dierdre Beddoe 'Images of Welsh Women' in *Wales: The Imagined Nation- Essays in Cultural and National Identity* ed. by Tony Curtis (Bridgend: Poetry Press, 1986) pp.225-238 (p.227)
[81] Ibid p.230
[82] Gwenno Ffrancon (2007 ''Glân, Gofalus a Gwallgof: Datblygiad y portread o'r Fam Gymreig ar y sgrîn', *Cyfrwng*, 4: 71-91 quoted in Jones p.259 (Author's Translation)
[83]As well as Marlene murdering her husband in *House of America*, in *Streetlife* (1995) Jo (Helen McCrory) commits infanticide and in *A Way of Life* Leigh-Anne (Stephanie James) is complicit in a racist murder.

masculinity, can be identified through the similarities and contrasts that they possess with reference to traditional images of industrial masculinities in Wales.

Chapter Four: Writing Post-Industrial Masculinity in Wales

In this chapter, I shall outline the elements within *The Last Giant King* which share common themes, settings, character types and narrative styles with the films that I have surveyed. I will also attempt to demonstrate elements in the screenplay which are not typically found in films depicting post-industrial Wales and masculine identities.

Synopsis- The Last Giant King

The early 1990s. Lonely fourteen-year-old Owain is having a tough time. Trapped in a depressing and depressed South Wales valley, his father is out of work, his mam is at the end of her tether and his big brother is heading off to fight a war in a foreign country. Just as he is about to reach his lowest ebb, Owain meets the enigmatic Caradog- two years older than Owain but with a wisdom seemingly as old as time itself. Together With Caradog's help, Owain escapes from his hum-drum existence as the two boys create an elaborate fantasy world based on the myth of Bendigeidfran, or Bran the Blessed, the Last Giant King from the *Second Branch of the Mabinogi* from *The Mabinogion*. As Owain and Caradog's connection intensifies, their hold on reality becomes more and more tenuous until Owain begins to see parallels between this ancient Welsh story and the relationship between his own mother and father. This sets Owain on a dangerous path which will lead to a deadly act of retribution.

Constructing A Protagonist: Narrativizing the Nation?

The Welsh films *Joni Jones* (Stephen Bayly 1982)[1], *Johnny Be Good* (Marc Evans 1984), *On the Black Hill* (Andrew Grieve 1988), *Stormydd Awst* (Endaf Emlyn, 1988), *Un Nos Ola Leuad* (Endaf Emlyn, 1991), *Morphine and Dolly Mixtures* (Karl Francis, 1991) *Elenya* (Steve Gough, 1992) *Y Mapiwr* (Endaf Emlyn, 1995) *Happy Now?* (Philippa Cousins, 2001) *Eldra* (Timothy Lyn, 2002) and *Gwen* (William McGregor, 2018) all centre around the experiences of young people in Wales. Except for *Happy Now?* each of these films take place in a non-contemporary setting and rural or non-industrial locations. The frequency of coming-of-age or *Bildungsroman* narratives was instructive in my own choice of protagonist in *The Last Giant King*. As Vitali and Willemen state:

"[one] of the models used to narrativize the nation and its culture is the *Bildungsroman*- a rhetoric which recounts the birth and maturation of […] the more intangible aspects of an assumed 'national' cultural essence."[2]

Following Moretti's assertion that the *Bildungsroman* form sees its protagonist's gradual initiation into the "comfort of civilisation"[3] it is possible to argue that a character's coming-of-age is intimately tied to a particular point in the nation's history. *Joni Jones* and *Elenya* are set during the Second World War and each film's protagonist comes into contact with "the enemy": an escaped Italian prisoner of war and a crash landed Luftwaffe pilot ; *Y Mapiwr* is set during the cold war and contains frequent references to the Cuban Missile Crisis; *Stormydd Awst* and *Johnny Be Good* are also set in this period and portray the conflicts between traditionally dominant or hegemonic forms of Welsh masculinity and emergent forms, in the guise of rock and roll and sexually liberated attitudes. Meanwhile *On the Black Hill*'s sweeping narrative covers a period of more than eighty years from the late nineteenth century until the 1980s. By placing their protagonists, and by extension Wales, at a globally significant point in history, the films appear to draw a parallel between the growth and

[1] *Joni Jones* began as a television series but was edited into a film and rereleased in 1988.
[2] Valentina Vitali and Paul Willemen 'Introduction' in *Theorising National Cinema* ed. by Valentina Vitali and Paul Willemen (London: British Film Institute, 2006) pp.1-16 (p.2)
[3] Franco Moretti *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture* trans. by Albert Sbragia, (London: Verso, 2000) pp.15-73

maturation of the characters and the Welsh nation becoming "mature" enough to be a part of world history.

My own decision to situate my protagonist's story in the "historical" setting of the South Wales valleys of the early 1990s stems in part from a desire to take what Alastair Bonnett calls an "anti-nostalgic position"[4].Devising a framing narrative which depicts an adult version of Owain in the present day, permits him to show is his youth through flashbacks, demonstrating the difficulties which continue to haunt him. I was inspired to do this after viewing *Un Nos Ola Leuad* and *Elenya* which both use a similar structure The conceit of characters returning to a location and reliving painful memories can be seen as an embodiment of Freud's theory of trauma. In the previous chapter I identified several film texts which explore traumatised identities, with the subjects compelled to repeat or relive traumatic moments unless and until they are resolved.[5] This avoids indulgence in a form of nostalgia which Eric Hobsbawm views as promoting ideologies of resistance to progress.[6]

As Claire Monk's points out, British cinema of the 1990s was preoccupied with masculinities in crisis[7]. This was seen as a reaction to the rapid deindustrialisation and deskilling which occurring in many Western nations. Setting *The Last Giant King* in this era gives the story a temporal proximity to the crises brought about by the loss jobs upon skilled manual labour. Owain's father, Matthew, loses his job which brings about a crisis for his masculine identity. Owain's brother, Liam joins the army as a means of escape from lack of economic opportunities available to him. Owain as witness to

[4] Alastair Bonnett in *Left in the Past: Radicalism and the Politics of Nostalgia,* (London: Continuum, 2010) p.1 quoted in Louis Bayman 'Can there be a Progressive Nostalgia? Layering Time in *Pride's* Retro-Heritage' *Open Library of Humanities*, 5(1): 19, pp.1-30 (p.2) DOI: https://doi.org/10.16995/olh.324 March 2019

[5] Duncan Barford 'In Defence of Death' in Rob Weatherill, ed. *The Death Drive: New Life for a Dead Subject?* Ed. by Rob Weatherill (London: Rebus Press, 1999) pp.12-39 (p.14)

[6] Bayman p.3

[7] Claire Monk 'Men in the 90s' in *British Cinema of the 90s* ed. by Robert Murphy (London: British Film Institute, 2000) pp.156-166

important and shifting social, economic and geopolitical events my attempt to give his *Bildungsroman* a wider context.

Moretti argues that the difference between the (continental) European *Bildungsroman* and the English *Bildungsroman* is the protagonists of the latter are defined by their sheer ordinariness. Unlike the "remarkable" heroes of the European *Bildungsroman,* the heroes of the English stories are defined by their common qualities; they could be *anyone.* [8] This is reflected by Jones's analysis of certain "Welsh" texts which take place in a post-industrial milieux and feature characters who are "more every day, unexceptional, even anonymous" when compared to earlier portrayals of "mythologised" masculine types in Wales. [9] My screenplay's protagonist conforms to Moretti's English *Bildungsroman* tradition and the trends within several contemporary films depicting Wales. While I have ostensibly disconnected my protagonist from the popular iconography of Wales, in selecting the character's name, Owain Llewellyn, I have, rather unsubtly, attempted to suggest a sense of unbroken historical continuity. 'Owain' and 'Llewellyn' are traditional Welsh names, with the latter possibly recalling the 13th century Welsh rulers Llywelyn the Great and his grandson Llywelyn the Last. The younger Llywelyn, despite his "shrewd and canny" nature, was defeated and killed on the orders of English king Edward I. His death, states Jon Gower, represented "a bitter watershed in the story of Wales- the country was now an English colony."[10] The name 'Owain' is suggestive of Owain Glyndwr whose rebellion against the English crown more than a century after the death of Llywelyn the Last, made him an "effective talisman and key touchstone for nascent nationalist energies."[11] The invocation of Welsh historical (medieval) figures, particularly those associated with armed rebellion, coupled with Owain's later descent into fantasy based around the

[8] Moretti p.189
[9]Elizabeth Jones *Changing Narratives of Minority Peoples' Identities in Welsh and Basque Film* Doctoral Thesis, University of Wales: Trinity Saint David, 2013 p.256
[10] Ibid pp.114-120
[11] Ibid p.146

violent medieval story of Bran the Blessed, shows a desire on Owain's part to perform a mode of masculinity which is both chivalric in nature and explicitly Welsh in character.

Finding Masculine Identities

Owain-Aged Fourteen

My decision to make the protagonist a teenager means that he is yet to be fully enculturated, or to use a Lacanian term, yet to be completely initiated into the symbolic order. Situating him just outside of the "adult" world allows him to, at least temporarily, escape from "the punishing norms that discipline behaviour and manage human development with the goal of delivering us from unruly childhoods to predictable adulthood"[12] through the "unruliness" of fantasy and the rejection of a predictable reality. Predictability can be associated with order and has been historically constructed as the domain of the masculine. Owain's desire to escape the rational helps to subvert the masculine character of Owain's imaginary world. Early in the narrative, Owain reluctantly plays rugby during a school games lesson. His lack of both physical prowess and desire to take part is apparent: he freezes when the ball is passed to him; and is brutally tackled to the ground. This may be viewed as a cliché, but it constitutes a useful thematic shorthand. Rugby, as well as possessing a heavy emphasis on intense, powerful physicality and team spirit, is deployed, often stereotypically, as symbolic of Welsh culture. Despite Balsom's model of a culturally and linguistically divided Wales, the country will often "unite" around support for the Welsh national team which can help, albeit temporarily to create a national community.[13] Owain's distaste for the de facto "national game" as well as his generally solitary nature, uncouples him from a sense of community and cultural continuity and, at

[12] Judith Halberstam *The Art of Queer Failure* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2011) p.3
[13] Daniel John Evans 'Welshness in 'British Wales': negotiating national identity on the margins' in *Nations and Nationalism* **25** (1), 2019, 167–190.

least initially, situates him alongside the similarly "adrift" and isolated young protagonists in films such as *House of America, Twin Town, I Know You Know, Submarine,* and *Just Jim.*

A frequent feature of coming-of-age narratives is the depiction of emerging sexuality or a form of sexual "awakening."[14] There are certain "Welsh" texts which feature coming of age narratives that depict the performance of queer masculinities such as *Gadael Lenin, Dafydd, Bydd yn Wrol, Very Annie Mary* and *Pride,* a majority feature heterosexual relationships. While my narrative avoids any overt depictions of his sexuality, the adult framing narrative shows him in a heterosexual marriage and with a young son. However, Owain's marriage is arrived at via a narrative ellipsis: unlike other coming of age narratives, we do not witness any form of burgeoning romance or courtship. His marriage happens between the teenage and adult stories. It is for the viewer to decide how troubled, teenage Owain became the adult father we meet in the film.

Owain's father, Matthew

Matthew, early in the narrative is depicted as embodying the dominant/hegemonic mode of industrial masculinity; his job in the steelworks is predicated on tough, physical labour and bodily skill. I have included a sequence in which Owain inadvertently witnesses Matthew administering a savage beating to a man named Gary who is revealed to be Owain's brother Liam's biological father. Owain is disturbed by this as this as, for the first time, he becomes aware of this side of his father's nature. The violence here is depicted as furtive and crepuscular, taking place in a side alleyway at nighttime, which suggests that Matthew is aware of the illicit nature of his act. Later, he attempts to reassure Owain that Gary needed to be "dealt with" as he wished to harm Owain and Liam's mother, Alys. The use of violence among men as either a corrective or a way to "settle scores" is a common feature in films of the 1940s and 1950s which depict industrial Wales. *The Proud Valley, How Green*

[14] Philippa Maslin *Contemporary British Coming-of-Age Films (1979-Present)* Doctoral Thesis, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2018 p.75

Was My Valley, The Corn is Green, The Last Days of Dolwyn, Valley of Song and *Blue Scar* all feature acts of violence, ranging from fisticuffs to murder. Yet the violent acts in these films are, almost universally, shown to be either unproblematic or even viable solutions to problems both interpersonal and community wide. My intention was for Matthew's justification for his violent act to reflect these traditional images of Welsh industrial masculinity while problematising them through both Owain's reaction and mise-en-scene during the beating.

In a later draft of my screenplay, I inserted a scene which shows Matthew at work, which focuses on his performance of skilled manual labour. I made the decision to do so after watching Sir Keir Starmer's speech at the 2021 Labour Party conference. During the speech he quotes from the WH Auden poem *Sext* about the value of skilled labour:

"You need not see what someone is doing to know if it is his vocation, you have only to watch his eyes. How beautiful it is, that eye-on-the-object look."

Starmer goes on to associate these words with his own formative experiences: "I saw that eye-on-the-object look in my dad. The pride that good work brings. It puts food on the table, and it provides a sense of dignity."[15] Of course this speech, on one level, functions as a mission statement for the Labour Party: the promise of an abundance of well-paid jobs should they get elected to office. However, Starmer's deliberate invocation of his father's performance of a form of bodily skill which is chiefly associated with traditional tough masculinity shows his awareness of the political and cultural capital that exists in skilled, working-class, "masculine" labour. Here Starmer is at once overtly associating himself with this form of masculinity and tacitly promising to recover a disappearing type of masculine community. When Matthew is made redundant due to the closure of

[15] https://labourlist.org/2021/09/we-can-win-the-next-election-keir-starmers-labour-conference-speech/. Accessed 09/03/2024.

the steelworks, he loses not only the "dignity" of being a breadwinner but a highly valued cultural status which causes him to lash out violently against his own family. Lynne Segal states that,

"In a culture which constructs masculinity around ideas of dominance, social power and control over others, but then denies some men any access to such prerogatives, it is not surprising that subordinated men may be more likely to resort to violence as the only power they can assert over others."[16]

Several of the films surveyed in this exegesis feature acts of violence. Distinct from earlier "Welsh" filmic portrayals of violence, these later films- *Yr Alcoholig Llon, Milwr Bychan, Un Nos Ola Leuad, Elenya, Y Mapiwr, House of America, Twin Town, Happy Now, Submarine, Just Jim, Bridgend, High Tide* and *Gwen*(2018, William McGregor)- are at best problematic and more often highly damaging. While post-industrial British films such as *The Full Monty* explore these issues in a comedic fashion, others such as *Naked* or *Brassed Off* express them as "bitter and explicit polemic." [17] Other films such as *Nil By Mouth,* while presenting domestic violence as something to be condemned, and permitting "greater narrative space to female characters"[18], nevertheless, as Monk identifies, it foregrounds the experiences of the violent male protagonist for much of the film.[19] By setting my screenplay in the 1990s and not placing Matthew's story at the centre of the narrative, I have attempted to subvert the tacit or overt endorsement many of the films of this period give to narratives of men expressing anger towards women. Matthew slips into depression and alcohol abuse. When Alys ejects him from the family home, Matthew returns to live with his mother, Lyn, which suggests his infantilisation and shrinking back from the role of fatherhood. During the narrative, then, he goes from a positive father to a tyrannical father and finally a

[16] Lynne Segal *Slow Motion: Changing Masculinities, Changing Men* (London: Virago,1990) p.256
[17]Sarah Godfrey *Nowhere Men: Representations of Masculinity in Nineties British Cinema* Doctoral Thesis, University of East Anglia, 2010 p.267
[18] Ibid p.138
[19]Monk in Murphy, ed. p.161

damaged/powerless father, embodying three types of fatherhood I identified in films featuring post-industrial Wales.

Liam- Owain's older brother

Although Liam is not the biological son of Matthew, early sections of the screenplay feature some scenes of father/son homosocial bonding, for instance when Matthew helps Liam to fix his motorbike. There is the suggestion, therefore, of a more traditional trajectory in their relationship as the son "inherits" a profession based upon bodily skill from his father. This is quickly undercut, however, as the deleterious impact of unemployment upon Matthew causes him to take his anger out on Liam through violence and at the same time overtly renounces his fatherhood role. A sequence shortly after this involves Liam violently defending Owain from the school bully. This act is in part compensatory for the humiliation and powerlessness Liam felt at the hands of Matthew which in turn suggests that the father-son "inheritance" is now wholly a negative and violent one.

Shortly after this, Liam decides to join the army. This is ostensibly due to the lack of employment opportunities in the South Wales valleys. But as Theweleit notes, the attraction of martial masculine performances allows recruits to guard against the threat of the fragmentation of identity.[20] With Liam's masculine identity threatening to unravel, joining the army makes sense to him. However, as a bitter coda, Liam is unable to adapt to life in the army or cope with the horrors of war. He returns to Wales psychologically broken.

Owain as an Adult

Owain's adult life is also fraught with difficulties: his marriage is failing, and he is struggling to be a good father to his son. His fate appears to mirror that of Matthew's and suggests that he will in turn

[20] Segal p.118

pass these negative traits on to his own son, once again subverting the father/son trajectories of earlier films[21]. Owain's difficulties stem from his teenage trauma- particularly Alys's sudden death. Freud says that melancholia stems from the refusal to relinquish the love object, in this case the literal mother, and the introjection, the taking of the "lost" object into the ego so that "the ghost of the dead past actually invades the self."[22] Indeed, the dead mother recurs several times in the form of dreams, fantasies and apparitions. Adult Owain's frequent returns to South Wales to relive moments from his childhood is form of "remembering and repeating" as he attempts to work through his trauma[23].

Caradog

Caradog fills the space vacated by Matthew and later, Liam. Once again, his name suggests a Welsh historical continuity, possibly recalling the first century chieftain, also known as Caractacus, who resisted the Roman occupation.[24] Caradog, son of Bran (Bendigeidfran) appears in the *Second Branch of the Mabinogi* as well as the Welsh Triads.[25] Equally the name could suggest twentieth century writers Caradog Evans and Caradog Pritchard. Evans' 1915 short story collection *My People* caused a scandal due to its unflattering depictions of Welsh society, counter to then popular images of Wales as a "harmonious peasant utopia."[26] Equally Pritchard's semi-autobiographical novel *Un Nos Ola Leuad* (on which the film is based) depicts Bethesda of the early twentieth century as a place of religious oppression, insanity and suicide and featuring a "grotesquely Oedipal relationship" between the young protagonist and his mother.[27] I have deliberately left Caradog's background and

[21] In a revised draft, for the sake of reducing the length of the screenplay, I have significantly reduced elements of the narrative which focus on the failure of Owain's marriage and his struggles with fatherhood. However, these issues can still be detected within the narrative.
[22] Pamela Thurschwell *Sigmund Freud* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2000) p.89
[23] Ibid p.121
[24] John Gower *The Story of Wales* (London: BBC Books, 2012) pp.40-42
[25] *The Mabinogion* trans. by Sioned Davies (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) pp.28,33,234
[26] Daryl Perrins' This Town Ain't Big Enough for the Both of Us' in *Wales on Screen* ed. by Steve Blandford (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press, 2000) pp.152-167 (p.155)
[27] Mark L. Woods *An Evaluation of the National Cinema of Wales and Whether this Cinema Constructs or Represents a National Identity* Doctoral Thesis, University of Glamorgan, 2007 p.269

motivations obscure. Rather he functions as both a repository and disseminator of Welsh culture- he initiates Owain into the fantasy world based upon *The Mabinogion.*

Alys-Owain's 'Mam'

Like other post-industrial depictions, I have attempted to subvert the traditional image of the 'Mam' She takes on the role of sole breadwinner for the household after Matthew is made unemployed. However, the stress of very working long hours coupled with the collapse of her relationship with Matthew leads to her collapse from exhaustion and she dies in hospital. Gwenno Ffrancon's description of the Welsh mam being "obliterated" in certain modern Welsh film texts can be quite literally applied here, as Alys is destroyed by the pressures of post-industrial capitalism. Here, the 'Mam' becomes a figure of absence, the lost love object whose image becomes a part of Owain's oedipal struggle.

The self-reflexive nature of this part of the exegesis has forced to me to take stock of the way I have portrayed Alys within the narrative. It is possible to argue that her death is a tacit criticism of the post-industrial, "feminised" workplace and the collapse of the heteronormative, nuclear family; an inference can be drawn that had Alys occupied a the traditional 'Mam' role then her untimely death may not have occurred. However, I have attempted to insert something of a corrective to this in my screenplay using elements of fantasy and mythology.

The Elision of Mythology and 'Realism' in the Diegetic World

Previous films based upon tales from *The Mabinogion*

A few Welsh film texts have used tales from *The Mabinogion* to explore contemporary issues around identity, including masculinity. *Branwen* (Ceri Sherlock, 1995) also takes as its inspiration *The Second Branch of the Mabinogi* (*Branwen Ferch Llyr),* to explore the (then) contemporary issues around the

conflict in Northern Ireland. In the original, Branwen, sister of Bendigeidfran, enters an unhappy marriage to Matholwch, king of Ireland. The "updated" version sees Branwen (Morfydd Hughes) marry Belfast Catholic, Kevin (Richard Lynch) and become deeply involved in the Irish Republican movement. The world Branwen enters is deeply patriarchal, which leads to her downfall. The film explicitly equates masculinity with violence and death.

Meanwhile, the story of Blodeuedd/ Blodeuwedd from *The Fourth Branch of the Mabinogi* (*Math Fab Mathonwy)*[28] can be found in at least three Welsh films. In the original tale a woman, Blodeuedd, is created from flowers as a wife for Lleu. Blodeuedd ends up falling in love with the warrior Gronw and the two conspire to murder Lleu. As punishment for her murderous infidelity Blodeuedd is transformed into an owl. Her name becomes Blodeuwedd (flower-face) and she is condemned never to show her face in daylight again.[29] The story was adapted for the stage in the mid twentieth century by Saunders Lewis and adapted again as a novel, *Y Dylluan Wen* by Angharad Rhys in 1995, becoming the film *Tylluan Wen* (Angharad Jones, 1997). *Otherworld* (Derek W. Hayes, 2003) is arguably the most "straightforward" retelling of *Y Mabinogi*, transporting its young protagonists from the present day and places them in a medieval setting where they each quickly adopt the guise of their mythological counterparts. Mark Woods lauds the film as an "allegorical tale of national destiny" with an "emphasis on collective transformation"[30] indicating that even an animated feature with all the fantastical trappings of the original stories can be used to elucidate and work through present day concerns. I have attempted, in my screenplay, to combine the 'realism' of a post-industrial/working-class milieux with the fantastical elements of Welsh mythology.

A note on 'Realism'

[28] Davies, ed. p.281
[29] Ibid pp.47-64
[30] Woods p.161

Hill states that "there is probably no critical term with a more unruly and confusing lineage than that of realism". However, he goes on to assert that one consistent characteristic of realism "resides in the ambition to […] approximate reality […] to show things as they really are."[31] Higson traces the roots of realist filmmaking in British cinema to the Grierson documentaries of the 1930s, which themselves were inspired by the Soviet montage films of the 1920s[32] The distancing techniques of documentary were meant as an antidote to the "capitalist controlled mass media"[33]- In Hill's analysis, however, the "reality" that the documentary, or any other type of film, seeks to portray always depends on the "epistemology of the real which has been assumed in the first place" and which can shift over time: "Films which were accepted as 'realistic' by one generation, often appear 'false' or 'dated' to the next" if certain conventions are repeated often enough.[34] Raymond Williams suggests that a shift in these conventions comes about through the identification of the dominant "ways of seeing" and the deliberate creation of new dramatic/representational forms as a reaction to this.[35] For Colin McCabe, however, these changes amount to little more than window dressing. He maintains that the organisational structure of 'realism' remains unchanged; the film camera, as controller and director of the "look", is the arbiter of empirical reality which is "founded, fundamentally on sight."[36] In other words, what we are shown *must* be the truth. This also means that what the camera does not, or cannot, reveal, such as underlying social and economic structures, become obscure: "the mechanics of capitalism or the distribution of wealth are not 'Things' which can be seen, except in their effects […] as a result the characteristic understanding of events provided by 'realism' will, of necessity, tend towards the personal rather than the socio-political."[37] Hill counters McCabe's argument by suggesting that the authority of the camera's "look" can be

[31] John Hill *Sex, Class and Realism: British Cinema 1956-1963* (London: British Film Institute,1986) p.57
[32] Andrew Higson *Waving the Flag: Constructing a National Cinema in Britain* (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 1995) pp.176-184.
[33] Ibid p.182
[34] Hill 1986 p.57-58
[35] Dana Polan 'Raymond Williams on Film' in *Cinema Journal*, Spring 2013, Vol. 52, No. 3 (Spring 2013), pp. 1-18
[36] Hill 1986 pp.59-60
[37] Ibid

undermined by tensions within the text This may manifest itself as a lack of resolution, or "tying up", of narrative threads, particularly if characters behave in ways which defy social mores.[38] Alternatively, the introduction of elements which are not properly integrated into the narrative can create an "excess of meaning" whose significance "remains 'unexplained' and still 'troublesome' by the time of the narrative's close."[39]. Clair Schwarz, for instance, in her study of the films of Shane Meadows, applies the term "liminal realism" to his oeuvre in that it "exists between the upbeat dynamic of Hollywood and the downbeat pessimism of British social realism."[40] Others have used terms such as "poetic realism" and "emotional realism."[41] In my screenplay, I have attempted, then, to create a form of hyphenated realism through the overt and self-conscious deployment of myths in order to produce an excess of meaning.

Mythology and the 'Hero's Journey'

Christopher Vogler's guide to storytelling, *The Writer's Journey,* asserts that all narratives, and their characters, are based upon mythical archetypes as identified by the psychoanalyst Carl Jung and the mythical studies of writer Joseph Campbell.[42] Thus even a text which claim 'empirical reality' is actually a collection of mythical structures filled with archetypal characters. In *The Last Giant King* I have attempted to draw attention these mythical structures to subvert the 'realism' of the text.

Vogler's archetypal "Hero's Journey", the protagonist's trajectory through the narrative, must necessarily begin in the 'Ordinary World'. As Joseph Campbell puts it, "a hero ventures forth from the world of the common day into a region of supernatural wonder."[43] The world of the "common

[38] Sylvia Harvey 'A Woman's Place: The Absent Family in Film Noir' in E. Ann Kaplan, ed. *Women in Film Noir* (London: British Film Institute,1978) p.33 quoted in Hill 1986 p.62

[39] Hill 1986 p.62
[40] Clair Schwarz *Shane Meadows: Representations of Liminality, Masculinity and Class* Doctoral Thesis, University of the West of England, 2013 p.194
[41] Ibid p.38
[42] Christoper Vogler *The Writer's Journey: Mythical Structure for Writers* Third Edition (Studio City, CA: Michael B. Weise Productions, 2007) p.xiii
[43] Ibid. p.83

day" may be deficient or lacking in some way which lead's the protagonist's dissatisfaction with, or estrangement from that world. In my screenplay, the "Ordinary World" of post-industrial South Wales is rendered "deficient" through economic decline which in turn erodes the "masculine" community. Owain, therefore, is already in the process of estrangement from the "Ordinary World" when we first encounter him. The next step in the "Hero's Journey" is crossing a threshold into what Vogler calls the "Special World."[44] Here, I have attempted to literalise Campbell's "region of supernatural wonder" through Owain's crossing of the threshold into his fantasy realm. The Four Branches of *Y Mabinogi* lend themselves to this approach through Annwn, the Celtic Otherworld.[45] Alternatively spelled Annwfn and Annwfyn, the word variously translates as "very deep-down land", "not-world" "in-world" or "under-world."[46] In the original Four Branches, the Otherworld is suggested to be geographical location- either an island or peninsula, under the earth or, as in the First Branch, an area contiguous to Dyfed.[47] Rhian Rees's reading of the Four Branches suggests that the Otherworld is in another dimension, one which is "all about us […] humans cannot see it, but those who live there can enter our world from many different liminal places and people can visit there by invitation without difficulty."[48] In *Last Giant King* Owain's fantasy world is comparable to the Otherworld and the lack of necessity for Owain to physically travel there suggests its liminal nature. Furthermore, Caradog's mysterious background and invitation to Owain to enter the fantasy Otherworld suggests that he is an inhabitant of this realm. The Otherworld of the Four Branches, true to Campbell's "region of the supernatural", features supernatural elements such as magic and enchantments.[49] I have included certain magical elements in my own story, particularly

[44] Ibid p.127
[45] Davies, ed. p.290
[46] Rhian Rees *Perceptions of Annwn: The Otherworld in the Four Branches of Y Mabinogi* M.A Thesis, University of Wales Trinity Saint David, Lampeter, 2012 p.17
[47] Davies, ed. p.228
[48] Rees p.24
[49] See for example Darren Winter *Enchantment, Treasure and the Otherworld in the Four Branches of Y Mabinogi* M.A Thesis, University of Trinity Saint David, 2017

shapeshifting, which appears frequently throughout *The Mabinogion.*[50] I have deliberately chosen to incorporate shapeshifting as I feel it thematically useful in depictions of the masculine identity.

Destabilising Masculinity

Shapeshifting in *Y Mabinogi* frequently sees human metamorphosis into animals or vice versa. This is sometimes an enchantment imposed upon characters as punishment, although at other times characters can transform seemingly at will.[51] At several points in *The Last Giant King* we witness Caradog's ability to shapeshift into a white raven, which links him with Bendigeidfran or *Bran* (with 'bran' translating as 'raven' or 'crow')[52] During one sequence, Caradog places an "enchantment" upon Owain who transforms into a stag and runs through woodland with Caradog in his raven guise, flying overhead. Huw Osborne argues that the human-animal transformations in the Mabinogion have the effect of destabilizing "the gendered national body."[53] I would argue that if the *Bildungsroman* or coming-of-age story uses its protagonist to "narrativize" the nation, then the breaking down of bodily boundaries can be seen as a deliberate subversion of masculinity in Wales itself. In chapter one, I attempted to show that the implicit fear of the fragmentation or destruction of the masculine body is a factor present in several texts depicting Wales. The breaking down of bodily boundaries through injury or even death, or the diminution of masculine identity through the loss of breadwinning capacity is shown to have an equally damaging effect on the male dominated communities which they inhabit. In my screenplay I have attempted to depict the destabilisation of

[50] See for example Samantha J. Cairo *The Significance of Shap-Shifting and Transformation in Medieval Welsh and Icelandic Literature: The Ingenuity of Medieval Writers* M.A Thesis, Western Michigan University, 1999
[51] Ibid p.38
[52] Davies, ed p.281
[53] Huw Osborne 'Fairytale Drag and the Transgender Nation in Rhys Davies, Erica Wooff and Jan Morris' in *Queer Wales: The History, Culture and Politics of Queer Life in Wales* ed. by Huw Osborne (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2016) pp.126-144 (p.143)

bodily barriers as something which can be a source of pleasure, Owain finds freedom and ecstasy as a stag.

Twin Town and *Human Traffic* are both part of Marin McLoone's "hip hedonism" cycle of films. However, Woods finds that the hedonistic behaviour of the characters in these films, their moments of "scheduled chaos", conform to Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of the *carnivalesque,* which can fulfil an important social function.[54] Bakhtin's study, *Rabelais and his World,* examines how Rabelais' novels incorporate folk culture and humour. The Rabelaisian carnival, as Bakhtin describes it, temporarily collapses hierarchical social structures and opposes "all pretence at immutability" and instead demands "ever changing, playful, undefined forms."[55] In both *Twin Town* and *Human Traffic* the characters flout social authority. In *Twin Town* they playfully mock "official" symbols of Welsh masculine culture such as rugby and male voice choirs. The carnivalesque too celebrates "low" bodily pleasures, in the case of the two films mentioned, the use of drugs and alcohol. Rik Loose analyses the desire for extreme forms of intoxication in Lacanian terms, stating that it represents a desire for a "state of pure being."[56] The desire to exit the symbolic order, albeit temporarily, represents an extreme desire for the fragmentation of masculine identity. Both films, however, frame this in broadly positive terms. This form of bodily destabilisation and hedonistic excess is reminiscent of Bakhtin's analysis of the Rabelaisian principle of the materiality of the body. That is, drawing attention to acts of human bodily excess, such as "food, drink, defecation and sexual life."[57] Both films feature either depictions or discussions of some or all these aspects. Although my screenplay doesn't dwell on these things in the same way, the transgressing of the boundaries of the human body through transmogrification to a "lower" species also points to a form of bodily excess. These transgressions perhaps fit into what Bakhtin calls "the concept of grotesque realism."[58]

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[54] Woods p.177
[55] Mikhail Bakhtin *Rabelais and His World* trans. by Helen Iswolsky, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984) p.11
[56] Rik Loose 'Toxicomania and the Death Drive in Lacan' in Weatherill, ed. pp.60-96 (p.76)
[57] Bakhtin p.18
[58] Ibid

Bakhtin asserts that "the essential principle of grotesque realism is degradation, that is, the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract: it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of the earth and body."[59] Far from being something negative, the degradation of the body and the attention to the "lower stratum" of the body, in Bakhtin's reading of Rabelais, is connected to the "fruitful earth and the womb"[60] which is suggestive of endless regeneration and rebirth. My attempts to deploy elements of grotesque realism is a conscious attempt to subvert the "classic image of the finished, completed man, cleansed as it were of all the scoriae of birth and development"[61] which may be found in other realist texts and earlier screen images of Welsh masculinity. The story of Branwen in the Second Branch too features rebirth and the shattering of bodily boundaries, although these moments are depicted as neither positive nor joyous, but tragic. In incorporating elements of the story into my own screenplay, I have tried to retain the tragic element whilst hinting at more "hopeful" moments using grotesque realism's themes of rebirth.

Death, Loss and Rebirth

Partway through *The Last Giant King,* Caradog relates the story of Branwen to Owain. After the death of Alys, Owain begins to believe that his mother is Branwen, while his father, Matthew, is her abusive husband Matholwch. Owain "travels" to the Otherworld and witnesses Matthew/Matholwch murder Alys/Branwen. Morgan Kay notes the prominence of female characters in *Y Mabinogi* and describes them as being more memorable and likeable than the male characters, although they are frequently associated with "death, loss and political fracture".[62] Kay frames this in explicitly post-colonial terms. Kay goes on to argue that the original storytellers viewed women as agents of "anthropological destructiveness, a force that no one can control",

[59] Ibid p.19
[60] Ibid p.21
[61] Ibid p.25
[62] Morgan Kay 'Gendered Postcolonial Discourse in Y Mabinogi' in *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, 2004/2005, Vol. 24/25 pp.216-228 (p. 219)

blamed for instances of loss in the stories then "the medieval audience of these tales may have been able to transfer any guilt over the current political status of Wales to similarly uncontrollable forces of fate."[63] While in *The Last Giant King* Alys remains a figure of loss- she, like Branwen, dies of a "broken heart"[64]- no blame is apportioned to her, or indeed the perceived feminisation" of society for the "loss" of the traditional forms of masculinity. In common with Ceri Sherlock's retelling of *Branwen,* Alys's fate comes at the hands of a society which remains patriarchal. Violence in *The Last Giant King* remains within the domain of the masculine. In the Second Branch it is Bendigeidfran's half-brother, Efnysien, who is the instigator of the violent retribution against Matholwch. As an act of atonement, Efnysien hides inside the Cauldron of Rebirth and deliberately destroys it, dying in the process. In my own screenplay, I have tried to retain themes of atonement and redemption. Here, Liam becomes adjacent to Efnysien, and it is Matthew who dies in a fire. However, it is Owain who deliberately starts the fire in which Matthew perishes, and Liam decides to accept the blame for this to make restitution for what he sees as the failure of his own masculinity earlier in the story. Here, I have attempted to incorporate elements Bakhtin's Rabelaisian rebirth. While in the original story the Cauldron is destroyed, permanently ending any possibility of rebirth, in my screenplay, I have attempted to leave open the possibility of rebirth and renewal. Alys is "reborn" in Owain's fantasy, and later, as an adult he repeatedly revisits her memory. This perpetual rebirth, through repetition, allows him to "undam" his trauma and "regenerate" his own life.

Vogler states that "The Hero archetype represents the ego's search for identity and wholeness" and that the completion of a narrative journey makes the subject "complete"[65] Throughout my screenplay's narrative I have attempted to subvert any sense of the "wholeness" of the ego and through the, at times literal, destruction of bodily boundaries, thereby exposing the mutable and often liminal nature of masculine identity. Furthermore, to return to Vitali and Willemen's assertion

[63]Ibid p.222
[64] Davies, ed. p.33
[65] Vogler p.26

that the *Bildungsroman* can serve to "narrativize" the nation, I have attempted to narrate a particular story of post-industrial masculinity in Wales which posits a form of masculinity embodied by the protagonist which attempts to at once reject the popular images of Welsh masculinity represented by the tough, labouring man as well as joyously embracing the collapse of bodily "wholeness." At the same time, I have chosen to include far older markers of Welsh masculinity informed by folkloric myth and demonstrate that the character types not only remain intelligible to a modern-day audience, but that these myths can be used to elucidate concerns around modern masculinities in Wales.

Conclusion

During this thesis, I have attempted to both trace the trajectory of screen portrayals of post-industrial masculinity in Wales and analyse the ways in which they differ from, augment or remain faithful to earlier film depictions of masculinity in Wales which were largely based upon "heroic" images of labouring men. As Andrew Spicer states, "one of the most striking features of masculinity in contemporary British cinema is its heterogeneity and hybridity: the range of male types is much wider than ever before and the types themselves much more complex."[1] This is doubly complex in the case of my research due to the historical status of Wales, its position of a stateless nation and its relationship with, and place within, the British state. This too goes for "Welsh" film production. Many of the films I have surveyed have rendered problematic the question of what constitutes a Welsh film. Several were not filmed in Wales, featured few or no Welsh actors and were funded by sources from outside of Wales. While the films I examined in the third chapter are more frequently shot in Wales and utilise casts featuring a greater number of Welsh performers, even certain of

[1] Andrew Spicer *Typical Men: The Representation of Masculinity in Popular British Cinema* (London: I.B Tauris, 2001) p.184

these raised questions about their "Welshness". Therefore, trying to analyse the ways in which they depicted masculinity through the lens of Welshness posed a challenge. The second chapter was also problematic in this regard: the attempt to isolate and identify changes in masculine identity in society which are/were specific to Wales. I attempted to resolve the problem in both chapters by referring to what went before.

Steve Blandford's points out that *A Way of Life* "was directed by Amma Assante, a young Black British woman raised in Streatham in South London"[2] but sees the film as very firmly Welsh. Her background allows her to address racism and prejudice which do not feature heavily in popular Welsh national images. Thus, diverse voices can forge new identities through cultural hybridity. Kirsti Bohata states that entities can be formed which reflect a "bi-culturality"[3] between rural/Welsh-speaking Wales and urban/post-industrial/English-speaking Wales. At the outset of my screenplay, Owain is estranged from Welsh folkloric myths and must be "tutored" on them by Caradog. This hybridity extends to Owain's masculine identity as he takes on a newly "excavated" Welsh masculine identity and combines it with a masculinity which is arguably has little Welsh specificity. This combining of continuity and newness in post-industrial constructions of masculinity in Wales is something that I have encountered throughout my research for this exegesis.

Gwyn Alf Williams wrote that:

"Wales is a process. Wales is an artefact which the Welsh produce. The Welsh make and remake Wales, day by day, year by year, generation after generation if they want to."[4]

[2] Steve Blandford '*A Way of Life:* British Cinema and New British Identities' *Journal of British Cinema and Television,* Volume 5, Issue 1, March 2009, pp.99-112 (p.105)
[3] Kirsti Bohata *Postcolonialism Revisited: Writing Wales in English* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004) p.145
[4] Tony Curtis 'Introduction' in *Wales: The Imagined Nation- Essays in Cultural and National Identity* ed. by Tony Curtis (Bridgend: Poetry Press Wales, 1986) pp.7-15 (p.7)

If Wales can be remade, reshaped and rendered as an artefact, then so too can the masculinities contained within it. I hope, through the work that I have produced, to have demonstrated this.

Filmography

Above Us the Earth (Karl Francis, 1977)

Aderyn Papur (Stephen Bayly, 1983)

Aderyn Papur/And Pigs Might Fly… (Stephen Bayly, 1984)

Another Country (Marek Kanievska, 1984)

Billy Elliot (Stephen Daldry 2000)

Bitter Harvest (Peter Graham Scott, 1963)

Black Legion (Archie Mayo, 1937)

Blue Scar (Jill Craigie, 1949)

Branwen (Ceri Sherlock, 1995)

Brassed Off (Mark Herman, 1996)

Bridgend (Jeppe Ronde, 2015)

Bydd Yn Wrol (Terry Dyddgen-Jones, 1996)

Chariots of Fire (Hugh Hudson, 1981)

Citadel, The (King Vidor, 1938)

Corn Is Green, The (Irving Rapper, 1945)

Dafydd (Ceri Sherlock, 1995)

Dance With A Stranger (Mike Newell, 1985)

Distant Voices, Still Lives (Terence Davies, 1988)

Eastern Valley (Paul Rotha, Donald Alexander, 1937)

Eldra (Timothy Lyn, 2002) and

Elenya (Steve Gough, 1992)

Fires Were Started (Humphrey Jennings, 1943)

Gadael Lenin (Endaf Emlyn, 1993)

Grand Slam (John Hefin, 1978)

Gwen (William McGregor, 2018)

Happy Now? (Philippa Cousins, 2001)

Hedd Wyn (Paul Turner, 1992)

Hell Drivers (Cy Endfield, 1957)

High Hopes (Mike Leigh, 1988)

High Tide (James Gillingham and Jimmy Hay 2015)

House of America (Marc Evans 1997)

House! (Julian Kemp, 2000)

How Green Was My Valley (John Ford, 1941)

Human Traffic (Justin Kerrigan, 1999)

Human Traffic (Justin Kerrigan, 1999)

I Know You Know (Justin Kerrigan, 2009)

In Which We Serve (Noel Coward, David Lean, 1942)

Johnny Be Good (Marc Evans 1984)

Joni Jones (Stephen Bayly 1982),

Just Jim (Craig Roberts, 2015)

Letter to Brezhnev (Chris Bernard, 1985)

Little White Lies (Caradog W. James, 2006)

Live Now, Pay Later (Jay Lewis, 1962)

Look Back in Anger (Tony Richardson, 1959)

Maurice (James Ivory, 1987)

Millions Like Us (Frank Launder, Sidney Gillat, 1943)

Milwr Bychan (Karl Francis, 1984)

Morphine and Dolly Mixtures (Karl Francis, 1991)

My Beautiful Laundrette (Stephen Frears, 1985)

Naked (Mike Leigh, 1993)

Nil By Mouth (Gary Oldman, 1997)

On The Black Hill (Andrew Grieve ,1987)

Otherworld (Derek W. Hayes, 2003)

Passage to India, A (David Lean, 1984)

Pride (Matthew Warchus, 2014)

Proud Valley, The (Penrose Tennyson, 1940)

Rhosyn a Rhith (Stephen Bayly, 1986)

Room With a View (James Ivory, 1985)

Run For Your Money, A (Charles Frend, 1949)

Saturday Night and Sunday Morning (Karel Reisz, 1960)

Save the Cinema (Sara Sugarman, 2022)

Stormydd Awst (Endaf Emlyn, 1988)

Streetlife (Karl Francis, 1995)

Submarine (Richard Ayoade, 2010)

Target for Tonight (Harry Watt, 1943)

The Full Monty (Peter Cattaneo, 1997)

The Last Days of Dolwyn (Emlyn Williams, 1949)

The Testimony of Taliesin Jones (Martin Duffy, 2000)

The Way Ahead (Carol Reed, 1944)

This Happy Breed (David Lean, 1944)

Today We Live (Ralph Bond, Judy Grierson, 1937)

Trainspotting (Danny Boyle, 1996)

Twin Town (Kevin Allen, 1997)

Tylluan Wen (Angharad Jones, 1997)

Un Nos Ola Leuad (Endaf Emlyn, 1991)

Valley of Song (Gilbert Gunn, 1953)

Very Annie Mary (Sara Sugarman, 2001)

Way of Life, A (Amma Asante, 2004)

Y Chwarelwr/The Quarrymen (Ifan ab Owen Edwards, 1935)

Y Mapiwr (Endaf Emlyn, 1995)

Yr Alcoholig Llon (Karl Francis, 1983)

Zulu (Cy Enfield, 1964)

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