Addicted to Violence:
A Network of Extreme Masculinity
in Irvine Welsh's Francis Begbie

Sarah Smith

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts by Research

University of Huddersfield

June 2018

Contents

Abstract

Welsh is "infamous for his representations of men and masculinity, most notoriously his 'hard men'" (Jones, 2010; p.54), who "effectively highlight[s] and problematise[s] our own contemporary anxieties regarding unstable gender roles in transition" (p.54). Masculine anxiety is a broad term which perhaps, in one way or another, can be applied to the thematic content of the majority of Welsh's fiction, but begins to undermine the complexity of Welsh's characters and the temporal and physical landscape in which they are situated. These generalisations inspire questions rather than reliable conclusions. Are the issues of failing national identity an integral counterpart of the postmodern fragmentation of masculinity and its hegemonic forms, and as such are they causal instigators of deviant psychologies and violence within Welsh's 'hard men', or, as this thesis suspects, is there a more complicated relationship between place, heritage and psychology?

Borrowing from (without strictly following) Actor Network Theory's methodology in which a network of actors is explored in relation to their connections and influences upon one another, the understanding of masculine violence can explored in detail, providing a thorough insight into Begbie's psychological identity which has been previously lacking from critical literature in the dismissal of his character as a "proto-typical hard man" (McGuire, 2010; p.9), unworthy of further study beyond this limited observation of violent masculinity in operation. Given Begbie's revival within *The Blade Artist*, and the recent release of *T2 Trainspotting*, it becomes ever more pertinent to give consideration to the complexity of his character beyond the "often comical cartoon figure of the film [Trainspotting]" (Morace, 2007; p.127) and the standard ticket of 'Scottishness' adhered to his specific breed of psychopathic intensity.

Considering masculinity's hegemonic associations which physiological gender, to its complicated relationship with sociocultural structures and national identity, alongside the pervasive possibility for a mental predisposition for depravity that falls within the classification of legitimate psychopathy, this body of work will use Francis Begbie as a conduit through which to explore the creation of a hyperbolic cocktail of violent masculine identity. This thesis will dismantle the general understanding of male violence in accordance with broad homogenous structures of masculinity within Welsh's fiction, specifically in its depiction of the network topography of Francis Begbie's masculine identity, the function of violence within his character, and his subsequent expression of potentially psychopathic behaviour.

Introduction

Since *Trainspotting*, published in 1993, Irvine Welsh's fiction has become a cult sensation, his works having inspired numerous stage and filmic adaptations, most notably in the infamous 1996 translation to screen of *Trainspotting* by Danny Boyle, and the recent release of its narrative sequel *Porno*, under the title *T2 Trainspotting*. His work is immediately identifiable, and treasured by both popular and academic readerships, largely in part due to a unique authorial voice, and an honest confrontation of taboo, such as drug use, violence and crime, all framed within an articulate representation of urban Scotland. Welsh's explicit narratives and written denotation of the Scottish dialect has changed the literary presentation of 'Scottishness' in a way from which the genre has "never quite recovered" (Innes, 2007; p.301). Welsh's presentation of the Scottish identity is a thread which runs through and around the entirety of his literary work, serving to create an overall portrait of the underbelly of Scottish culture, which often casts a somewhat unflattering reflection of the Scottish national identity as a whole.

Welsh's notoriety and popularity amongst a global readership gives his authorial voice a volume which was unprecedented within Scottish 'Cult' literature of the 1990's, and as such his representation of "a certain community in a certain part of Edinburgh" threatens to "become standardised as the authentic Scottish Voice" (Innes, 2007: p.301). The accreditation of 'Scottishness' to Welsh's work is a useful term, but the assumption that one "literary hallmarked" (p.303), minority voice is one which is nationally universal not only distorts the perception of a representative Scottish national voice but also "render[s] inaudible the language . . . and experience of other underprivileged groups" (p.303). That is to say that the emergence of Renton, Begbie, Sick Boy and Spud as stereotypes of 'Scottishness' serves to undermine the literary validation of other Scottish demographics, massive or marginal, when a set of characters with a recognisably 'Scottish' accent and a "cutting edge" (Welsh, in Innes, 2007 p.301) lifestyle become emblematic of Scottishness in its entirety.

This understanding of Scottishness within Welsh's fiction, in which specific identities, behaviours

and attitudes are packed and sealed into one, often inadequately labelled, box of nationality has frequently become the common denominator of interpretation between depictions of psychological depravity and violent action. Indeed, "the spectacle of Edinburgh with its knickers off" (Bathurst, 2012) found within *Trainspotting* sets the tone for much of Welsh's fiction to come, focusing on the subculture of Leith, the afflictions of drug addiction, the prevalence of violence and misogyny and the varying distortions of personality within a demographic of socially and culturally disenfranchised individuals. Welsh is "infamous for his representations of men and masculinity, most notoriously his 'hard men'" (Jones, 2010; p.54), who "effectively highlight[s] and problematise[s] our own contemporary anxieties regarding unstable gender roles in transition" (p.54). Masculine anxiety as part of the 'postmodern condition' is a broad term which perhaps, in one way or another, can be applied to the thematic content of the majority of Welsh's fiction. The application of postmodernism within this context is neither classically Lyotardian nor Jamesonian, as whist the role of "capitalism's alienation effect" (Lucy, 2015; p.87) and its disruption of faith in the metanarratives of masculinity are imperative to this understanding of postmodern 'fragmentation', they do not exhaust its potential application. Postmodernism within this thesis embarks upon a more sociological exploration in which the fragmentation and anxiety surrounding failing, uncertain identities inspires a "rethinking of the very nature of the basic categories through which the social whole is . . . constituted" (Nicholson and Seidman, 2008; p.24). The ambiguity of plurality and its root within capitalist culture drives an understanding of postmodernity which can be transposed onto a map of an individual's experience, psychology and identity, but which does not sufficiently accommodate the psychological ramifications of a "continuous dismantlement and reconstruction" (Schoene, 2004; p.122) of masculine behaviour and identity. The standardisation of 'fragmentation' begins to undermine the complexity of Welsh's characters and the temporal and physical landscape in which they are situated, ensuring the generalisation of a postmodern crisis of masculinity comes to inspire further questions rather than provide reliable conclusions. Are the issues of failing national identity within Welsh's fiction an integral counterpart of the postmodern fragmentation of masculinity and

its hegemonic forms, and as such are they causal instigators of deviant psychologies and violence within Welsh's 'hard men', or is there a more complicated relationship between place, heritage and psychology? One which suspects national identity and the postmodern anxieties which surround it, serve more as efficient vehicles and catalysts for the depiction and exploration of a set of underprivileged, minority and psychologically disturbed characters, rather than the pivotal structures from which their behaviours springs. Specifically, within Welsh's most unhinged and volatile creation from the *Trainspotting* universe, Francis Begbie, there is a question of psychopathy and a mental predilection towards violence that appears to exist beyond the implication of outwards spheres of influence and conditioning. In order to unpack and sufficiently organise this understanding of violent masculinity within the works of Irvine Welsh, there must be a revaluation of these relationships, and their significance in the networks of identity formulation.

Actor-network Theory (ANT), otherwise known as the "sociology of translation" (Law, 2011; p.380), is a sociological methodology developed by Bruno Latour and Michael Callon, with the "aim . . . to rethink the nature of society away from its anthropocentric legacy and return the locutions of 'the social' to their wider planetary and cultural contexts" (Munro, 2009; p. 125). Born originally from the research surrounding action and agency within "science and technology study" (Gomart & Hennion, 1999; p.222), Actor-network Theory has advanced to consider and elucidate the organisation of networks in a vast array of academic fields, the majority of which are encompassed by Latour's expression of 'the social'. The over-arching aim of Actor-network Theory serves to revaluate the establishment and assumption of the "stabilized state of affairs" (Latour, 2005; p.1) of 'the social' through an understanding of heterogeneous networks, in a suggestion that "society organizations, agents and machines are all effects generated in patterned networks of diverse (not simply human) materials" (Law, 1992; p.380). For Latour, the significance of what may have been "'assembled' under the umbrella of a society" (2005; p.2) is not reflected by the development of homogenous categories of 'social' context and influence, but is more so evident in "a trail of associations between heterogeneous elements" (p.5), specifically the "type[s] of connection[s]

5

between things that are not themselves social" (p.5). For example, economics, psychology, linguistics, religion and law act as both interlinked and independent domains of theory and study which are, generally, considered to be inherently driven with the norms and beliefs of 'the social' and its presentation within a given society. Latour reverses this entangled association by suggesting that rather than the traditional practice in which we

> take social aggregates as the given that could shed some light on residual aspects of economics, linguistics, psychology, management and so on. . . on the contrary, [we should] consider social aggregates as what should be explained by the specific associations provided by economics, linguistics, psychology, law, management, etc. (p.5)

Whilst the disembowelment of the common understanding of 'the social' and its sphere of influence is not the concern of this thesis, the methodology of analysis proposed by Latour's Actor-network Theory in which an actor – any agent, human or non-human, "which makes a difference" (Felski, 2016; p.748) – becomes an integral facet of a network – "an assembly of actors that share information and coordinate action" (p.748-9) is useful in the understanding of character development within literature. The use of ANT within literary studies offers "new ways of thinking about connectivity" (p.749). Each of these actor represents a network of agency within a larger actor-network, and becomes a mediator of sorts, participating in the development of relations in-between each object, machine, organisation or individual, serving as the heterogeneous matter which contributes to "the patterning of the social" (Law, 1992; p. 382). The scope of an actor-network stretches far beyond the obvious, immediate connections between object and human actors, correlating almost endless relationships – a notion which can be transposed onto the study of literary characters. ANT has been criticised for the vastness of such an inclusive means of network discernment and description, risking the overzealous development of infinite topologies of connection between "a myriad of little elements" (Gomart & Hennion, 1999; p.224), but as Rita Felski summarises, under the Latourian school of thought

The social. . .is not a preformed being but a doing, not a hidden entity underlying the realm of appearance, but the ongoing connections, disconnections and reconnections between countless actors. (2011; p.578)

Whilst the vast expanse of interpretation provided by an ANT perspective may prove daunting, its thorough observation of connections between actors is a limitless means by which to decipher the development of character identity. At this point I will reiterate, it is not the aim of this thesis to become embroiled in the admittedly complex and at times perplexing practice of Actor-network Theory to its utmost conclusion, in which the translation of puntualized actor-networks becomes a philosophical minefield to the uninitiated ANT investigator. The interest here lies in the adoption of a comprehensive means to review a "relational and process-orientated sociology that treats agents, organizations and devices as interactive effects" (Law, 1992, p.389).

Within Welsh's fiction, there is a plethora of grand, generalised influences that Latour would attribute to the "sociologists of the social" (Latour, 2005; p.9) in which "every activity – law, science, technology, religion, organisation, politics, management, etc. – could be related to and explained by the same social aggregates behind them all" (p.8). Critics have applauded Welsh for his depiction of political and cultural circumstances, which are predominantly concerned, with the "destruction of working-class identities" formed by means of "new social exclusion" and, thereafter, the characters of *Trainspotting* are left to muddle through with "forms of subcultural escapism in the absence of any serious possibilities for social change" (Herbrechter, 2000; p.110). The adherence to a homogenous schema of 'the social' and its subcategories directly confronts ANT's desire to ultimately deconstruct and inspect each actor component of a societal network, recasting the term 'social' as something far more specific, whilst also far more elusive. With this in mind, it is important to note that this thesis is also not the duelling pistol to be drawn between theories of social constructionists and their ANT nemeses. The existence of the social is inherent to any reading of Welshian literature, regardless of on-going debates in sociological theory. The function of national identity, working class forms of tradition and their all-encompassing effects on masculine identity

are so heavily entrenched within a reading of Welsh's work, an adherence with the strict schema provided by Actor-network Theory is of unnecessary, damaging effect. However, in the study of individual characters, and their personal and plot-driven function within Welsh's fiction, Actor-network Theory serves as an approach with which to deconstruct characters, representative of actor-networks, into heterogeneous components of identity, in which there is also no shared "aggregate" adhesive behind each facet of personal development. This in turn requires a study of identity which emphatically mirrors the study of society advocated by Latour, in which there is no limitation imposed by the predetermination of the social, but instead a replacement of the "object to be studied by another matter made of social relations" (2005; p.9). Interchange Latour's use of the term 'social' here for more specific domains such as 'nationalism', 'working-class identity', 'drug addiction' or 'misogyny' and the assessment of Welsh's characters as actor-networks becomes easily discernible and much more practical.

The significant overlap surrounding this scaled-back adaptation of Actor-network Theory and its earlier concern with 'the social', as the adoption of a "'social explanation' of some state of affairs" (p.1) - in this instance the construction of masculine violence within a single character of literature - is heavily documented, as critics readily use 'social' frameworks to formulate interpretations of literary characters. Social constructions and their associated rationale for the development of negative identities have been repeatedly, and justifiably, used to quantify the masculinised behaviour of men and women, both fictional and otherwise, throughout history. Using Actor-network Theory as a model for this method of the interpretation of such characters then, is naturally precarious, relying on a construction of social influence that is directly critiqued by the likes of Latour and Felski. Whilst Latour himself denies the function of Actor-network theory as an interpretive tool, "because tools are never 'mere tools' ready to be applied, they always modify the goals you had in mind" (p.143), he criticises his own terminology in *Recalling ANT*, specifically a decision to term Actor-network Theory as a theory at all,

It was never a theory of what the social is made of, contrary to the reading of many sociologists who believed it was . . .Far from being a theory of the social or even worse an explanation of what makes society exert pressures on actors, it always was . . . a very crude method to learn from the actors without imposing on them (Latour, 1999, p.19-20).

Actor-network theory then, may not be intended as a tool, or a lens through which to interpret the social state of play, but it is most certainly a methodology which provides a means to psychologically and historically untangle the confused interests of social pressures and determiners, as well as other broad spheres of influence, upon actors in terms of identity and behavioural development. Regardless of the opinion of its champions, Actor-network Theory is a method, crude or otherwise, which can be adapted in order to understand networks of meaning and association. Undoubtedly, this compromise between the reigning dichotomy of sociological study, of social construction and the annihilation of 'the social' is controversial, but is of undoubted functionality.

This thesis will focus on the construction of masculine violence within one of Welsh's most infamous secondary characters within *Trainspotting*, *Porno* and *Skagboys*, who is brought into the limelight by his role as protagonist/antagonist within the 2016 novel *The Blade Artist*, Francis Begbie. His role within the Welshian landscape of Leith has always been prevalent, as it is all too often his violence and menace which drives the acceleration of action within the narrative, yet his complexity as a character is frequently reduced to compressed labelling of a "psychopathic" (Bathurst, 2012) "monster" (Smith, 2002), who serves as a notable yet simplified "chilling portrait of a headcase" (Murphy, 2012). It is easiest to accept this interpretation of Begbie at face value, and leave the dimensions of his depravity, or humanity, unquestioned through the basic observation of a man who is both "empowered and limited by the violence he personifies" (Welsh, 2002). Often, when considering violent individuals and characters, there is a habit to perceive only 'the social' – the conditions which have externally fertilised and framed deviant behaviours, to adopt a limited and sweeping conclusion of the 'psycho' psyche. Borrowing from (without strictly following) Actor Network Theory's insight that it is the relationship between actors that define their significance

through the "performative character of relations and the objects constituted in those relations" (Law, 1999; p.7), this thesis will dismantle the understanding of violence and its relationship to masculinity within Welsh's fiction, specifically considering Francis Begbie as a conduit for the complexity of the creation of such a fearsome cocktail of masculine identity. Begbie is often accredited with an inexplicit 'psycho' status, without thorough reflection upon his development throughout Welsh's fiction, or the adequate mapping of his network of self and his society. Whilst this thesis will not offer an application of Actor-network theory unto Welsh's fiction, and as such will not endeavour to remain faithful to Latour's terminology, much of what follows will attempt to shed light on a vast, distributed actor-network, correlating the relationship between both human and non-human actors within the network topology of the Welshian presentation of culture, society and psychology, in order to determine the deservedness and origin of Begbie's psychopathic title.

<u>Meeting Francis Begbie</u>

> "World's all right for smart cunts,
> but what about me?
> What about fucking men like me?
> What do I get?
> All I can take with my bare hands.
> All I can get with my fists.
> Is that what I fucking get?"
> – *T2 Trainspotting* (Boyle, 2016)

Francis Begbie is "addicted to violence" (Welsh, 2016; p.22). His lust for aggression and confrontation are exacerbated by his lack of sensitivity, morality and self-control. He appears as the embodiment of a rabid masculinity that senses its own demise, thrashing against changing social constructions of masculine identity through physical and emotional warfare. Welsh's portrayal of Begbie as hyper-male highlights the volatility of those who are left psychologically displaced amidst a postmodern culture which inadvertently derailed the "oppressive behaviour" which has been "accepted as 'normal male behaviour' [and which] can be said to impede. . .[men's] awareness of its oppressive aspects" (Pease, 2000; p.3). However, Begbie's awareness of his actions seems irrefutable, the simple truth being his character serves only the whims of his own wants, be that shagging, stabbing or abusing friends and strangers alike.

The association between masculinity and violence, contrary to Connell's and Messerschmidt's observations of hegemony, is hardwired into the consciousness of western civilization. Collier (cited in Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005) criticises the affiliations made between hegemonic masculinity and the way in which it has come "to be associated solely with negative characteristics that depict men as unemotional, independent, non-nurturing, aggressive, and dispassionate" (p.840) within critical literature. In spite of this, the prevalence of violent and aggressive behaviours specially within men is well documented. In 2016 the "Overview of violent crime and sexual offences" conducted

within England and Wales by the Office for National Statistics, 74% of violent offences were committed by men, fallen from 2015's 81%. Depicted as a young man in 1980's Edinburgh, Welsh's first incarnation of Francis Begbie lacks exposure to more recent progressions in the equality of rights across genders, orientations and race, existent only within *Trainspotting*'s fictional reflection of a temporal culture compounded by phobic behaviours towards oppressed demographics. It would be easy to suggest that Frank Begbie is solely a product of his environment, violent in accordance with a social and cultural habitat that inspired fear amongst those clinging most tightly to an evaporating construct of masculinity. However, as this work will explore, the adoption of this view omits the persistent sensation of monstrosity that seethes beneath the assumption of circumstantial victimhood of postmodern fragmentation of identity within such a character. It is the societal norm to rationalise violence into an order of cause, instance and effect, applying logic to the enactment of brutality which makes it easier to quantify its occurrence and thereby sleep sounder in the knowledge that violent masculinity is predominantly reactionary, brought into being through misfortune and inadequate socialisation practices. Francis Begbie resists this conception of masculine violence, suggesting that there is a level of misanthropy beyond the line-up of violent masculinity's usual-suspects and their spheres of behavioural influence. The following chapters will consider the conceptions of violence within the establishment and maintenance of masculine identity which have accrued responsibility for the development of violent behaviours, from class socialisation to genetic and hormonal factors, alongside an examination of psychopathic behaviours, using Welsh's Begbie – the apparent summit of 'hard-man' identity – to map and correlate the relationship between these networks of antisocial and violent behaviours.

The Role of Violent Masculinities

> ```
> "Ehs view ah ehsel, aw forged
> through the brutalisin ay others"
> ```
>
> (Welsh,2013; p.357)

The hegemonic understanding of the archetype of normative, successful masculinity is deftly embroidered into the fabric of human history. Raewyn Connell confirms this undercurrent in the common understanding and expression of masculinity as

> Mass culture generally assumes there is a fixed, true masculinity beneath the ebb and flow of daily life. We hear of 'real men', 'natural man' and the 'deep masculine'. This idea is now shared across an impressive spectrum. (2005; p.45)

The relationship between masculinity and violence then is equally vast and diversified, as although "the majority of men do not commit violent crime" (Omar, 2011; p1), it is statistically confirmed that "Men commit the majority of violent crime" (p.1). The natural order of violence within social human behaviour is heavily debated, with some suggesting male violence is a residual feature of patriarchal structures of the state (Carrigan, Connell & Lee, 1985) whilst others argue it is intrinsic to the social practice of masculinity in which "Aggression and violence may . . . be a way of acting out, or 'doing' masculinity" (Messerschmitt, cited in Omar, 2011; p.8), legitimised by the use of violence in history and recreational sporting activities. Omar continues, "if violence is part of acting masculine, albeit only in certain situations such as sport and war, violent behavior could easily be translated into a way to enact masculinity in everyday life" (p.8). The compounding of violence and the hegemonic understanding of masculinity then suggests there is a perceived function to the use of violence, most fundamentally concerned with the establishment of dominance, strength and difference from that which is considered feminine.

Traditional masculine stereotypes suggest that men are expected to be generally unemotional, but should be prepared to be aggressive or violent if conflict arises. (David & Brannon, cited in Jakupcak, 2003; p. 533).

Begbie's violence is therefore functional, regardless of the nature of its primary foundation, even in its anti-social expression, as there is a reinforcement of a *normative* perspective of masculinity that ensures his reputation as a strong 'manly' man (Thompson Jr., Pleck & Ferrara, 1992; p.575). He is infamous amongst his social circle for his extreme, "discipline ay the basebaw bat" (Welsh, 1996; p.172) aggression and unpredictable changes in temperament:

The problem Wi Begbie wis . . . well, thirs that many problems wi Begbie. One ay the things thit concerned us maist wis the fact thit ye couldnae really relax in his company, especially if he'd hud a bevvy. ah always felt thit a slight shift in the cunt's perception ay ye wid be sufficient tae change yir status fae great mate intae persecuted victim. (p.75)

Begbie's tyranny is synonymous with his friendship, and despite their qualms with the extremes of his character, Renton adds "The big problem is, he's a mate an aw. Whit kin ye dae?" (p.84). To be a friend of Begbie is to serve under a dictator, participating in the "obligatory. . . boosting [of] Beggar's ego" (p.134). Renton exposes this delusion of friendship repeatedly, acknowledging that such reaffirmations of superiority are,

the sole function of any mate of Begbie's. He reflects on the insanity of being a friend of a person he obviously dislikes. It was custom and practice. Begbie, like junk, was a habit. He was also a dangerous one. Statistically speaking, he reflects, you're more likely to be killed by a member of your own family or a close friend, than by anyone else. (p.134)

Just as Renton, Spud and Sick Boy cannot rehabilitate their drug habit, they cannot remove themselves from their association with Begbie, and the violent malady of destabilised masculine identity which he exudes. It has been previously suggested that Frank Begbie of *Trainspotting* serves

as a symptom of the postmodern anxiety which fractured the hegemonic norm of traditional masculinity, striking out at a failing sense of dominance and security through crude, hyper-macho behaviours and ideals. Although Welsh's novel is set during the 1980's, Begbie assumes the archetypal blueprint for the inception of the 'new lad' (Benwell, 2003; p.13) formula of masculinity which surfaced around the time of *Trainspotting*'s publication in 1995. The 'new lad' identity is assembled as a "reaction against the 'new man'" (Gill, 2003; p.37) serving as an "attempt to reassert the power masculinity [was] deemed to have lost by the concessions made to feminism" (Benwell, 2003; p.13). The oppositional relationship between the 'new man' and the 'new lad' centres around a dichotomy of what constitutes male power after the impact of second wave feminism and the apparent postmodern 'crisis' of hegemonic masculinity. According to Gill,

> The 'new man' is generally characterised as sensitive, emotionally aware, respectful of women
>
> and egalitarian in outlook. . . By contrast [the]'new lad' is depicted as hedonistic, post (if not anti)
>
> feminist and pre-eminently concerned with beer, football and 'shagging' women. (2003; p.37)

'New lad' culture encapsulated a nostalgic regression of masculine identity defined in part by

> a retreat to infantile forms of behaviour, including scatological obsessions, puerile humour, an
>
> absence of references to work or social responsibility. . . and a kind of rebellious posturing
>
> against 'adult' authority . . . [which could be] arguably seen as symptomatic of some sort of crisis
>
> of adult masculinity. (Benwell, 2003; p.14)

Welsh's *Trainspotting*, and much of his early fiction which serves to depict the later decades of the twentieth century, embody this 'new lad' ideology, as well as its frustration and rebellion against the popularisation of the 'new man'. *Trainspotting* is a fictional prerequisite of this disruption, modelling the qualities of 'new man' and 'new lad' before their coagulation in the body of the masculine identity codex. Renton embodies an emotional capacity and an, at least partial, acknowledgement of women beyond their sexual objectification that presents the beginnings of the 'new man' within the 1980's, whilst the novel's controversially depicted females begin an engagement with feminism

which pre-empts the birth of the 'new lad' as a backlash against emasculation and failing tradition (Benwell, 2003), despite the fact their "loutish and laddish. . . turning of the tables on men"" (Jones, 2010; p.60) serves more so as mimicry than defiance, which ultimately fails to undermine the "oppressive, objectifying system of interpersonal relationships that frames male behaviour" (p.60). Despite their feminist failings, it is this atmosphere of cultural apprehension which foreshadowed the changes in gender politics that Renton, Sick Boy, Spud and Begbie serve to demonstrate within *Trainspotting.* Francis Begbie demonstrates the hypermasculine extreme of a template for the 'new lad' culture that was yet to establish itself within his surroundings. In *Male Order: Unwrapping Masculinity* John Rutherford suggests that the redundancy faced by traditional norms of masculinity, and as such by the disestablishment of the heteronormative heritage of masculine identity has "created cultures of prolonged adolescence" (1996; p.7) in which risk taking behaviours exhibited during adolescent rebellion are continued into adulthood through "Violence, criminality, drug-taking and alcohol consumption [which] become[s] the means" through which to attain "prestige for a masculine identity bereft of any social value or function" (p.7). As liberal attitudes on the equalities of gender and sexual orientation permeate the fringes of Begbie's world, he serves as a fitting bannerman for postmodern masculinity which understands the threat of the emotionally functional 'new man', essentially presenting a working-class conception of manliness with the volume turned up, drowning out impending social change through volatile expressions of hard-man behaviour. The phenomenon of the 'new lad' was largely witnessed amongst middle-class men, short changed by feminism and the repression of 'true' masculinity, segregated to the north side of the stark class divide between themselves and the dominant characters of Welsh's fiction. These middle-class men were likely to be amongst Welsh's early readership, taking cues for the devolution of masculinity from the likes of Francis Begbie.

This assessment of violence within Begbie is problematised then by the fact that in 2016 Welsh produced *The Blade Artist*, and chose to return to Begbie again as a character who seems to have found a functional, outwardly healthy, place in the contemporary, beyond the schemes of Leith and

the walls of a prison cell; beyond the temporal storm of late twentieth century postmodernity and the complicated navigation of 'new' "chronological moments" (Gill, 2003; p.37) of masculinity. Reincarnated as Jim Francis, he lives a life of relative luxury in California, with a beautiful young wife and two young daughters. 'Begbie' has been all but buried in a process of rehabilitation and the discovery of the new outlet for his passions: artistic sculpture. Buried is a choice word, as when Jim returns to Edinburgh after the death of his son, old habits reconvene and the duality of his freshly reformed character - Jim Francis the better man and Francis Begbie the jailbird psychopath - is brought into inevitable conflict. It is worth noting from an early stage within this discussion that although "an easy development" and a "minor coincidence" according to Francis within early chapters of *The Blade Artist* there is a significant change and variety in the nominative references to a single character, christened upon birth as Francis Begbie, but mentioned and cited through a variety of derivative honorifics. Within *Trainspotting*, Begbie is often referred to using his surname, or the derivative of such 'Beggars', or otherwise known as 'Franco' or 'Frank'. The significance of the transition to the new identity of 'Jim Francis' may be underplayed by the character himself, but serves as a useful means to separate his differing psychological states during the following analysis. From this point, references to Frank, Franco and Begbie and other denotations affiliated with the essence of Begbie first explored within *Trainspotting*, *Skagboys* and *Porno* will be used in reference to such, whilst Jim Francis, will be used in specific reference to the contemporary incarnation of his character within *The Blade Artist*.

R. W Connell suggests "both biology and social influence combine to produce gender. . . behaviour" (2005; p. 46) presenting a "common- sense compromise" (p.46) between the opposition of nature vs nurture in the study of behavioural development. Considering Francis Begbie, the apparent "irredeemable villain" (Maley, 2000; p.67) of Welsh's fiction, there is a direct correlation between the need for physical violence and the assumption of a specific masculinised identity in relation to social circumstance. However, the nature and severity of Begbie's pursuit of violence goes beyond a loutish need for dominance in the face of an emasculating society, the overall package of

17

his hyper-masculine 'self' overlapping into a realm of psychological disorder. Whilst Francis Begbie would be unlikely to "think [him]self-deviant" (Connell, 2005; p.83) in his violent behaviour, the reader must assess the nature of his deviance into excessive outbursts of violence, whether it is a consequence of a troubled upbringing and a criminal lifestyle, an ingrained feature of a broken psyche, or whether it is in fact deviance at all. Is Begbie's sociopathic rage a natural progression from an embodiment of hegemonic masculinity when under the pressures of postmodern ambiguity? Or is he predisposed to this behaviour, and if so, can it be corrected, simultaneously removing postmodernity's gender-identity anxiety as the root causal factor? To answer this question there must be a consideration of the state of masculinity's apparent penchant for violence, along with the role of violence within anti-social personality disorders, and the relationship between them.

Hyper-masculinity versus Psycho-masculinity

```
              "Total fuckin crazy psycho Beggers"

                    (Welsh, 1996; p. 198)
```

The term 'psychopath' has fallen into the common vernacular of the twenty first century layperson. Enamoured by glossy television drama in which serial murderers are pursued by insightful psychologists and FBI agents, we are a culture that has come to harbour a vested interest in the discussion, "understanding" and the shared sensation of abhorrence inspired by fictional and real-world psychopathic characters. The unavoidable exposure to this media packaged translation of psychopathy has dampened the implication of the label; for example, disgruntled ex-partners reminisce on their 'psycho' other-halves, and short online quizzes claim to provide serious answers to tumultuous, complex questions: Are You a Psychopath? Is Your Child a Psychopath? How to tell if you're dating a psychopath. . . The list goes on. The truth is psychopathy is not in fact an official medical term, assimilated into the pages of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, published by the American Psychiatric Association, as part of Antisocial Personality Disorder (DSM- 5, American Psychiatric Association; p.2013). This is due to a conflict between Robert Hare, architect of the PCL-R, more commonly known as 'The Psychopath Test', in which patients are rated across twenty categories of known psychopathic behaviours, and given a score reflecting their position on the mental scale, and Lee Robins, a sociologist who highlighted the difficulty in definitively identifying psychopathic tendencies and giving a quantitative measure to the psychopath's trademark empathy deficit. Robins proposed only "overt symptoms" (Ronson, 2011; p. 252) should be used in diagnosis, rather than the subtleties found within Hare's checklist categories, and as such psychopathy was "abandoned for Antisocial Personality disorder" (p. 252). Despite this official dismissal of the 'psychopath' from the DSM-5, the term psychopathic remains registered within the International classification of Diseases under F60.2 in association with antisocial personality disorder (2017/18 ed), and the diagnostic use of Hare's checklist is still commonplace in correctional institutions, as are his definitions of psychopaths:

19

Psychopathy is a personality disorder defined by a distinctive cluster of behaviours and inferred

personality traits, most of which society views as pejorative. . . Completely lacking in conscience

and in feelings for others, they selfishly take what they want and do as they please, violating

social norms and expectations without the slightest sense of guilt or regret (Hare, 1993; p.1-2)

From this brief, admittedly limited, definition, there appears a formative tick next to the name of

Francis Begbie; even Renton christens him "total fuckin crazy psycho beggers". There is often a

confusion of meaning in the use of 'psycho' terminology, which can inhibit their use within literary

studies. Psychotic behaviours, most frequently hallucinations, delusions and severe mental

confusion, are not uncommon in those dislocated from their reality, commonly treated with

medication and cognitive behavioural therapy after a diagnosis of psychosis, but are not truly

indicative or associated with the development of a psychopathic mind. The predilection and

association of violent attacks on others with psychopathology is somewhat digressive in light of an

increased awareness of other psychological disorders, but it is a crucial aspect of Hare's definition of

psychopathology, and one that also describes Begbie's comprehension of violence: a distinct lack of

empathy and the impossibility of rehabilitative treatment. Hare continues "unlike psychotic

individuals, psychopaths are rational and aware of what they are doing and why. Their behaviour is a

result of choice, freely exercised" (Hare, 1993; p. 22).

The choice between violent action and abstinence from physical expressions of hostility remains

unexplored by Begbie until he exists as Jim Francis within the world of *The Blade Artist*, imbued with

a new found patience surrounding his passion for violence. In the novel's opening incident, two

suspicious men harass Jim's wife and children on the secluded beach near their home. Jim defuses

the situation without physical violence, walking away from a scene of potential carnage; a challenge

which his younger self, on the streets of Edinburgh, would never have overcome. In spite of this

passivity, the predatory men recognise a subdued malevolence within Begbie,

The two men share a mocking laugh, but it is one underscored with a sense of relief that the man

facing them has departed. It is more than his strong build and the attitude he carries that he

would fight savagely, to the death. . .there is something about him. . .he belongs in a different

world to the one inhabited by that woman and those kids. (Welsh, 2016; p.7)

The "discipline of the basebaw bat" mentality and its physical ramifications are clearly still evident,

noticed by those who know what to look for, in this instance men equally acquainted with the casual

threats upon strangers and impending confrontations. If this were to be the conclusion of this

interaction, an argument could be made that the rehabilitation of Jim's violent impulses had been a

success, allowing him the choice to refrain from violence, if not entirely removing the desire behind

such choices. However, in the latter half of the novel, in a chapter entitled "The Self Control", Welsh

details Jim's return to the beach, without the moral buffer of wife and child. He shoots Coover in the

leg, and continues to butcher the pair of men with his artist's knives, relapsing with glee to his old

violent games, "the rage had been a beautiful treat" (Welsh, 2016; p.153). Jim's appreciation of his

bloody attack reflects a degree of emotional truth in the expression of uncensored physical rage

which is lacking within his new lifestyle. He reveals the shift in personality to Coover, before

"obliterating him" (153), "Begbie's my name . . . FRANK BEGBIE . . . SAY MA FUCKIN NAME" (p.153).

This schizoid construction of identity allows Jim Francis to masquerade as a reformed man,

manipulating the perspective of those around him in order to accommodate the existence of a

respectable identity. Jim Francis would not murder men in an impetuous fit of rage, even if he may

enact meticulous, choreographed attacks and mutilations whilst unsupervised. Begbie is not bound

by the outward perception of moral responsibility or social expectation, and therefore makes no

effort to restrict his violence within the confines of a plan; he is the raging 'fit' of violent masculinity

behind Jim Francis's tangible air of authority.

If 'Franco' Begbie is a semi- concealed facet of the newly christened Jim Francis' identity, there is

an implied dichotomy of masculine violence that does not reflect a functional degree of amendment

in regard to Begbie's hunger for violence. The internal division between violent and non-violent

personalities has not acquired a moral code, or an alternative means by which to ultimately prevent

or abstain from violence, but has simply learnt to relocate the extremes of brutality to one corner of

Francis's mind which has been tasked with the mental confinement of Begbie's sadism, and from

which it occasionally breaks free. Welsh suggests Jim Francis has exorcised his demons through the

adoption of intellectual maturity and, crucially, the abandonment of a national identity that

escalated his violent mania, but in turn can only reveal his failure to do so. Lee Bowker suggests that

the failure to eradicate masculine violence is bound by an "ameliorative focus on a single system

level of action, whereas masculine violence has roots in multiple system levels" (1998, p.2). Bowker's

systems consist of five different fields of influence upon human behaviour, the "social, cultural,

personality [. . .} biological and economic" systems, each of these systems acting as an area in which

masculine violence can thrive at varying concentrations, or differing 'levels'. The action of each

system is "the way in which living systems attempt to reach their goals" (p.3). Using the verbal abuse

of a female as an explanatory example, Bowker proposes that the terms "stupid bitch" and "whore"

(p.4) are "cultural inventions" (p.4) through which the male abuser can assert dominance through

psychological attacks upon the victim. Both derogatory slurs are reflective of a sexist, misogynistic

perception of women, which does not spontaneously exist within the cultural system of thought and

action, but is cultivated there by the social and personality systems of influence. Each system of

masculinity provides a degree of reasoning and influence upon each violent act, however, with this

example in mind it becomes easy to concur with Bowker in that it is "impossible to conceive of a

violent act that is related to just a single level" (p.7). Within each section of this analytic framework

there are accepted 'norms' of masculinity, which can be surpassed and exaggerated, or deviated

from by "subordinate variants" (Cronwall & Lindisfarne, 1994; p.3) which are deemed to be

"inadequate or inferior" (p.3) ways of 'being a man'. The interpenetrative nature of these systems

presents a complex image of masculine violence, similar to the map of violent character this thesis

aims to establish, in which the interaction between systems reveals an insight into the basic goal-

orientated psychology that is evident within the violence exhibited by many masculine role players,

biologically male or otherwise. Applying this theoretical scaffold to the violence of Begbie, there

forms an understanding of his sporadic, unjustifiable attacks and aggressive behaviours, seen within

Trainspotting and its neighbouring novels *Skagboys* and *Porno,* which foreshadows his relapse into,

albeit more cleverly orchestrated and controlled, outbursts of extreme violence on the pages of The

Blade Artist.

> In *Trainspotting*, Begbie launches an unprovoked attack on a passer-by:

> We were silent on our journey towards Begbie's until we came upon a guy in Duke Street. Begbie
>
> hit him in the face, and he fell. The gadge briefly looked up before trying to pull himself intae a
>
> foetal position. Aw Begbie said wis 'wide cunt' as he put the boot intae the prostrate body a
>
> couple ay times. (Welsh, 1996; p.309)

This action is perhaps most directly affected by the personality system, as Begbie proves himself to

always be the first to "respond to annoyance with violence" (Bowker, 1998; p.8), a trait which grows

primarily from the seeds of his volatile persona and desire to be terrifying by his own definition.

However, his establishment of fear-induced dominion over others is not removed from his social

system, in which he uses the threat of violence to maintain his ostentatious dictatorship amongst

friends, family and acquaintances. Both of these systems of masculinity are affected by a sub-

systemic hierarchy of action, seen here in the severity of Begbie's aggressive reaction. He is not

satisfied by a mere verbal assault of the victim, or in the passing of a hostile comment, but is driven

to physically beat him to the ground, presenting an acceleration of violence that is immediate and

dangerous. The rational reader does not share his motivations, as there is a significant distance

between understandable systems of influence in this action. Bowker states that the "farther a system

is from the scene of a violent act, the harder it is to prove that system elements 'caused' the event in

some way" (p.6). From this it can be inferred that Begbie's attack on the stranger is closest to his

cultural and personality based systems of masculinity, but is not resolutely commissioned by them.

On the streets of 1980's Leith, physical violence is the language that Begbie uses most comfortably

throughout his life. He lives in a sphere of criminality and under-class discontent created by the political and social disenfranchisement of Post-Thatcherite Scotland. Whilst aspects of these circumstances are rooted in the economic under -privilege of those situated within the "lowest and most obscure substrata of society" (Schoene, 2010; p.4) they serve more so to develop a cultural attitude which condones the use of extreme violence as a means by which to show power, authority and discipline. Begbie lives for the thrill of a conflict and the rush of confrontation, not because of a 'crime pays' mentally or hierarchy based social pressure to express an appetite for violence, but because this behaviour is, for him, normative and enjoyable.

Considering then, Begbie's violent masculinity with a means of how to cement his rehabilitation successfully, all of these systems need be amended to accommodate a non-violent lifestyle. Begbie is a criminal, and as such is incarcerated for a time. He exhibits psychopathic behaviours and violence, and as such is given a degree of therapy within the prison system. He circulates in a crowd of "small-time wasters" (Morace, 2001; p.42), a circumstance which is alleviated by his move to America, where he finds success as an artist, removing the need for crime in order to prosper financially, and consequently the need for violence inspired by an economic system of influence. The superficiality of these changes within Begbie's character are reflected by his inability to maintain them with any permanence, highlighting the issue Bowker strives to raise in his study of masculinity; No system is discrete, and therefore, violence within a single system cannot be reformed by the treatment of violence in isolation. Begbie's mass overhaul attempts to show what is perhaps possible with a character or individual who truly exists as victim of circumstance, for whom external stimuli and situations are the resolute birthplace of violent expressions of masculinity, rather than an inert lust for the power associated with, and instilled by, violence. Begbie is given the opportunity, support network and economic currency required to permanently change the circumstantial factors and systems which hold cards of credibility for his violent behaviour, but this is not enough to fortify his reformation. There is something unchangeable, unaffected by the veneer of rehabilitation, within Francis Begbie, as observed by his sister Elspeth,

I see what you're daein, Frank. I see what you've become. You're the same evil bastard but you've just learned to control your anger. I can see it in your eyes, the same murderous, selfish killer's eyes (Welsh, 2016; p.100-1)

This leaves us to consider the psychological and physical biology of male characters such as Begbie, and the presence of violence within these facets of masculine identity. To what degree is he a violent product of a disenfranchised Scotland, locked in what Rutherford would consider to be a permanent adolescent construction of masculinity, disempowered by his surroundings and upbringing, or a genetic sufferer of a violent gene, predisposed to aggression through his psychological condition, biological body or psychopathological architecture? The initial determination of Bowker's biological system and its facets proves problematic as these facets of masculine identity construction are considered,

The biological system and the personality system meet in the human brain. . . It is [therefore] very difficult to untangle biological and personality system influence on specific incidents of violence. (Bowker, 1998; p.9)

The study of masculinity has struggled with the ambiguity of the nature versus nurture argument since its inception, as every analytical field, from psychoanalysis to sex role theory and anthropology strives to strike a balance between the psychological, biological, bodily contention of maleness, and the socially constructed rules of hegemonic masculinity in western culture. It is the "mismatches among these projects" (Connell, 2005; p.7) that underline the difficulty to define masculinity and maleness in a concrete manner, and as such their discrepancies "raise the question of what . . . knowledge of masculinity is [a knowledge] of" (p.7). Considering Bowker's model, it would be simplest to continue in concurrence with his neat organisation of systems, and to use the masculine 'biological system' in accordance with the patriarchal status quo of understanding. That is to say, following the "plausible, pervasive and powerful story of sex and society" (Fine, 2017; p.6) which dictates that it is the physiology of the male body and its significant hormonal difference to that of

the female that acts as the dominant, if not sole, agency behind masculine aggressive behaviour (p.45). However, the suggestion that the male psyche is dictated solely by a series of chemical releases and their uptake within the brain has been widely questioned in recent studies, and does not allow for a discussion of psychological disorders and their relationship upon the development of violent gender identities. To consider the relationship between the development of masculine identity and its role within certain psychological disorders, there must be an initial understanding of how masculinity and maleness is currently defined, whether as a synthetic collection of qualities deemed male, or an omnipresent feature of men.

The 'Macho' man and his inheritance of myth

> "it's what bein a hard man is aw aboot"
> (Welsh, 2013; p.358)

R.W. Connell states, "the physical sense of maleness and femaleness is central to the cultural interpretation of gender" (2005; p.52). She suggests that the 'male body' is physically existent in biology, but is defined largely through cultural and social associations and difference from its counterpart, the female body. While there are undisputed hormonal and physiological differences, for example the obvious difference between male and female reproductive organs in both appearance and function, the discoveries of difference in other areas such as mental capacity are

> small compared to the variation within either sex, and very small compared to the differences in the social positioning of women and men. The natural - masculinity thesis requires strong biological determination . . . [however] There is no evidence at all of strong determination in this sense. (p.47)

It becomes more difficult to perceive whether the biological 'nature' of masculinity and maleness is truly genetic and organic, or postulated as such through years of social conditioning due to a "certain feel to the skin, certain muscular shapes and tensions and ways of moving" (p.52) having come to be culturally recognised and commended as inherently masculine. The acceptance of masculinity as a genetically encoded, irrefutable feature of the male brain is a symptom of what Cordelia Fine refers to as the "Testosterone Rex". She suggests that the natural order of masculinity -for men to be more aggressive, risk taking and dominant - is not defined by the abundance of testosterone within the male body, as the common layperson's consensus would imply, but has become interwoven with the fallacy of such an idea. Testosterone is cast as the "hormonal essence of masculinity" (2014 p.16) when perhaps it is more so the signified connotations of Testosterone established throughout history that provide a definition of maleness. For Fine, the origins of 'Testosterone Rex' begin in

27

Darwin's theories of sexual selection, in which, usually, the male of a species competes for a mate intersexually, through successful displays and courtship behaviours, and intrasexually, by fighting directly with rival males. This directional force of evolution ensures the most appealing and effective sexual behaviours and qualities are genetically inherited by subsequent generations. It can be presumed then, following the notion of generationally transferred behaviour, that masculinity, and its violence, is inherited from archaic human practices,

> Masculine violence in ancestral times doubtless was an important factor in hunting success, therefore maximising food supply, health and social status. Reproduction was aided by violence in that females could be acquired through violence, retained as mates through violence, and motivated to be sexually compliant by their awareness of masculine violence.
> (Bowker, 1998; p.12)

Masculine violence here appears highly functional, serving a general purpose of resource acquisition. McCall and Shields continue this line of enquiry within their anthropological study of early hominid behaviour, stating,

> It is evident that the history of interpersonal violence is as old as the hominid evolutionary line itself. There is . . . evidence for this in terms of trauma on early hominid fossil skeletons and the ubiquity of interpersonal violence among all modern human groups and closely related primate species. (2008; p.8)

However, the simplicity of the implication of a biologically inherited violence is undermined by a later observation, "that humans can be extremely violent does not mean that they are biologically determined to be so. This represents an important problem for the applied social sciences" (p.8). This highlights the complexity of humanity's predilection for violence, and the dubious way in which it has become firmly entrenched in the understanding of instrumental violence – violence with a purpose or function towards personal gain or success. The necessity of violence, or its perception as

such, is a notion which has been inherited by generation after generation, and simultaneously quashed over time through varying degrees of social and cultural advancement. This is the basis for Fine's conceptualisation of the Testosterone Rex, a narrative of masculinity that associates these "essential masculine trait[s]" (2017, p.72) with pure biological inheritance, as opposed to social conditioning and archaic tradition. Through the continuation of a hierarchical culture of patriarchy and the association of masculinity with power and supremacy, the qualities associated with Bowker's 'ancestral man' hide in plain sight, if at a quieted volume. The need for these qualities in their ancestral format has been inarguably displaced over time by the evolution of humanity, but remains evident in the assumption that male behaviour is genetically inherited. Pre-history's male hunter has become an emblem for the male as a strong provider and authoritarian figure, performing gender through the assumption of a power based role, be that in the home, workplace or social environment, which in itself has evolved and developed alongside new technologies, industries and social models. At the same time, prehistoric man's use of aggression remains a pervasive excuse for the continuation of a narrative of justifiable male violence. Fine suggests this form of masculinity attempts to reinforce patriarchal doctrines of inborn masculine superiority, whilst restricting females to a performance of a complimentary, subservient ancestral role that does not reflect their ability, behaviour or in fact, their biology:

> Testosterone Rex implicitly blames women for their lower salary and status, distracting attention away from the "unruly amalgam" of gendered influences – the norms, beliefs, rewards, inequalities experiences, and . . . punishment from those who seek to protect their turf from lower-status outsiders. (p.82)

The process of behavioural inheritance suggests that Testosterone is the "biological culprit" (p.83) for gender formation and difference, its lack or excess bearing direct influence on authority and gender identity. However, with the development of our understanding of endocrinology, and the understanding that, in fact, "hormones do not cause behaviour, but rather only make a particular

response more likely" (p.89). Fine theorises that the actions associated with testosterone cannot be simply "chalked up to a . . . purely biological factor" (p.92), as "social context and experience can override its influence on behaviour" (p.92). The suggestion that testosterone then, is the biological ringleader in the expression of masculine violence is similar to the suggestion that the presence of stairs is guilty for a fall. Human error plays a significant role in both statements. Whilst a fall down a flight of stairs might increase the degree of injury on an individual from that which could be sustained from a simple trip on the pavement, it does not define the act of falling in itself. This can only be attributed to human haste or misjudgement: a failure to find the proper footing for the situation or an inability to move safely. In the same way, testosterone is an accelerant for a biological response, potentially increasing the effect of a stimulus such as provocation or aggression, but it is not the spark that ignites such a behavioural reaction, or the psychological deficiency that prevents the management of rage or stress. Testosterone is the proverbial fall guy, handed down from one male elder to the next in order to legitimise the presence of the 'ancestral' masculine qualities that frequently blend into justifications of male violence and predation, which are only inherited through the transference of acceptable behaviours and attitudes. Fine refers to the comment of Lisa Wade to summarise:

Hormones . . . are not part of a biological program that influences us to act out the desires of our ancestors. They are a dynamic part of our biology designed to give us the ability to respond to the physical, social and cultural environment. (Wade in Fine, 2017; p.96)

Ancestral behaviours then are less associated with the 'essence' of masculinity that is assumed intrinsic to 'Testosterone rex' physicality of the male body, and are more so a product of the social and cultural doctrine which gestates the development of normative male identity. The prehistoric functionality of aggressive, violent male behaviours seems reasonable in light of discussions surrounding the use of violence as a technique of acquisition (Bowker, 1988) and, as suggested by Harrod, Martin and Perez, a means through which to solve "problems" such as,

> Retribution for past injustices, maintaining hierarchy within the society, making tribute to the gods, or blaming someone for droughts or epidemics are all ways that humans used violence to attempt to control human, natural, and supernatural forces. (2014; p.276)

However, there are little means to accurately and reliably obtain information on the use of violence within social practices which extend beyond the limit of written record, relying largely upon the bioarchaeological study of skeletal remains, which is pragmatically compromised due to the rarity of "the discovery of human remains that display evidence of violent confrontations . . . because of problems with preservation or with locating gravesites" (Montgomery & Perry, 2014; p.38). Regardless of the uncertainty which surrounds any study of how exactly ancient violence was used, there certainly seems little need for the same mentality in in the societies of modern history and into the contemporary, in which caveman-esque confrontation is not a practical means for the purchase of property, the finding of a spouse or the payment of one's utility bills. Any understanding of ancestral masculinity, accurate or speculative, does not serve to support the exhibition of masculine violence within a modern lifestyle which extends beyond a primary concern for survival and reproduction. The fact that the majority of humanity has evolved to in fact show no such use of violence in their daily lives, suggests there is further issue with the concept of ancestrally inherited violence, as modern society has existed for only a miniscule fraction of time in comparison to the millennia of prehistory, it does not follow that such behaviours could be weaned out so quickly within an evolutionary timeline. The contemporary incarnation of the behaviours most closely 'descended' from, or commonly associated with, the ancient ideals of masculinity are found within what Cornwall and Lindisfarne address as the 'macho' man:

> The 'macho man' is not everyman; he is less a stereotype than caricature in which distinctive attributes are selectively presented. (1994; p.12)

The notion of machoism as a form of social pastiche is due in part to the continuing process of enlightenment towards a more varied and accepting conception of masculinity, as 'macho' men

seem more and more ridiculous in their hyper-masculine behaviour, and masculinity itself evolves to encompass a more emotionally open and sensitive attitude, beyond the regressive outcries of 'new lad' ideology. Yet in the microcosmic corners of social amphitheatres across culture, from local pubs to lecture halls to council offices, these 'macho' qualities are still reflected in the behaviours of modern men on a base level, despite a recognition of their absurdity in contemporary society. The seemingly two-dimensional nature of Begbie's macho masculinity is perhaps the reason he is skimmed across in much of the pre-existent study of Welsh's work, as if his behaviour is simultaneously too extreme and narratively predictable to render attention beyond the basic observation of hypermasculinity. However, the preservation of macho ideology within particular areas of culture, the common lay understanding of the term 'real man' and its connotations serving as just one example, has been discussed at length by David L. Mosher and Silvan. S. Tomkins. They suggest the continued cultural inheritance of machoism reflects a continuation of "perceived scarcity" (1988, p.63) of masculine dominance and the success of violence in navigating the anxiety which surrounds the failure of such. Historically, precious resources and status were allocated to "victors of adversarial contests" (p.63) and as such, "using enemies violently, taking slaves, and raping women creates social stratification that later transfers to classes, sexes and ages within society." (p.63). These were the norms of masculine success. Whilst these behaviours are outdated and extinct the idealistic abstract, their immoral practices have modernised alongside society and industry: wars continues across the globe, human trafficking serves up modern day slavery hidden in plain sight, and women fight against the persistence of sexual abuse within society on a daily basis. The role of these behaviours within the adoption of similarly violent assertions of masculinity on a smaller scale suggests a disappointing optimism in the suggestion that 'macho' men have been relegated to an existence as abject cardboard cut-outs, who are no longer active players in the contemporary construction of masculinity. *The Hypermasculinity Inventory* developed by Mosher and Sirkin (1984) proposed a measurement of the "macho personality constellation" (Mosher & Tomkins, 1988; p. 60) in accordance with the,

rigid conformity to masculinity standards or over-compensation to gender expectations can manifest itself in a 'macho personality' characterised by socially callous attitudes, violence and aggression. (Thompson Jr, Pleck & Ferrara, 1992; p.595)

The behavioural script consisted of "three behavioural dispositions justified by beliefs: (1) entitlement to callous sex, (2) violence as manly, and (3) danger as exciting" (Mosher & Tomkins, 1988; p.61). Mosher and Tomkins suggest these macho scripts are means by which to, "connect[s] and organise[s] the information in a family of related [macho] scenes through a set of rules for interpreting, responding, defending and creating similar scenes" (p.61). In this sense, machoism preserves and polices itself, as each macho scene or act serves as a precedent to be maintained in order to,

honor[s] the 'superior, masculine' affects and humiliate[s] the displayer of the 'inferior [and] feminine'. . . Thus, macho scripts exaggerate masculine gender role behaviour to serve hostile-dominant goals motivated by . . . excitement, anger, disgust and contempt. Not just a male, not just masculine, the macho must be hypermasculine in ideology and action. The essentialist claim is made that that's just how 'real men' are. (p.64)

Returning to Frank Begbie in light of this formalisation of machoism and the subsequent features of macho ideology accounts for the nature in which he maintains his torrent of violence, discerned through a lens of identity upkeep. The admonishment of otherness, specifically the feminine, witnessed explicitly in pornographic, depersonalised retellings of sexual conquests in which the female is reduced to an object which exists only in relation to his dehumanising sexual act, "so ah'm oan toap ay it, ken, cowpin it likes, gaun fuckin radge n it's fuckin screamin likes" (p.336), serves only to inflate the macho superiority Begbie uses to perform masculinity. The Hypermasculine Inventory has been criticised in terms of validity; due to the extreme behaviour of hypermasculine individuals, the measured prevalence of such ideologies within men can act only as a "distal indicator of the possible effects of the social forces scripting men's behavior, and thus the scale may be relevant only

to the extremes in male behavior" (Thompson, Pleck & Ferrara, 1992; p. 596). Francis Begbie, however, is the epitome of this hypermasculine extreme, and it is in this light that the workings of his 'biological' sphere of masculine violence should first be considered. The term biological here refers more so to Begbie's comprehension of masculinity than in the context used by Bowker, or in the questionable anthropological studies of the evolutionary inheritance of biologically preconfigured violence, but in the myth of such ideas as exposed by Fine. He perceives his masculine identity in accordance with the gaze of Testosterone rex, biologically ingrained within his mind and body, as opposed to something exterior or beyond his physical male gender. In a similar fashion, Begbie comes with his own rex-mythology, a series of values and assumptions which are presumed intrinsic and demonstrative within his character, but are in fact facets of a personality which have been amplified to distortion by the nervous placation and sycophancy of his contemporaries. Renton narrates this formula of bravado in 'The Glass':

> A whole Begbie mythology hud been created by oor lies tae each other n oorsels. Like us,
> Begbie believed that bullshit. We played a big part in making him what he was.
> **Myth**: *Begbie has a great sense ay humour.*
> **Reality**: *Begbie's sense ay humour is solely activated at the misfortunes, setbacks and weaknesses ay others, usually his friends.*
>
> **Myth**: *Begbie is a 'hard man'.*
> **Reality**: *Ah would not personally rate begbie that highly in a square– go, withoot his assortment ay stanley knives, baseebaw bats, knuckledusters, beer glesses, sharpened knitting needles, etc. Masel n maist cunts are too shite–scared tae test this theory, but the impression remains. . .*
>
> **Myth**: *Begbie's mates like him.*
> **Reality**: *They fear him.*

Myth: Begbie would never waste any ay his mates.

Reality: His mates are generally toa cagey tae test oat this proposition. and oan the odd occasion they huv done so, huv succeeded in disproving It.

Myth: Begbie backs up his mates.

Reality: Begbie smashes fuck oot ay innocent wee daft cunts whae accidently spill your pint or bump in tae ye. Psychopaths who terrorise Begbie's mates usually dae so wi impunity, as they tend tae be closer mates ay Begbie's than the punters he hings abaot wi. He kens thum aw through approved schoal, prison n the casuals' networks, the freemasonaries that bams share. (Welsh, 1996; p.82-3)

There is a division within the 'mythology' of Begbie between qualities which attest to Begbie's machoism as he would be likely to define it, a self-prescribed 'hard man' who is justified in his behaviour: " Ah mean, you ken me, ah'm no the type ay cunt thit goes lookin fir fuckin bother likes" (p.85) and the reality of an unhinged 'macho' man, always on the hunt for an imagined provocation, "but ah wis the cunt wi the fuckin pool cue in ma hand, n the plukey cunt could huv the fat end ay it in his pus if he wanted" (p.85). Whilst Mosher and Tomkins suggest the 'macho man' identity is "socially inherited within a macho culture by virtue of being male" (Mosher & Tomkins, 1988; p. 64), this form of 'inheritance' is synonymous with the misconception of genetic, ancestral inheritance put forward by Cordelia Fine. The imagining of a script of machoism that is synonymous with the identification of the male gender is apparent in Begbie's accumulation of self-identification; in his mind, there is no alternative way in which he can assert his masculinity, nor does the hard-man demonstration of violence bear any negative connotations. Renton reflects on this after Begbie's narcissistic description, "This is a useless bastard; but he's goat style. A man ay wit. A man ay class. A man not unlike my good self"(Welsh, 1996; p.77). To the reader, and to his peers, Frank Begbie is none of the above, yet he has "always constructed imaginary qualities in his friends, and shamelessly

claimed them for himself" (p.77). This is much the same as Begbie's understanding of masculinity, and his perception of 'macho' qualities in himself and others, which are claimed as merits and accolades of power, in order to meet the requirements of a personality defined by hyper-masculine conceptions of 'how to be a real man'. In *Trainspotting* and *Skagboys*, Begbie appears as the utmost extreme of this form of 'macho' masculinity, screaming dominance in a world which deems his brand of maleness to be infantile and weak and, as Cornwall and Lindisfarne would attest, rapidly collapsing. Within *The Blade Artist*, Jim Francis reflects on this misunderstanding of masculinity within himself and the falsified assumption of strength within Begbie's criminal, 'hard man' identity,

I was weak. The notion was ridiculous; it went against everything I'd come to believe about my persona and image, against the way I'd consciously forged myself over the years. . .I had zero control over my darker impulses. Therefor I was constant jail fodder. (Welsh, 2016; p.76)

The recognition of fallacious authority within Jim Francis's old self comes with distance, both temporal and geographic, from his life on the pages of *Trainspotting*, and supports the significance of postmodern anxiety in the construction of his earlier 'macho' masculinity, and subsequent preoccupation with violence. As overarching grand narratives of identity are contextually disrupted, the destabilised order of 'biological' authority assumed by 'macho' participants in masculinity leaves Begbie possessed by an excess that cannot correct itself in line with changing social regulation or political correctness, but can only retaliate with further extremes, enhancing all explosions of violence from and within his character. Jim continues, "I was weak because I wasn't in control of myself" (p.76). Begbie's fearsome persona and violent ownership of machoism is defined precisely by this lack of control, indicative of an internal crisis in which the only form of stability is to be decidedly and aggressively unstable in a repetition of the previously reliable masculine archetype.

Accrediting this to a damaged male ego, the extinction of the idea of ancestral coding for a "man's man" – a phrase, which considering the heterosexual obsession of 'real' masculinity, has never quite made sense – does not necessarily encourage an assessment of Begbie's potential

psychological disorders. It would seem his macho, hyper-masculinity is in itself an extraordinarily volatile product of postmodern context, but settling on this conclusion as a singular elucidation of Begbie's behaviours feels like a tactical dismissal of Jim Francis's return to violence, and to Begbie, within *The Blade Artist*. However, while Mosher and Tomkins's machoism may be unable to render a complete psychological picture of masculine violence within the likes of Francis Begbie, and his mental counterpart Jim Francis, it is certainly a feature of the landscape. The sociocultural setting of *Trainspotting* is an undoubted disruption to the framework of traditional masculinity, and a disruption of a macho understanding of masculinity serves only to amplify the presentation of its symptoms within an individual in a futile effort to re-establish identity. Mosher and Tomkins summarise,

> The time to be macho is any time when "masculinity" is challenged; the macho must seize the moment. An opportunity to be macho is a challenge to be dared. Given a direct threat to hypermasculine status or self-esteem, the macho strategy is to be "mucho macho." (1988; p.79)

With this in mind, a postmodern 'crisis' of masculinity is cast as the unequivocal stimulus for macho acceleration. "The dissolution of the patriarchy and the de(con)struction of masculinity" (Herbrechter, 2000; p.1) combined with the "repressive processes of post-industrial individualism" (Freeman, cited in Herbrechter, 2000, p.2) and the "anger and volatility of post-Thatcherite Britain" (Berman, 1996 cited in Herbrechter p.2) serve to implode the traditional metanarratives of identity within Welsh's fiction, even those so readily entrenched as machoism. The ramifications of these expanding fault lines in the social construction of the individual are substantial and undoubtedly reflected in the expression and inception of violent masculinities.

Psychopathic Masculinity and Nationhood

> "When you hurt some cunt. . .
> it's your duty to enjoy it.
> Otherwise, you've done it for fuck all.
> It means nothing"
> (Welsh, 2016; p152)

It is by no means the aim of this thesis to disparage the aforementioned observations that

surround the construction of masculinity, or to suggest masculine identity can be entirely

disengaged from its "various intersections with other aspects" of culture and identification "such as

class race and sexuality" (Benwell, 2003; p.13). This is the function of an analysis which considers

Begbie as a network of actors – addressing the presence of these influential connections within his

violent character. However, within Begbie, there does lie a serious issue regarding empathy, the

enjoyment of inflicting pain upon others and the non - functional role of violence within social

interaction which transcends the boundaries of what has been termed masculine violence, and

considered derivative of external stimuli and situation. There appears no cathartic movement within

his character beyond the pursuit of a violent encounter, no social or political anxiety relieved or

explored in the physical transference of rage. This is seen explicitly in the episode of *Trainspotting* in

which Begbie launches a pint glass into the crowd of an Edinburgh pub,

> Aw ah did wis put a pint ay Export in front ay Begbie. He takes one fuckin gulp oot ay it; then he
>
> throws the empty gless fae his last pint straight ower the balcony, in a casual, backhand motion . .
>
> . Ah look at Begbie, whae smiles . . . The gless crashes doon oan this draftpak's heid, which splits
>
> open as he faws tae his knees. (Welsh, 1996; p.79)

The revelry in such instrumental outbursts of violence, or the inability to assess their emotional

impact on others, is a facet of personality that may seem a natural leap from the association of

machoism with a limited emotional vocabulary and opposition to the expression of male sensitivity.

However, it is not a ubiquitous character trait within each of Welsh's denizens of Leith, each of whom undertakes their own struggle with machoism and the establishment of 'deviant' or derivative identities, all of whom exist in a similar position of social and cultural disenfranchisement. The severity of Begbie's virulence exceeds those of his peers, and it is because of this that he is frequently limited by criticism which labels him a "proto-typical hard man" (McGuire, 2010; p.9). This is the persona Jim Francis refers to in his reminiscence of Begbie's lack of control, a self-honed performative façade of insanity which actively conjugated the 'myth' of the "Total fuckin crazy psycho Beggars" (Welsh, 1996; p.198) which is accepted as natural within 1980's Leith, "held up as an archetypal model of manhood Ecosse" (p.198), in spite of Renton's criticism. Begbie determines himself as a 'hard-man' because this is a constituent of his nature, and the inevitable product of moral and criminal malnutrition of social conditioning, but his relationship with violence, and a failure to heed its affectual consequences, extends beyond the ascendency of 'Begbie', refusing to be satiated by the expression of control. Begbie's "shallow affect, lack of empathy, guilt and remorse, irresponsibility, and impulsivity" (Kiehl & Hoffman, 2011; p.355) are in fact far more closely related to an ungendered mental deficit associated with Antisocial Personality Disorder.

As the general interest in psychopathology has boomed, the search for an explanation of such "emotional impairment" (Blair, Mitchell & Blair, 2005; p.110) has initiated several studies into the genetic prevalence of specific brain abnormalities in psychopathic individuals. These studies use MRI images and chemical tracers to produce neuroimages of brain function within psychopathic participants and non-psychopathic participants, comparing the difference in neural activity. There has been marginal variation in the exact nature of the deviance within psychopathic neurophysiological activity, but overall, studies have universally agreed upon the significance of abnormalities in the amygdala and hippocampus regions. Blair, Mitchell and Blair (2005) suggest that within psychopaths,

> The amygdala is functioning atypically from an early age . . . it is this problem in amygdala functioning that leads to the psychopathic individual's impairment of emotional learning . . .

[which is] at the root of psychopathy. (2005; p.110

The amygdala and hippocampus are "classic members of the limbic system, which is generally considered to be responsible for the control of affective and emotional processes in the brain" (Kiehl, 2014, p.100). If there is an actual neurological impairment that precedes psychopathic tendencies, the suggestion that postmodern identity anxiety is the basis on which Begbie's violence is formed becomes marginalised, and the questions surrounding the origins of his violent and anti-social behaviours become further complicated. The severity of Begbie's sociopathic behaviours and their climaxes in violent outbursts are reflective of a psychological disturbance, which supersedes external factors of influence, and stalls the accruement of victimhood by fragmented male role players in a context of postmodernity. In their study of psychopathy, Kiehl and Hoffman suggest an "interactive model" (2011; p.360) in which,

Psychopaths are seen as having a genetic or early developmental predisposition for the disorder, which then blossoms into psychopathy when the predisposed individual interacts with a poor environment. (p.360)

Begbie's predisposition for violence is evident throughout his lifetime within Welsh's fiction, threatening to overtake narratives of hypermasculinity, biological maleness or socialised gender roles; it appears that Begbie's brain is simply switched on to sadism. In an interview with *Bomb*, Irvine Welsh gave an authorial perspective on the nature versus nurture predicament of masculinity and its violence, specifically in terms of the rape of young women, and whether the suffering of previous abuse excuses its regurgitation unto another victim,

I'm generally undecided. Most abusers have been abused themselves. Yeah, I would give the importance to nurture rather than nature. I don't think the debate itself is as simple as that. Scotland is one of the most repressed societies. It completely sustains that kind of misogynistic behaviour. (Welsh, interviewed by Berman, 1996)

For Welsh, the issue of neurological 'badness', inborn within an individual's psyche is problematized by the misogyny of masculinity within Scotland, and the effect this has on the development of a progressive perception of violence and misogyny. It would appear, according to Welsh's authorial intention, that the inception of male violence is more heavily embroiled with nationality and the conventions of Scottish culture which stem from the social climate in which his characters exist, as opposed to an independent agent in the network of masculine violence within a coincidentally Scottish character. However substantial works of theory have criticised the reflectional positioning of authorial intention onto the meaning of a text, and the interpretation of its characters, it follows as such that "authorial intention must at some point accept the premises of anti-intentionalist accounts of meaning" (Knapp & Michaels, 1982; p727).

The introduction of this thesis highlighted an issue of a sweeping Scottishness within Welsh's works, in that the microcosmic representation of Leith dialect threatens to "become standardised" (Innes,2007: p.301) as the universally accepted "authentic Scottish Voice" (p.301). The understanding of masculine behaviour that is connotatively 'Scottish' threatens to create a similarly 'authentic' yet often misrepresentational image of violent masculinity. Welsh's representation of Scotland is indebted to his personal experience of life in Edinburgh, a subject he frequently discusses in public interviews, and it is perhaps because of this legitimate authenticity that the process of generalisation and the easy accreditation of 'Scottishness' to Welsh's subjects and their misbehaviour is so readily accepted as the backbone of their existence. The importance of Scottishness and the sociocultural environment of Scotland is inarguable within Welsh's fiction - specifically considered in the construction of Frank Begbie - however there are limitations to the lens of nation when it is calibrated to perceive a small sample of the view of masculinity as panoramic. There follows a consideration of how the imposition of Scottishness is integral, or not so, in the creation of a man such as Francis Begbie, considering the connections between the national culture and its relation to the development of a hyper-masculine, ultraviolent identity. Whilst *The Blade Artist* provides Begbie with a narrative upbringing within Scotland (an effort that *Trainspotting* only

sporadically considers in monologues from Renton, and a post-incarceration reflection on his phobic intolerance of otherness, the cadences of which are echoed and exaggerated within his appearances in *Porno* and *Skagboys*) there remains a bloodlust within Jim, prevailing in spite of a departure from the environment, class, and social sector which forged his young sense of 'self'. The relationship between Begbie's psychopathology and the "poor environment" (Kiehl & Hoffman, 2011; p.360) which has arguably served to fertilise the expression of violence, under the assumed effort to reassert a 'macho' extension of traditional masculine identity appears dubious in the dissection of his masculinity. This must be considered in further detail in order to suggest furtively that it is the psychopathic "lack of moral reasoning" (p.361) that weaponises Begbie's masculinity beyond a brutality that can be accredited to a socio-culturally 'Scottish' circumstance.

Masculinity in Leith Central station

> "How goes bonnie Scotland, Tam?
> The usual. Begbie's oan the fuckin warpath again."
> (Welsh, 2013; p.307)

Thus far, the lay assumption of a genetic inheritance of an ancestral form of masculinity has been sufficiently invalidated, but the social and cultural inceptions of identity, masculine or otherwise, are yet to be thoroughly explored, along with the definite possibility of a psychopathic neurological dysfunction within all incarnations of Welsh's Frank 'Franco' Begbie and his secondary identity, Jim Francis. This requires an assessment of his earliest behaviours and appearances within the various novels belonging to the *Trainspotting* universe. In *Skagboys*, a prequel to *Trainspotting* situated several years before events of Welsh's debut novel, Begbie appears once more as a satellite character within Welsh's shifting narrative voice, and is a younger version of the same self, hyper-violent and misogynistic to the letter. In 'Too shy' we first encounter Begbie in a Leith pub with his usual companions, Renton, Tommy, Spud and Keezbo, in a conversation which Begbie rules through a palpable tension of imminent violence should his opinions be questioned, a fear felt by Spud as "Begbie dispenses his trademark paint-stripping stare" after a disagreement on the paedophilic nature of Gilbert O'Sullivan. Samantha Frenchard enters to inform Begbie of her pregnancy following their sexual relationship. Merciless rage and misogynistic outcries ensue "Ah said tae ye: 'Gies a fuckin ride.' Ah nivir sais: 'Gie's a fuckin bairn.' Cause ah'm intae rides n ah'm no intae fuckin bairns!" (Welsh, 2013; p.54). The Begbie of *Skagboys* may be an earlier form of the 'monster' (Smith, 2002) recognised within *Trainspotting*, but he is very much the same young man, already enamoured with the authority of the hard-man. Later within the novel, Begbie attacks the "slag's brother" (p.160) in a grand exhibition of retaliation to an infringement of his notorious reputation, "this dippit big brother cunt's been gaun oan aboot how he's gaunny dae this, n how he's gaunny do that" (p.160). It is Frank Begbie who accelerates the violence of physical conflict with the Frenchard family,

Begbie gits a hook in at his side, and the boy thinks he's been punched but ah see the glint, n his next blows square intae the laddie's guts. . .as he looks doon at the blood soakin his blue shirt. . . Begbie's pocketed the blade but he's jist standin thaire, cooly appraising his work, like a forman oan site checkin the quality ay the job. (p.145)

And continues the incline of its severity,

Franco. . .picks up the railin and fuckin tans the bastard's jaw wi it, aw in one sweet motion. . . Franco's bringin doon the spikey end first . . . right intae the cunt's baws. Then he leathers the boy a couple ay nasty shots across the coupon. (p.162)

Skagboys amplifies the volatile madness which surrounds Begbie's character, retrospectively adding to his repertoire of violence as it is presented within *Trainspotting,* emphasising the nonchalance with which it is regarded and enacted*.* Even after his girlfriend June miscarries their child, Begbie can resort only to anger and accusation, "aw she hud tae dae was keep the fuckin up thaire, n she couldnae even dae that. . . Telt her it was her fault: lelt her she wis a fuckin murderer!" (p.318). The loss of a child does not appear resolutely as a deeply emotional event for Frank Begbie, supported by his absolute lack of empathy for June – adding to Begbie's score on the PCL-R checklist under the 'lack of empathy' and 'shallow emotions' categories – but more so as a potential justification for his inherent rage, which is further considered in the next section of this thesis. Welsh provides a more in-depth insight in Begbie's childhood in *The Blade Artist*, with narrative flashbacks to his childhood depicting a young boy who was encouraged to establish his place in the hierarchy of authority through an attack on his elder brother by his Grandfather, Jock:

Grandad Jock said to be me. . .He kens his weaker than you. . . I was floored by this revelation. Joe constantly bullied me. . .When I was younger I used to tell everybody this story. . .I made out that it was my dad that took me aside and told me to batter Joe's face in with a brick as he slept. . . But it wasn't my dad. It was my grandad. It was old Jock. . . The main thing, however,

was that the face was Joe's and the brick was in my hand. He wept all night, blood leaking into

his pillow. I was scared, exhilarated, almost tripping from my own sense of might. We both

knew the score from then on in. (Welsh, 2016; p.28)

This is the very first instance of Begbie's systems of violence in operation, directly inspired by the

advice of an elder. His understanding of self-assertion is based upon the example set by his

grandfather, reflecting and reincarnating the view of masculinity and strength held by generations

previous. It is Jock who indoctrinates Francis into the understanding of violence as "a way of claiming

or asserting masculinity" (Connell, 2005; p.84), a performance of dominance that, throughout

adolescence and early adulthood, Begbie comes to revere as the staple feature of his identity. Jock

enfolds Francis in his own criminal enterprise, recruiting the young boy to make suspicious deliveries

to Jock and "his pals" (Welsh, 2016; 25), "these bold, sly men, whom people seemed to fear and

respect" (p.25), and inadvertently cementing Begbie's seemingly inevitable adoption of a criminal

lifestyle. If psychopathology is defined by an inborn abnormality in the neurological function and

structure of the brain, was there ever any saving a man such as Begbie, if his early relationships had

demonstrated better morality and less aggression? Is his predilection for violence a singular result of

the aforementioned mental deficit, or is there room, as suggested by Kiehl & Hoffman, for an

overlapping understanding of his brutal masculinity, combining the concept of psychopathy with

social and cultural influence? In *The Development of Psychopathology*, it is suggested that although

there is no evident link between the presentation of the neurological symptoms of psychopathy –

the dysfunction in amygdala operation that has been documented through the development of brain

scan imagery – and "social environmental variables such as "abuse, exposure to violence. . .and

parenting techniques" (Blair, Peschardt, Budhani, Mitchell, & Pine, 2006; p.270), due to such

children's pre-existent "emotional dysfunction"(p.270) it is accepted that there are,

Other social environmental variables that have an impact on aggression/antisocial behaviors in

typically developing children, for example, an antisocial cultural and economic background and

unemployment, are likely to have at least as great an impact on the behaviour of children with

the emotion dysfunction that is at the core of psychopathy . . . because they influence either the

motivation to offend or the child's knowledge base of antisocial strategies. (p.270)

Even if a psychopath cannot be 'made' through childhood trauma, it does not follow that their

behaviours cannot be moulded by aspects of their environment, specifically their socioeconomic

surroundings. If Welsh's Begbie did not score highly enough on the PCL-R to meet a formal diagnosis

of 'psychopath', his psychopathic tendencies would undoubtedly be affected by his upbringing in the

criminal underclass. A fictional character cannot be questioned across the table of an interrogation

room, or diagnosed in accordance with Hare's PCL-R checklist in accordance to his answers, and as

such the diagnosis of a genetic disorder in a definitive manner is impossible and partially redundant:

Frank Begbie is not a real threat to a real society, existing only on the pages of a novel, serving to cast

a reflection upon the fictional variant of society in which he exists. However, his appropriation of

qualities and behaviours that have been accredited to the psychopath's playbook, and their

development as such from a young age, is too significant to ignore given an understanding of his

construction of masculinity. Of course, in order to affirm this niggling sensation of an underlying

psychological deformity, Begbie's sociocultural surroundings, and the company he keeps within them

must be repeatedly considered, ensuring the accusation of psychopathy is not merely a misplaced

allegation of mental depravity, a short-circuit within our network of character as it were, which has

been otherwise instilled and inherited by social practice and cultural conditioning. If Begbie is the only

member of his social circle to embody such rage and psychopathic potentiality for violence, then there

are significant problems with a purely sociocultural interpretation of his hyper-masculinity, giving

further merit to the sensation of deep-seated, psychological abnormality within his character.

There are other characters within *Trainspotting* who share aspects of Begbie's disturbed

character: Sick Boy enjoys the torturous sport of shooting an air-rifle from the window of his flat at

dogs, inciting the animals to turn on their "stereotypical twat" (Welsh, 1996; p.178) owners,

They call me Sick Boy, the scourge of the schemie, the blooterer of the brain-dead. This one's for

you Fido, or Rocky, or Rambo . . . or whatever the fuck your shite-brained, fuck-wit of an owner has

dubbed you. This is fir aw the bairns you've slaughtered, faces you've disfigured and shite you've

deposited in our streets. (p.178)

Sick Boy's rage unto the animal is perhaps not so simple as a penchant for sadism, also representing a

hatred towards the owner of the dog, who suffers the betrayal of his pet's loyalty, and the physical

pain of being bitten. Sick Boy selects his target casually, yet pointedly "what a fuckin sight the cunt

looks as well. Skinheid haircut, green bomber–jaykit, nine–inch DMs" (p.178). Patricia Horton

suggests,

  The source of his hatred is complex. On one level, it has its roots in class since as a subculture,

    skinheads embrace 'a somewhat mythically conceived image of the traditional working-

    classcommunity'. Thus the skinhead reminds Simon of his own working-class roots – his own

    'enemy within' – and of the tensions in his own identity. (2001; p.230)

  A bestial sadist and a thoroughbred misogynist in his discussion and disposal of women as sexual

objects, Sick Boy reflects the contention of masculinity that resents the oppressive promise of

feminism and 'post' culture, as well as his working-class heritage, seemingly unsure where to drive his

frustration towards the impending development of the 'new man' (Benwell, 2003) and his sensitised

perspective. These misanthropic feelings are shared by Begbie, and yet there is no implication or

suggestion that Sick Boy should be perceived as an inherently dangerous incarnation of masculinity,

perhaps only if you are a young woman in pursuit of romantic commitment. Sick Boy describes himself

in comparison with his associates,

    Ah shake off Rents, he can go and kill himself with drugs. Some fucking friends I have. Spud,

    Second Prize, Begbie, Matty, Tommy: these punters spell L–i–M–i–T–E–D. An extremely limited

    company. (Welsh, 1996; p. 30)

Sick Boy is a con man, lothario and a fitting model for the 'new lad' schema of rebellion, maturing in the same socio-economic and cultural climate as Francis Begbie, yet he perceives his functionality beyond his contextual milieu, as does Renton in his escape to Amsterdam. Tommy is perhaps the best-rounded, physically and psychologically healthy character at the beginning of *Trainspotting.* He is seen to uphold a degree of social morality and foreshadows the popular development of a more effeminate masculinity, which is unseen within his scally counterparts. This is demonstrated within his chivalrous intervention in a couple's physical conflict within a bar, as Second Prize commentates,

> That wis fuckin ace ay Tommy hittin the boy, likes, n no the bird, even if it wis the burd thit hit him. Ah've done loads ay things in ma time thit ah'm no proud ay, but ah've nivir hit a burd. . . Ah jist held oantae her so thit we could talk. She sais restrainin is like hittin, it's still violence against her. Ah cannae see that. Aw ah wanted tae dae wis tae keep her thair, tae talk. Whin ah telt this tae Rents, he sais thit Carol wis right. Eh sais she's entitled tae come n go as she wants. That's shite though. Aw ah wanted tae dae wis talk. Franco agreed wi us. It's different whin yir in a relationship. (Welsh, 1996; p.61-2)

In this extract alone there is a comparison drawn between the ideology of Begbie and his constitution of violence, specifically in opposition to femininity, and Tommy, an "offensively fit. . .handsome, easy-going, intelligent, and pretty tidy in a swedge" embodiment of maleness which ticks all the hegemonic boxes, without raising any psychopathic red flags. The perception of "restrainin" here serves as a fitting metaphor for the semblance of tolerance and justification of violence within the characters. Second Prize upholds the chivalrous, if somewhat patronising in this extract, anti-violence towards women dogma, but exempts from the use of physical restraint, reflecting a normalisation of social and domestic violence. Renton recognises the physical constraint of an individual is a violence in of itself, whilst Second Prize and Begbie contend it to be an almost affectionate act, inseparable from the male-female relationship dynamic. The suggestion that "it's different whin yir in a relationship" (p.62) synonymously asserts codes of hegemonic masculinity

48

through inferred sexual authority over their partners and criticises Renton's "subordinate variant" (Cornwall & Lindisfarne, 1994; p.3) of masculinity which implicitly suggests a lack of experience within sexual relationships. Of course, each of Welsh's characters exist somewhere on an antithetical scale of phobia and violence, as whilst Renton demonstrates disgust towards Begbie's xenophobic exhibitionism ("Ah hate cunts like that. Cunts like Begbie. Cunts that are intae baseball–batting every fucker that's different; pakis, poofs, n what huv ye") (Welsh, 1996; p.78) his "thoughtless invocation of the same derogatory terms makes him complicit in the politics they imply, as does his fear-fuelled refusal to voice a different position" (Innes, 2007; p. 302). Despite his admonishment of Begbie's chauvinistic and racist beliefs, Renton is a collaborative member of a society which deems these terms and attitudes legitimate, a role which Renton accredits to national identity,

Fuckin failures in a country ay failures. It's nae good blamin it oan the English fir colonising us. ah don't hate the English. They're just wankers. We are colonised by wankers. We can't even pick a decent, vibrant, healthy culture to be colonised by. No. . . What does that make us? The lowest of the fuckin low, the scum of the earth. The most wretched, servile, miserable, pathetic trash that was ever shat intae creation. Ah don't hate the English. They just git oan wi the shite thuv goat. Ah hate the Scots. (Welsh, 1996; p.78)

The contempt for the standardised nature of "a vaguely defined but passionately despised" (Innes, 2007; p.300) understanding of 'Englishness', is part and parcel of Welsh's characters' understanding of nationality and nationhood. The disenfranchised voice of a "subordinated social group" (Miller, 2010; p.89) is used to convey the mutual "crisis of nationhood" (Schoene, 2004; p.124) which, as Patricia Horton suggests, "is clearly grounded in their class status, [whilst] it is also bound up inextricably with gender and nationhood, and with Scotland's history of colonisation" (2001; p.226). Horton continues in the observation of animosity within the Scottish Self, as "self-hatred is grounded in feelings of emasculation, in Scotland's failure to behave 'manfully'" (p.226). The diseased form of nationalism within *Trainspotting* articulates a shared crisis of identity, emphasised by the

"postmodern project of destabilisation and decentring" (Schoene, 2004; p.124). There is a definite subscription to a national sense of ostracism by each of the masculine role-players within *Trainspotting,* even those of a female sex, which indicates that the predilection for violence and aggression within Begbie transcends the influence of social and cultural stimuli, as few others are driven into to similar expressions of physical rage. The importance of these differences in Welsh's characters, the degree to which their masculinity is regarded as deviant or normative of the hegemonic gender narrative, and the differences in moralistic justifications of violence and its function as a signifier within identity crafting behaviours, supports the assumption of a psychological deficit within Begbie's character. Welsh's Leith is the emblematic crawl space for the storage and festering of atypical, addicted personalities, but there is no other character within *Trainspotting* whose relationship with violence becomes so psychopathically augmented, or so exceptionally violent. However, the topography of the map of Begbie's masculinity, and his violence, shares many of these sociocultural landmarks of national identity and the influence it bears onto each of Welsh's young denizens of Leith. It does not fit the ethos of this study to stroll past them without adequate recognition.

Returning to Begbie's childhood as a means to further comprehend the difference in his character and his companions, as highlighted earlier within this chapter, young Francis Begbie adopts the behaviours of his grandfather, and as such inherits an outdated codex for what dictates a strong, contextually normative, male identity. His father, a figure who is largely absent in his upbringing due to alcoholism, is superseded by his own elder, leaving Francis Begbie to adopt a misplaced admiration for his only blood-related masculine influence who takes an interest in him. Begbie's father appears only once within *Trainspotting*, as a misrecognised "auld drunkard" (Welsh, 1996; p.309) in the chapter from which the novel derives its name, 'Trainspotting at Leith Central Station'. He approaches Renton and Begbie; "what yis up tae Lads? Trainspotting eh?" (p.308) Leith Station is abandoned and derelict, absent of trains and escape routes from the woes of Leith's destitution. Berthold Schoene reflects,

[this] encounter is resonant of the derelict state of the Scottish working class which, like Begbie's

father, has come down in the world and whose demise represents a key factor in the younger

generation's despondency and lack of direction. (Schoene, 2010; p.65)

Begbie states his only instance of desire for social mobility within this scene "If it still hud trains, ah'd

be oan one oot ay this fuckin dive" (Welsh, 1996; p. 308) which Renton marks as "uncharacteristic [for

him tae talk aboot Leith in that way]" (p. 308). The presence of Begbie's father in an environment

which inspires a reflection upon his position within Scotland, reaffirms the association between

"damaged identity" and the "Scottish 'divided self'", as Begbie pontificates on an impossible escape

from Leith but more significantly, reflects the impact of his past upon his character, his father's

presence within Leith Station serving to amplify his absence within Begbie's life – another

circumstance from which Frank Begbie cannot escape. The absence of the father, both physically and

emotionally, has been suggested to have direct correlation to the likelihood of an involvement with

crime, "delinquent peers" (Harper & McLanahan, 2004; p.372) and criminal incarceration. Mackey and

Immerman (2004) suggest that father absence is "causal in character, not merely correlative" (p.353)

to the development of violent behaviour. Whilst Begbie is given a male role model in his Grandfather,

the comparative nature of this inter-familial adoption only serves to magnify the distance between

himself and his biological father. In terms of hypermasculine identity, the potential for Begbie's violent

personality exists both in the synchronic moment of its actuality, as it does in each instance of rage

and misanthropic outbursts throughout his lifetime, but equally in diachronic measure, first

demonstrated by an elder, and repeatedly reinforced with each acceleration of violent severity. This

'psychological inheritance' of behaviour endeavours to explain Begbie's behaviours throughout his

further appearances in the Welshian universe; the violent nature of a child, perhaps already destined

for a life of psychopathic deviance, catalysed by the questionable nurture of a disaffected

environment and a familial 'support' network which ultimately fails to be established.

   In his essay 'Irvine Welsh and Identity Politics' Gavin Miller considers the inheritance of character

and culture in Welshian literature to be "a specious 'working-class identity' [which] is passed down to

the sons and daughters of the working class" (2010; p.90). Welsh's construction of 'working class culture' and the subsequent identifications with such are defined by two philosophies: "one that sees the middle and upper classes as enemies; and another more individualistic desire to escape the working class" (Welsh cited in Schoene, 2010; p.4). Begbie's family fall firmly within the first category of this division, situated at the bottom of society's ladder, existing within the "underbelly of working-class culture" (Mcguire, 2010; p.10) and resenting the norms of a more moralistic, law abiding and 'middle-class' lifestyle. The 'working-class' identity is an ostensible observation to be made of Welsh's focal characters – very few of them are actually employed during the narrative of *Trainspotting*, and would perhaps be more readily identified within a substratum of Marx and Engel's Lumpenproletariat: lacking a class identity beyond their residual inheritance, acting now as "unemployable workers, paupers and criminals" (Fletcher, 2011; p.112). However, Welsh's characters appear to inherit the mental socioeconomic structures of their elders, considering themselves to be 'working-class' in spite of their "replacement of work with leisure" (Freeman, cited in Herbrechter, 2000; p.112). Stevie, a minor character within the novel, considers this deceptive demographic in contention with his 'comrades' football allegiances,

> Football divisions were a stupid and irrelevant nonsense, acting against the interests of working–
> class unity, ensuring that the bourgeoisie's hegemony went unchallenged. Stevie had it all worked
> out. (Welsh, 1996; p.48)

Stevie acknowledges the dissolution of an actual working-class ideology in the hearts and minds of his contemporaries, who are far more prone to infighting, drawing divisions amongst themselves and thereby undermining the functionality of "working-class unity". Miller highlights an accumulation of victimhood amidst this process of class placement, in which the working-class identity incorporates Scottish sectarian anxieties and assimilates a "history of trauma" (2010; p.92) through the assumption of Protestant and Catholic religions to be discrete "mode[s] of race" (p.91), and as such to be burdened with the weight of racial injustice. Welsh belittles this notion of sectarian race as there is no

true parallel between the struggles of these ultimately "performed" (p.91) non-biological facets of national or religious identity and historic cases of abhorrent ethnicity based racism. The hypocrisy of this "inter-generationally transmitted cultural or psychological inheritance" (p.92) is highlighted by the displacement of racism from supposed victim unto the perpetrator:

> Ah sorta jist laugh whin some cats say that racism's an English thing and we're aw Jock Tamson's bairns up here . . . its likesay pure shite man, gadges talking through their erses. (Welsh, 1996; p.126)

The coalition between an understanding of working-class identity and national pride becomes embroiled in the development of nationalism within Welsh's characters. James Kellas highlights the dangers of this formulation of nationalism as a "combination of biological ethnocentrism, psychological ingroup/outgroup hostile propensities and cultural and political differences" (1998; p.16) which can be directly related to "forms of behaviour such as xenophobia, discrimination and racism" (p.16). In *Trainspotting* there is a rendition of Scottishness which endeavours to reaffirm traditional, mythologised notions of greatness within the nation through a distinct separation with perceived oppressors, such as the English, which inadvertently critiques itself through the transference of racism and violence into Scottish national identity. Renton articulates this during one of his many diatribes on the subject of Scotland and nationhood,

> Ah've never felt British, because ah'm not. It's ugly and artificial. Ah've never really felt Scottish either, though. Scotland the brave, ma arse; Scotland the shitein cunt. We'd throttle the life oot ay each other fir the privilege ay rimmin some English aristocrat's piles. Ah've never felt a fuckin thing aboot countries, other than total disgust. They should abolish the fuckin lot ay them. (Welsh, 1996; p.228)

Through Renton "nation is examined" (Farred, 2004; p.221) to reveal

the myth of Scotland and its ''factual'' corollary [that] have combined to produce, according to

Renton, a profoundly dangerous misconception—a national self-delusion powerful enough to

obscure the ''white trash'' from itself because it is clothed in and historicized into a heroic

oppositionality. (p.220).

The inheritance of national 'injustice' and a communal identity defined in contention with otherness

throughout history – particularly Englishness – surrounds Renton, and separates him from those still

encapsulated by the "nostalgic" (p.221) mythology of Scotland, of the acquired social and cultural

memories proposed by Miller, the "rabid, racist sectarians" (p.221) who are best represented by Frank

Begbie. Begbie's identity, and as such his masculinity, is compounded with a sense of Scottishness,

which appears, within the temporal confinement of *Trainspotting*, inescapable. The undermining post-

structuralist quandary faced by the concept of nationhood in an ever increasingly globalized and

connected world permeates Renton's narration and his understanding of Scotland on a political level,

as,

> Thatcherite England . . . evacuated Scottishness . . . by making sure that the Scots have nothing to
>
> do—except take drugs, commit acts of ''nihilism'' against their neighbors and their mates, and . . .
>
> contemplate the end of the Scottish nation. (p.221)

The construction of national identity within Begbie is perhaps less polemic in politics, and more

reflective of a "working class nationalism [which] is generally related to culture and football" (Kellas,

cited in Harvie, 2004, p.19). The lads of *Trainspotting* are followers of Hibernian FC or 'Hibs', a team

often considered as Scotland's "Forgotten Irish" club, formed by a "significant minority" (Kelly, 2007;

p.517) of Irish catholic migrants in 1875 (Kelly, 2007), and frequently related to instances of football

violence and hooliganism, sporting one of the "most active casual movement[s] in Scotland"

(Guilianotti, 1994, 1999; p.230) during the 80's and 90's. Anthony May suggests, "Welsh presents

football support as a cultural affiliation in itself, and one which plays a key role in defining an

individual's cultural and political ideal" (2016, p.11). The 'accumulation of victimhood' suggested by

Miller is present here also, as the assumption of religiously weighted, but now largely sectarianized, discrete "mode[s] of race" (Miller, 2010; p.91) is attached to the process of 'belonging' to a Catholic football club, auto-inheriting the perceived injustices of Catholicism within Scotland through shared affiliation with Hibernian FC. The relationship between football and national identity, and the inheritance of amplified injustice in accordance with such, is reflective of the notion of Scottish 'mythology' as highlighted by Farred, suggesting that, for characters such as Begbie, it is an integral aspect of cultural participation that influences his readiness to behave in accordance with a particular code of violent behaviour. "The humble working class roots" (Lughton, 2012, p.2) of Hibs FC are memorialised in the adoption of underclass pride amongst their followers, and their subsequent assimilation of 'working-class' ideals and structures which are reduced to spectres of their former representations amidst the "young junkies and wasters" (Petrie, 2004; p.89) Welsh depicts. In his novel *Among the Thugs* Bill Buford considers the "first non-working-class working-class generation" (2001; p.264) as "ornate versions of an ancient style, more extreme now without substance" (p.264):

> A . . . suburban society stripped of culture and sophistication and living only for its affections: a bloated code of maleness, an exaggerated embarrassing patriotism, a violent nationalism, an array of bankrupt antisocial habits . . . it is lad culture without mystery, so deadened that it uses violence to wake itself up. (p.265)

Football hooliganism is only one means by which Begbie secures his high ranking place in Buford's aforementioned culture of inflated masculinity and exaggerated exhibitions of such. Begbie of *Skagboys* is engaged with the Young Leith Team, or YLT, a street-gang heavily involved with football casual violence, seen in 'the Waters of Leith' as he urges Tommy and YLT affiliates to join him at Easter Road to rally against the "Aberdeen boys". Tommy laments Begbie's continued thirst for mob-violence, "Begbie's aw fired up by aw this casuals shite. He's six or seven years aulder than these wee cunts. Its pathetic" (p.307). Whilst Tommy accepts the futility of football violence, young men performing masculinity as part of Buford's "lad culture without mystery" (2001; p.265): "It's nonsense.

You grow out of that shite" (p.309), Begbie preserves his identity in relation to violent action. Again Begbie's adoption of a collective identity, as part of the YLT, serves to validate a desire for a 'swedge' that is not shared by his post-adolescent peers. The affiliation with a violent gang gives Begbie another promotional schema of masculine violence to adhere to and protect. Renton sees through this veneer of loyalty and pride, masking the reality: "Ye ken the Generalissimo [Begbie]. Any excuse for aggro" (p.307). Whilst Begbie's violence is not particularly explored in terms of his affiliation with Hibs during *Trainspotting*, the hostility between opposing clubs, shown in the frequent slurs of "Hibby bastard or fenian Cunt" (Welsh, 1996; p.48) and the group's expulsion from a takeaway after "chanting: – Oooh to ooh to be, oooh to be a Hibby! when a nervous and uncomfortable looking guy in a Hearts shell– top walks in" (p.272) is reflective of the qualities of the pseudo class-generation identified by Buford. The assertion of masculinity through a sensation of victory over rival football affiliations is not limited to expressions of violence. After sleeping with Dianne, an underage school girl who takes him home from a nightclub, Renton congratulates himself on the act after learning her father is a Hearts fan,

  - The Hibbies didnae do too well against us, did they?

  Renton smiled, glad for the first time, for reasons other than sexual ones, to have shagged this
  man's daughter (Welsh, 1996; p.150)

Whilst Hibs may not have enjoyed an actual victory to be scored in a goal, Renton's affiliation with their team is a fresh source of masculine pride, as his sexual conquest comes to embody the sensation of pride associated with his team, and in the momentary subversion of the standard class-hierarchy, mentally belittling a man of middle-class standing whilst maintaining a strong sense of underclass identity that remains linked to Hibernian FC. Using football chants and club rivalries to cajole an albeit divided sense of Scottish patriotism that has been otherwise usurped by Thatcherism, a stagnance in devolutionary momentum and a disrupted mythological narrative of the 'great' Scot, the amalgamation of associated masculinity, and its violence, into a national culture is an inevitable hedonism for those within the destabilised margins of Welsh's Scotland, best preserved by those

most enraptured by the physical expression of its extremes.

Berthold Schoene explains that the patterns of "continuous dismantlement and reconstruction" explored within and typified by the postmodern condition brought about "a radical destabilisation of the self [which] also gave rise to a twentieth-century crisis of national identity" (2004; p.122), similar to that which has been previously discussed in this chapter. The failed independence referendum held in 1979 inspired such a crisis of national identity, as a 'Yes' vote for devolved independent Scottish parliamentary powers was discounted on the basis of failing to reflect the majority of the electorate. Struggling against "the hegemonic centre of 'English' britishness" (Herbrechter, 2000; P.1) there is an aspect of 'Scottishness' which becomes synonymous with a failure to establish identity, whether on an international scale through the vehicle of the nation, or in the psychological perception of 'self' held by one member of said nation. Anne McClintock suggests, "The needs of the nation [are] typically identified with the frustrations and aspirations of men" (1997; p.89) drawing a direct comparison between the fragmentation of nationhood and the postmodern destabilizations of "base and superstructure, gender and sexual orientation" (Byers, 1995; p.35). The effect of a destabilised national identity is significant here in the development of Begbie's violence, as it is a movement away from Scotland, from a national identity compounded with crime, violence and (non)working-class struggle, that undermines the concept of a socially reactive or culturally conditioned inception of violent behaviour, yet remains linked in the self-perception of his identity.

Welsh is infamous for his use of Anglophonic Scottish vernacular in his narration, but it is only in conjunction with Jim Francis' old acquaintants and life in Scotland that he chooses to use it in *The Blade Artist.* In conversations with his wife Melanie, other associates within America, and for most of the novel's first person narration, Jim speaks or narrates with an Americanised received pronunciation, but slips back into Scottish vernacular upon his return to Leith and his increasing escapades of casual violence. There have been efforts to develop a 'new' Leith; the ambitious construction of new 'urban' housing developments which the financial disaster of the recession marked as "unsaleable" (p.58) and in turn have been reassigned to the Housing Association,

encouraging a form of social mobility that lessened the gap between the geographic classes of Edinburgh. His sister Elspeth's home in Murrayfield "appeared to be a millionaires' playground" (p.35) as a child, but is now "just another drab, shabby neighbourhood and nothing whatsoever to aspire to" (p.35). Jim Francis "can't allow it; can't permit this place to be anything other than what he's made it" (Welsh, 2016; p.68). What Begbie has made is a national identity that reinforces his subjective masculinity through the acquisition of violent social practices, a national identity which can only be upheld and adhered to within Scotland, and on a smaller scale, Leith itself. Jim Francis needs Scotland to be a physically and mentally hateful setting, which must exist in order to fuel his rage-inducing perception of the immediate world around him, allowing his return to unlawful violence which he claims to be "under control now" (p.22) in his new life amidst the American dream. Grant Farred suggests it is this troubled relationship with a Scottish past that reflects a national inability to "transcend[ing] Scotland" (2004; p.225) in any potential pursuit of a future beyond that which is dictated by locality, "The past is not only all that Scotland has, it is all that it will ever have if it cannot transcend nationalism; the past is precisely what holds Begbie . . . captive." (p.225). His reformed persona 'Jim' and 'Begbie' live in contention, previously separated by the Atlantic Ocean, and as such have acclimatised to entirely different climates and cultures. However, the heritage of Scotland and Scottish nationalism within Begbie and Jim's dual construction of identity appears to prevent Jim from discarding his old self and his unfortunate habits. When brought back together by an unequivocal need for revenge, the binary opposition Francis has created between his identities combusts, catalysed by an unfortunate visit to a damp and dreary past in Scotland, recognising the futility of the persona of Jim Francis as his violent clashes with old associates accelerate: "Jim Francis won't help him now. Frank Begbie's pulse rises and a red mist swamps his brain . . . C'MOAN THEN, YA FUCKIN BAMS!!" (Welsh, 2016; p.244). Scotland is simultaneously the worst place Jim Francis can revist, and the only place Francis Begbie can thrive uninhibited by the new man he professes to be. Within *Trainspotting*, after a return from a trip to London, Renton "feels as good to be back as he did to get

away in the first place" (Welsh, 1996; p.264), despite an equal recognition of the damage drug-addled

Leith poses to his addicted personality,

> Ah huv tae git oot ay Leith, oot ay Scotland. . .the limitations and ugliness ay this place hud been
>
> exposed tae us and ah could never see it in the same light again. (p.201)

This relationship with Scotland, the apparent pull to be reunited with an environment which

facilitates, exaggerates and encourages the expression of both Renton and Begbie's vices is puzzling,

but illuminates the problem which surrounds many of Welsh's characters. In their embodiment of a

form of Scottishness, which may mistakenly encompass a sweeping understanding that does not befit

an actual representative view, Welsh's characters appear, nevertheless to belong to Leith, to their

associated clubs and class identities, and as such it is only through a repression of Scotland itself that

they can abstain from the symptoms of their subculturally inflected masculine practices.

This compartmentalisation of national identity, the means by which Begbie perceives an

admittedly limited degree of rehabilitation within his character through the physical relocation of his

life, suggests a connection between masculinity, nation and violence that is umbilical in nature, each

feeding the next in cyclic fashion. Despite the potential genetic disposition towards violence, not in

terms of physiological sex difference but in predetermined abnormal neurological pathways, there is

an amelioration of hostility towards otherness when the spheres of Scotland and its associations are

removed from the equation of violence. In America, Begbie attends a salsa class with his wife Melanie,

and befriends a gay couple, despite displaying a deep-seated homophobia within *Trainspotting* and

Porno. In Danny Boyle's infamous 1996 film adaptation of the novel, Begbie pursues a transgender

woman in an Edinburgh nightclub, upon realisation of which he retreats, "*simultaneously trying to put*

his clothes back on, hit the Woman and get out of the car" (Boyle, 1996). He threatens Renton at

knifepoint during his questioning around the subject:

> BEGBIE: I'm no a fucking buftie and that's the end of it.

RENTON: Let's face it, it could have been wonderful.

Begbie leaps off the bed, grabs Renton and head-butts him, then holds him by the lapel.

BEGBIE: Now, listen to me, you little piece of junky shit. A joke's a fucking joke, but you

mention that again and I'll cut you up. Understand? (Boyle, 1996)

The function of homophobia has frequently been discussed as a means by which to establish a

distinction between what is considered a "man's man" and a man who is "interested in men"

(Sedgwick, 1985; p.89). Begbie's outraged rejection of homosexual behaviour, his employment of

pejorative slurs and the threat of physical violence should Renton reveal the encounter to anyone else

all befit the stereotypical reaction of a 'macho' man – hostile towards "feminist and gay underminings

of the traditional masculine subject" (Byers, 1995; p.36). This is unsurprising and typical of many of

Welsh's characters within *Trainspotting,* although it is within their power to recognise the extreme of

such loathing within Begbie, and to manipulate this for their own amusement, as Sick Boy sends

Begbie packages of "Poofs' Porn" (Welsh, 2013; p.101) during his incarceration, delighting in the rage

such a suggestion of homosexuality would incite. Begbie does not disappoint:

One fuckin thing ah'm gaunnae dae is tae find the fuckin sick cunt that kept sendin ays that fuckin

filthy poofs' porn. . . Added six months oantae muh fuckin sentence whin a battered this wide wee

cunt thit laughed whin a sais: Lexo n me's partners. (p.101)

The surprise it seems, is that in spite of a failure to successfully remove violence from the architecture

of his psyche, the hatred surrounding his "self-destructive masculine sexuality" and its intolerance of

homosexuality (Herbrechter, 2000; p.1) is at least partially subdued. If considered as an actor within

the network of national identity, which has become somewhat synonymous with the consideration of

masculinity in this chapter, there is a suggestion that Begbie's relationship with Scotland is concurrent

to his relationship with hatred, as it is his integration into a more liberal environment in California that

promotes the abandonment of a phobic incitement of aggression. For Begbie there is an umbrella

system of masculine violence and animosity that encompasses those put forward in Bowker's model previously: Scottish violence. Using Bowker's construction of rehabilitation, this nationalised system of behaviour serves to undermine all other efforts, as both counterparts of his personality, Francis Begbie and Jim Francis, are inherently Scottish, despite their forsaking of the "Scots demotic" (Howard, Cited in Karnicky, 2003; p.138) and a residence in Leith.

The degeneration of Jim Francis 's resolution of control upon his return to Scotland supports the significance of national identity within his relationship with violence, but does not account for the psychopathic nature of his actions: not every male within Welsh's fiction becomes a violent exhibitionist, regardless of their presentation of Scottish national identity. With this in mind it becomes pertinent to consider the psychology behind the intertwined nature of a Scottish national identity and the masculine self. Both are thrown into mobility by a period of uncertain, postmodern "transition" (Schoene, 2004; p. 122) as the rush to reinstate values of normative hegemony, both masculine and national, provides a volatile playground for identity crisis. As Begbie outlives this period of narrative destruction, he 'reassimilates' the fragments of his identity in such a way that appears to accommodate the weaknesses of his hypothetical 'Scottish system' of masculinity, but cannot successfully culminate this process due to his embodiment of the symptoms of crisis at his core. The crisis of national identity within an individual has replaced the concept of the original identity itself, suggesting Begbie's volatility has become its own form of security. As such, Begbie's return to Scotland is perhaps more so a psychological return to the appropriate conditions for his 'true' machoism and its subsequent violence, as opposed to a physical journey to a fixed geographical location. His image of Begbie as the dominant, aggressive and hypermasculine 'hard-man' is validated by a perception of Scotland that demands such a persona in order to establish power order. Despite an accelerated reversion to intimidation and brutality upon his homecoming that supports this hypothesis, the character Welsh presents is not a simple resurrection of 'total psycho' Francis Begbie, twenty years later. He has a "tender underbelly" (Welsh, 2016; p.73) in his wife and children, a part of his character "rendered soft by loving" (Welsh, 2016; p.73). Emotional connection and genuine

familial attachments are not something associated with psychopathic personalities, or machoistic

hard-men, as a lack of empathy dictates an indifference to the "rights and suffering of family members

and strangers alike" (Hare, 1993; p.45). Begbie has established an appearance of a hegemonic system

of family in which he is the masculine protector, rather than masculine predator, highlighting the

evolution of his character in light of an ever-shifting series of social norms. Yet, this metamorphosis

feels hollow and performative as the novel progresses, even internally, as it is the only means by

which Francis can maintain his outward composure and thereby continue the lifestyle he has come to

enjoy. To return to an unmitigated relationship with his desire for violence would inevitably

foreshadow a return to a prison cell, as is demonstrated within *Porno*, and yet this is not enough for

Begbie to relinquish participation in violence and the enjoyment of such. The two fragments of Begbie

and Francis' masculinity, first part predator and the second part- protector, endeavour to preserve

one other, through the enactment of violence against perceived enemies, and its subsequent

concealment. However, this equilibrium is interrupted by the insatiable coveting of violence, and an

overall inability to refrain from brutality. The affection Jim Francis shows for his new family is arguably

as performative as his presentation of a reformed persona. Francis recognises the truth of his violence

in a discussion of his work as a sculptor, which parades as the socially admissible expression of the

impulse to act violently unto others;

> My talent was for hurting people. That's what I was venting, the desire to hurt another human
>
> being . . . Society is fucked, I just give messed-up people what they want. It doesn't make me a
>
> talent, unless it's for spotting the weakness and twisted desires in others. (Welsh, 2016; p.83)

"Society is fucked" as it demands violence in the expression of identity, and drives the masculine

"compulsion to affirm one's (perceived) masculinity" (Norton, cited in Schoene, 2004; p.126) through

whatever means necessary. For Begbie, violence has also been a form of self-expression, and

comfortable base language through which to communicate anxiety and frustration. This observation is

one of contemporary society, the post-postmodern, in which Begbie explores the contention between

the facets of his personality which have come to encompass some of "postmodernity's pluralist diversity" (Schoene, 2004; p.127) and others which have remained entrenched in a deformed understanding of 'traditional' machoism. The temporally transposed identity crisis which surrounds the characters of Welsh's earlier novels, has somewhat subsided within *The Blade Artist,* with the evolution of industry and the anxieties of a new millennial generation pushed to the forefront of society's concern, yet Begbie's preservation of his bloodlust, entombed in collapsing mantras of control, demands a continuation of masculine crisis into the contemporary age. If postmodern identity anxiety, and its destabilising effect upon national and social identities has a whole, has been largely negated by sociocultural progression that has occurred between the 1980's of *Trainspotting* and the 2016 of *The Blade Artist*, we return to the question of how a destabilised masculinity has transcended the influence of external, causal actors within the map of Jim Francis's psyche, and reinstated itself once more in his recent acts of violence.

The Blade Artist's revenge

```
          Coming out. A fresh start. A new bird.
             Big Plans. Resolutions made.
        Then another wide cunt. Another incident.
                   (Welsh, 2016; p.210)
```

As discussed, *The Blade Artist* depicts a new chapter of Begbie's life: Jim Francis the family man, good husband and successful parolee, initially moving away from the image of the man met with abhorrence by readers twenty years earlier in *Trainspotting,* defined by Duncan Petrie as the "real centre of masculine malevolence . . . a graphic manifestation of the Scottish male's myopic capacity for self-destruction, and self-hatred" (2004; p. 93)*.* The blame for Begbie's malevolence is again critically racked up to the responsibility of Scottishness, whilst other factors are potentially overlooked; however, the observation of Begbie as a centre for malevolence is crucial. Francis Begbie of *Trainspotting* is an animal; his unexplained temperament allows for an interpretation of pure machoism in his aggressive personality and behaviours that would suggest his inflated masculinity is degenerated by postmodern identity anxiety; fragmented in such a way that he is forced to intensify as a 'macho-man' of hyperbolic proportion. As he provides such a notorious antagonist with an origin, beyond the existing retrospective extension of Begbie's character within *Skagboys* and *Porno*, Welsh weakens the sensationalised fear attached to his presence and action. This is not to suggest that Welsh's earlier readership were unable to speculate on the reasons behind Begbie's violent rage, or was guilty of a presumption that Begbie had not undergone trauma in such a way that affected upon his terrifying identity, as if he simply burst into existence as an ultraviolent sadist, chasing the opportunity for a square-go. Welsh's details of an unfortunate childhood and a wiretap into a surprisingly philosophical internal monologue within *The Blade Artist* dampen the initial madness of Begbie's violence, along with the definitive terror and shock it inspired. It has been suggested that *Trainspotting* and its subsequent adaptations on the stage and screen each relied largely upon "a

shock aesthetic" (Pittin-Hédon, 2006; p.254) for which Frank Begbie is the "emblematic figure . . .the

perfect embodiment of pure, mindless, unjustifiable and unatoned violence" (p.254). Welsh's writing

has often been criticised due to his "predilection for graphic, and often rather cheap, shock[s] beyond

the more everyday banal brutality of scheme life" (Petrie, 2004; p.95). However, it is – arguably –

exactly this feature of Welsh's writing which grounds his infamy. The use of these extreme

characteristics and metaphors creates a "Welshian Subjectivity" (Karnicky, 2003; p.138) in which

disturbing, and occasionally fantastical, occurrences - such as Bruce Robertson's shared narration with

his tapeworm within *Filth*, or Boab Coyle's Kafkaesque transformation into a housefly during *Acid*

House - are used to "implicitly critique[s]" (p.138) culture and politics. In a similar fashion, the

development of hyper-violent, psychopathic characters, such as Begbie, should be accepted as part of

the narrative's natural landscape, and not simply as actively inserted, rigid plot devices through which

to incite drama. John Neil Munro writes,

> In Begbie, Welsh created a character that he despised, but later said he had little control in the
>
> process. Echoes of voices and violence he had experienced in real life came to him 'arguing and
>
> shouting'. . .and immediately found their way into the book.' (2013; Chapter 8: Banging on the
>
> word processor)

 Whilst Munro raises the organic nature of Begbie's violence, which Welsh has reinforced in the

vocalisation of his aim to "create characters who speak for themselves, in their own conflict . . . to me

they only exist as an accumulation of behaviour" (Welsh cited in Munro; Chapter 8: Banging on the

word processor), he also highlights the severe impression readers take from Begbie and his violence

with little understanding of his complete character as it now exists in 2017. Begbie is certainly the

"emblematic figure" (Pittin-Hédon, 2006; p.254) of *Trainspotting*'s "shock aesthetic" (p.254) in this

sense, and despite criticism to the contrary, exists as a character who is first and foremost "left to be

rather than represent" (Schoene, 2010; p.5), existing within the schemes of Leith without overbearing

authorial intention to forge symbolism into his violence. For some this acts as a limitation, leading to

the critical side-lining of a Begbie who is frequently overlooked, seen to be acting purely as a stereotype. However, his substantial role within Welsh's later fiction works to belie this restrictive perspective. Francis Begbie induced fear and loathing within Welsh's readership as "a character next to whom all others seem hampered by scruples" (Mullan, 2008), a trait which can be largely accredited to the apparent ease with which he commits and incites violence, often without any real motivation or explanation. In *The Blade Artist* then, and within *Skagboys,* finer details of Begbie's past are inserted into the understanding of his character, implicating aspects of his abhorrent behaviour as conclusions of his early relationships with others and his establishment of identity within a sociocultural setting. The holes within the reader's understanding of Begbie's motivations, the impenetrability of his psychotic rage, are filled up by the influences discussed within this thesis, and the "shock" element of Begbie's operation of fear instilment is extinguished.

However, Welsh does not halt Begbie's violent tendencies with the revelation of their first occurrences, or the apparent context of their acceleration – Jim Francis's reflections on his past do not successfully act as a cleansing confessional in this manner, but do allow Jim to create an image of his "increasingly. . . fractured" life, "as if his past had been lived by someone else" (Welsh, 2016; p.110). The process of self-reflection endeavours to serve in an effort of redemption despite failing to do so, creating distance between the dichotomy of Francis Begbie and Jim Francis, whilst also establishing distance from the toxic environment of Scotland's Leith. The success of this effort is corrupted by an unaffected and unchangeable delight in violent action. The rehabilitation of Begbie's violence crumbles entirely upon his return to Scotland, but is not confined to the re-visitation of the loaded geographic location. Whilst it is his trip to Scotland, after the murder of his eldest son Sean, that provides an opportunity to remove the composed veil of Jim Francis and lapse into unconcealed episodes of psychopathic violence, it appears more so a convenient excuse for violence, as opposed to a crucial factor of its occurrence. His new experience and the recognition that he "was one of the weakest people on the planet. [who] had zero control over [his] darker impulses" (Welsh, 2016; p.72) separates his new 'Jim' identity from his life within *Trainspotting*, but does not segregate the two eras

of personality sufficiently in order to solidify Begbie's reformative transition to a 'new' man. The two alter egos exist in schizophrenic contention; "The only bridge is rage; when angered he can taste his old self" (Welsh, 2016; p.110).

In *The Blade Artist*, Francis' sadism takes on an air of theatricality, a lavishness of premeditation which correlates with his new success as an artist, as he labours more so in the details and grand execution of pain, rather than fitful self-expressions of rage and retaliation. The novel's penultimate chapter, titled 'The Artist in The Residence' sees Francis confront an old associate from his criminal past, ex-boss David 'Tyrone' Power, after the false identification of his son's killer. Francis drugs Power, restrains him atop a table and proceeds to attach implements of assault to a chandelier, swinging them like a pendulum into Tyrone's face. He severs Tyrone's hand before implementing a 'mouse-trap' inspired system which threatens to ignite Power's home should he move the string attached to his 'big tae' (p.262). Begbie pontificates: "That's the thing aboot bein an artist, ye get. . . creative". This creativity gives Begbie's violence an air of exhibitionism and proliferation, as there appears a form of catharsis which has evolved from the impulsive, thug-like 'middle finger to the world' outbursts seen within *Trainspotting* and *Skagboys*, into a deep-seated passion that can be controlled, mulled over and released in ultimate macabre fashion, exhibiting imagination beyond the end game of fatal injury unto the victim. The adaptation of his sadism to accommodate the existence of a more refined persona falls in line with much of the literature surrounding psychopaths who participate within correctional 'rehabilitative' treatments whilst in prison: "psychopaths in prison often learn to use the correctional facilities to their own advantage and to help shape a positive image of themselves for the benefit of the parole board" (Hare, 1993; p.50). While 'Begbie' bursts through in the action of violence, it is Jim Francis who holds the reigns of his contemporary bloodlust; a rage, which is less randomised, and more akin to personal retribution. The love of his new family, career success and literal escape from the physical confines of his past fall away at the hands of opportunities for violence under the name of revenge, reflecting the notion of their employment as a diversionary means to create the appropriate 'positive image', tethering Francis's mask of rehabilitation to his

synthesised personality, whilst simultaneously concealing the "anger, violence and sadism" that prevails "within him" (Welsh cited in Hazelton, 2016).

The notion of 'revenge' has surrounded Begbie throughout his appearances in the Welshian universe, from the reactionary attacks on the Frenchard brothers in *Skagboys* after he impregnates and abandons their younger sister, or his attempted assault on Renton for his theft and escape to Amsterdam in the late chapters of *Porno.* Despite such prominence, it is notably within *The Blade Artist* that the reader sees violence as a cause with comprehensible, although not necessarily condoned, intention. The parent of a murdered son, Begbie returns to his homeland in search of answers and retribution; the motivation for vigilante action is not difficult to perceive. David Leon Higdon explores the presence of 'Wild Justice' in Welsh's works – a form of corporeal punishment that exists beyond the boundaries of the law. He suggests,

> Revenge has become very personal, very subjective and very individualised. . . the individual himself . . . is such a marginalised being, failed by family, deserted by institutions and especially abandoned by Thatcherite tory policies. . . [so much so] that [the individual] must define law within lawlessness. (2004; p.432-4)

In terms of masculinity, Higdon's assessment of revenge as an act which stems from a failure of positive, external factions to support and include the perpetrator, concurs with Bowker's assessments of masculine systems of violence, and the difficulty in eradicating such behaviours due to a general inability to correct all of the external contributory factors of violence within each system simultaneously. The conditions in which masculine violence runs riot then are similar, if not identical, to the environment in which revenge is best inspired and enacted. For Begbie, his familial bereavement offers convenient cover for a psychopathic need to hurt others, as his network of identity and the experiences he undertakes provide ample opportunity for a dalliance with revenge that gives apparent meaning to an otherwise unjustifiable employment of violence. In his discussion of Welshian literature, Mark Storey considers the significance of retribution in *Trainspotting* and beyond,

There is a pervading theme of revenge throughout Welshian literature that parallels the struggle

to create and adhere to a form of hegemonic masculinity in a "postmodern world in which the

concept of identity has changed. (2005; p.58)

This is not limited to the confines of Begbie's character, although his brutality arguably serves to

express a breed of frustration with society that is not unlike revenge in practice, and frequently

accredited to the pursuit of false 'justices', but also appears in accordance with more literal and

traditional terms, seen specifically in the chapter of *Trainspotting* entitled 'Bad Blood'. Dave Mitchell,

or Davie, contracts HIV, not through the sharing of hypodermic needles – an anxiety for many of the

characters within *Trainspotting* – but through sexual transmission after his girlfriend Donna is raped

by the HIV positive Alan Venters. Mitchell hunts Venters and embarks on an elaborate plan for the

ultimate revenge:

The disease could have his body; that was its victory . . . Mine would be a greater one, a more

crushing one. I wanted his spirit. I planned to carve mortal wounds into his supposedly

everlasting soul. Ay-men. (Welsh, 1996; p.243)

Dave's artistry in the design of his revenge – the staged mutilation, rape and murder of Venters' young

son, the only person whom Venters cares for – is grandiose, much like the physical violence of Jim

Francis within *The Blade Artist*, presenting an almost Jacobean drama through which the strength of

masculine authority is restored (Connell, 2005; p.77), despite a lack of genuine flamboyant violence

(Venters is smothered whilst his son is only ever anaesthetised, physically unharmed and mentally

unaware). Set within the 1980's, *Trainspotting* presents a snapshot of the extreme social anxiety that

surrounded the contraction of Human Immunodeficiency Virus. Davie's contraction of the virus places

a question mark above his masculine identity according to the hegemonic doctrine of normative

masculinity in 1980's Scotland, and the 'internalised homophobia' (Huebner, Davis, Nemeroff & Aike,

2002) subsequently inspired and enforced. Davie's revenge on the man who infected his girlfriend,

and himself, restores a powerful masculine agency within his character which threatened to be

eradicated by the stigma of HIV. Once under the critical microscope, vengeful motivations are rife

within Welshian literature, and most markedly within characters who are threatened by a subversion

of their conception of masculinity. However, Begbie's revenge exceeds this understanding of violent

or vindictive action as a means to adequately restore a masculine identity, consistently and repeatedly

going beyond Higdon's 'Wild Justice', into the realms of hedonistic aggression which perpetuates

itself. Revenge is predominantly defined by reactive violence – violence with a palpable incitement of

injustice. Revenge is a useful term for both faces of the Francis/Begbie dichotomy, giving credence to

imagined causes of offence and explanation to the perpetration of violence. Whilst the death of a son

is a universally understandable source of anguish, Begbie's orchestration of vigilante 'justice' is not

based in love for others, as it is for Davie, or in fact justice at all, as he reveals his ambivalence towards

the existence of his sons: "I liked the idea of having sons, but I was never really interested in you or

Sean. . . to me there was never any real point to you boys" (Welsh, 2016; p. 66).

For Begbie, and for Jim Francis, the enactment of revengeful violence is an outlet for his otherwise

unacceptable rage and a means through which to maintain his infamous persona on the streets of

Leith. The function of such violence is to reinstate dominance that perhaps once had its origins in

subconscious panic surrounding a fractured ideal of manhood, and the upkeep of fear in a

socioeconomic climate that favoured the ruthless, but is now revisited for recreational purposes.

Begbie's relationship with revenge, with past and present injustice, is therefore questionable, as it

transpires that where betrayal and wrong-doing are absent, the pursuit of violence remains. David

Power informs Jim Francis it is a young up-and-coming gangster in the Edinburgh criminal

underground, Anton Miller who is "behind your laddie's death, as sure as night follows day" (p.93). As

the novel continues, it unfolds that Anton Miller is not Sean's killer, but an inconvenient threat to

Power's dominion within his criminal enterprise and operations, and a threat to be dealt with under

the guise of retribution for Francis's bereavement. Francis is not fooled, "Golden rule: that fat cunt

says sugar, I think shite" (p.198) and works with Miller to entrap Larry, an old associate who plotted

with Power in the falsification of Miller's role in Sean's murder. However, after the revelation of

Miller's innocence, once disengaged from his own "barbaric duties" (p.222) unto Larry, Begbie sets

upon the murder of Anton Miller regardless, giving a series of weaker, and far less substantial

justifications,

> Well ye mentioned the death ay the missus n the bairns. . . That was an awfay daft thing tae say. . .
>
> ye dinnae threaten some people, it's just counterproductive. . .The second reason. . . is they aw
>
> think that you did Sean. Ye kin see how bad that looks for me. . .So littin you live jist isnae a fuckin
>
> option, ay-no. Worked hard for this rep, mate. (p.223-4)

At this point, Welsh's third person narration no longer pertains to Jim Francis, the recoveree of an

addiction to violence, but once again to Franco, the same man from the streets of Leith depicted in

Trainspotting, *Skagboys* and *Porno*. This change in honorific signifies the reversal of agency within

Francis, who falls quiet to the murderous dominion of Frank 'Franco' Begbie. The final reason for

Begbie's treachery against his young accomplice solidifies the reality behind the suspicion of a

psychopathic personality,

> N thaire's another reason, which, fair enough, is a pretty pathetic yin, but here goes: it's barry
>
> fuckin sport. . .I've goat what ah want right here, mate. For you tae burn. (p.224-5)

This is the prevailing ethos behind Franco's preoccupation with revenge and the upkeep of his

notorious reputation, beyond all else, a delight in the terrorisation and physical injury of others. The

death of Sean inspires little emotion within Francis, as all presentations of attachment, performative

or otherwise, are attributed to his new life, new family and new freedom, but does provide a pseudo

legitimate means by which to reignite his affair with violence, and his psychopathic extension of the

'hard-man'. It is telling that this confrontation occurs on Leith Docks, the sight of Begbie's first act of

murder detailed in 'The Delivery Boy 3', as young Francis Begbie ends the life of his Grandad Jock's

associate Johnnie Tweed in an act of mercy, after he is forced to jump from the dry dock, and lays

bleeding to death "like a wounded beast waiting to expire" (p.87). Begbie's violence has evolved since

its first fatal enactment, from a dutiful necessity to a pursuit it is his "duty to enjoy" (p.152). Returning

to the docks is a return to the very beginning of Begbie, symbolising the futility of any designs to

escape his dark past, or the readiness for violence that exists within it. The murder of Johnnie was

merciful, imposing a limitation on the suffering of a dying man, yet for Begbie, the act served to

remove a restriction within his psyche, legitimising violence and cementing its role within his adult

identity. As Begbie questions the dying words of Johnnie Tweed, which were previously presented as

pleas to end his suffering, Begbie wonders, "what was the one word Johnnie had mouthed again? It

could have been 'wait', but he couldn't be sure" (p.271) . The subjectivity of Begbie's memory bears

an uneasy shade of malevolence, suggesting that even in his earliest years, Francis Begbie's

understanding of mercy was nothing more than a murderous curiosity and an adequate opportunity

at the bottom of Leith dry dock.

In *Skagboys*, the next chronological visitation of Begbie's character, the reader meets Frank as he

is most recognisable, "heavyset, with a number-two haircut, tattoos on his hands and neck" (Welsh,

2013; p.47), no longer acquainted with mercy, if indeed he ever was, whilst still inextricably bound to

violence. It is ultimately this fact that suggests there is something unchangeable in the psychology of

Begbie's masculinity, influenced largely by a predilection for unashamed, sadistic behaviour. The

Violence Inhibition Mechanism model is a system of behaviour regulation that was first proposed by

R.J.R Blair, after study of animal behaviour indicated that given a stimulus of distress, both rats and

rhesus monkeys would "learn to make instrumental responses. . . which terminate unpleasant

experiences to conspecifics" (Cited in Blair, Blair & Mitchell, 2005; p.76). This phenomenon is

rationalised and normative in human behaviour, as an adequately developed individual "finds the pain

of others aversive" (p.78) whilst within psychopathic individuals there is a "disruption to this system"

(p.78) that invariably fails to provoke an emotive or empathetic response to the suffering of others.

The existence of this behavioural model within Francis Begbie is uncertain given that within each of his

violent acts and outbursts, within each of Begbie's appearances in Welshian fiction, there is a

unanimously unapologetic exhibition of brutality and intimidation that revels in the physical and

psychological pain of others,

> Aye, eh's terrified, dizzy wi fear and pain; fuckin perversely, deliriously sick. . .it's fuckin well
>
> beyond violence, its beyond sexual; it's a kind ay love, a fuckin bizarre, vain –glorious self-
>
> adoration, way past the fuckin ego even. (Welsh, 2013; p.357-8)

If this is Begbie's rendition of 'love', the dominance over others held by an individual in his stance as a

"hard man" (p.358), it follows that his emotional capacity, impotent within his psychopathic mental

ability is reduced to inflammatory propaganda within the understanding of his own character. The

fear felt by those who surround Begbie is an addictive high, much akin to the heroin highs described

by Renton, and paves the way for an infinite relationship with violence, as nothing else serves up the

same package of adrenaline, anger and aggression. Whilst systems of disconcerted masculinity and

society serve to amplify or exacerbate these behaviours, there remains a disconcerting notion that

Frank Begbie is a hyperbolic performance of what happens to masculinity when self-control is

permanently lacking. Jim Francis believes he has mastered this control, in the same manner which

Robert D. Hare accredits to the common practice of real psychopathic inpatients, as "psychotherapists

had trained him, not to eliminate this mindset" of ultraviolent dominance "as he'd led many of them

to believe – but simply to channel it" (Welsh, 2016; p.141). The channelling of violence is a maturation

of Begbie's character, but does not sufficiently control the impulses behind aggressive action,

providing Francis with a falsified notion of rehabilitation. His lust for violence is not dampened, and is

no less formidable than within *Trainspotting* and *Porno*. The nature of Begbie's vehemence is

irrepressible, but is more refined, in order to direct its expression through the adoption of a new

social schema and a honed performance of rehabilitation.

   Of *Trainspotting*, Higdon observes there is a "revenge postponed" (2004; p.424), as Renton flees

with the group's money from their drug deal in London, escaping to Amsterdam. He explores his

remorse in the final pages of *Trainspotting*, identifying his role within "the building of Begbie's status

as somebody not to mess with" (Welsh, 1996; p.343) through the collective, indirect sycophancy and "moral cowardice" (p.343) of his failure to intervene in Begbie's ultraviolence, whilst also failing to find "sympathy for that fucker. . .his crime in ripping off Begbie was almost virtuous" (p.343). The threat of violence should Begbie find Renton secures the abandonment of his life in Leith, and is realised upon his return seen within *Porno*, in which Begbie's undoubtedly fatal attack onto Renton is only inhibited by the car which hits him as he "tear[s] across the road towards . . . [Renton], face contorted with rage" (Welsh, 2013; p.467). In the culmination of *The Blade Artist*, on his return flight to California, Franco meets Renton once more, and it is notably Frank Begbie who meets him, Welsh pointedly using this version of his name to signify the internal abandonment of the image of redeemed masculinity and a bettered self. This long standing pursuit of revenge is perhaps the only instance in which Begbie's use of violence will be sincerely in the name of justice, beyond the hedonism of violence, and yet it is the only revenge Welsh does not bring to fruition. Welsh withholds this confrontation from his narrative, choosing to end *The Blade Artist* in the same sentence that reacquaints Renton and Franco Begbie. Revenge has been used as plot device and falsified codex of reasoning within Begbie, obscuring the view of his character from an objective, unaffected viewpoint. There is no true revenge for Begbie, as each act of violence serves an apparently carnal want for destruction, and each "wide cunt" (Welsh, 2016; p.210) that wrongs him provides only the latest excuse for "another incident" (p.210) of psychopathic violence.

Conclusion: Psycho-masculine Centralised Network

This thesis has endeavoured to provide a network inspired topological snapshot of Welsh's varied inceptions of Francis Begbie, considered in terms of his infamous violence and its role within his masculine, hard-man' identity. From the significance of physiological gender, to its relationship with social and cultural settings and its connection to a complicated relationship with national identity, alongside the possibility for a mental predisposition for depravity that falls within the classification of legitimate psychopathy, the understanding of Begbie's violent behaviour, and reputation for such, has been depicted as a vast identity topography of an extreme of 'macho' masculine identity. Using the continued metaphor of a network, as defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "A chain or system of interconnected immaterial things" (2017), Francis Begbie appears as the product of a web of interwoven experiences and ideologies which predominantly serve to catalyse and continue his relationship with violence. Whilst much of the theoretical body of Actor-network Theory has been foregone in the previous discussion, the analysis of Begbie's character has preserved the notion of the connections between actors within a network of descriptive agents which allow us to "describe something that does not at all look like a network" (Latour, 2005; p.142), but functions as part of a network of varying influences and contexts. The relationships between the actors of Begbie's identity network, or influencers as it may be easier to understand them, are causal to his critical reception as a "proto-typical hard man" or "sexist psychopath figure" (Herbrechter, 2000; p.4), as it is the reader who largely infers which actors are most closely linked, and which are most significant to the overall map of violent masculinity.

In pursuit of a fitting metaphor, we turn to another use of complex, intricate networks. In the development of computing networks there is an obvious need for a reliable, and uninterrupted stream of connectivity between databases and computer terminals, which is attained through the employment of a vast network of connections, in which multiple complex pathways are existent and functional: should one connection pathway fail, another must always be available in order to maintain adequate levels of functionality. This is known as a Distributed Network, in which "there is no central,

dominant hub" (Chandler & Munday, 2016) through which all information and programming must pass. This network topology is designed to be reliable, and does not necessarily reflect the architectural network of personality and masculinity which Welsh's work has endeavoured to describe within Frank Begbie, but could arguably reflect the identity network of a more mentally stable character, in which spheres of influence are less organised around a single, overruling neurological actor such as psychopath. A Centralised Network, however, is another form of computer network topology, in which all facets of the network are connected to a single, dominant hub, meaning all connectivity and data transference is entirely dependent on the functionality of a central node. This is more akin to the visualisation of the network of identity existent within Begbie, reflecting the notion of a centralised hub of violent behaviour, through which other actors are interpreted and related, augmenting the development of a successful rehabilitation in Jim Francis, and permanently locating Begbie's predilection for violence at the forefront of his personality. In the same way that psychopathologists have deduced there is no significant link between the development of the psychopathic condition and social or cultural instigators of the associated violent behaviour, it has been found that within those who are diagnosed under branches of Anti-Social Personality Disorder, "parental antisocial attitudes, inconsistent discipline. . . poor school performance, broken homes and childhood separations have all been associated with higher psychopathy scores" (Forth & Burke, cited in Blair, Mitchell & Blair, 2005; p.40) on the PCL-R scale. Poor childhood behaviour and inadequate socialization practices are not the causal factors of psychopathy, but they are frequently exhibited by those who fall within the pathological categorisation as such, and more often than not confused as the instigators for psychopathic behaviour, rather than the catalysts which amplify symptoms, or act indeed as symptoms themselves. Following this vein of thought, it seems apparent that within Frank Begbie there is a pre-existing understanding of violence as a pleasurable and gratifying experience, through which all other spheres of influence are perceived and reacted against, and not the reversal of this influence dichotomy. For example, if postmodernity's "championing of difference and marginality over homogeneity and hegemony" (Schoene, 2004; p.123) served to inspire a

psychologically unstable 'second wave' of exaggerated 'macho 'masculinity, clamouring to re-establish a collapsed order of traditional patriarchal authority, it follows that Francis Begbie is less a victim of this fragmentary process, and more so the prime male candidate for the application of violence unto such circumstance. Begbie naturally harbours the perfect psychological disposition in which the disease of masculine violence can mature and intensify, cultivated by a sociocultural structure that promotes violence in of itself, but born primarily from an internal malevolence.

The definitive separation of causal actors within the network of masculine violence is ultimately impossible, and it will be forever inherent to the traditional study of Welsh's sub-cult fiction to accredit extremes of masculinity to the socio-political circumstance of Scotland. Yet with an ever more international readership, and prevailing ANT sentiments inclined towards a more rigorous and objective perception of character, this labelling appears increasingly habitual, whilst less insightful. Given Begbie's revival within *The Blade Artist*, and the recent release of *T2 Trainspotting*, it becomes ever more pertinent to give consideration to the complexity of his character beyond the "often comical cartoon figure of the film [Trainspotting]" (Morace, 2007; p.127) and the standard ticket of 'Scottishness' adhered to his specific breed of psychopathic intensity. Frank 'Franco' Begbie exists within Welsh's fiction as a psychomasculine menace, who encompasses the darkest penchants of Leith society, alongside a postmodern masculine identity crisis that extends beyond its beginnings in the modernisation of labour and industry accredited to the later decades of the 1980's, but is defined primarily by neither such experience, as there lives within him a thirst for violence that transcends an assertion of masculinity in response to external conditions, permanently chasing the prospect of a good swedge. Jim Francis may bear an updated and ameliorated network of influences, but his centralised and dominant rationale for violence cannot be quelled, no more so than his degenerative relationship with his past can ever accommodate a change within his psychology. Considered as a psychopath, Begbie takes from the actors of his identity network the incentive to create a top-shelf brand of intimidating hard-man identity, conveniently aligning a hedonistic use of violence with the establishment of macho order. Begbie has achieved what most of us wish for, in both the criminal

pursuits of *Trainspotting* and his artistic prominence within *The Blade Artist*: to do what he loves both professionally and recreationally as he forges an identity through the fear and exhibition of violence which transcends a placement amongst the peripheries of his identity network, serving instead as the centralised gateway through which all other influences, social, cultural, familial or biological must pass, sharpened weaponry in hand, violence ever imminent.

References

- Bathurst, B. (2012, April 15). Skagboys by Irvine Welsh - review. *The Guardian.* Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/books/2012/apr/15/skagboys-irvine-welsh-trainspotting-review
- Beckett, A. (1999, January 15). Irvine Welsh: The Ecstasy and the Agony. *Mail & Guardian.* Retrieved from https://mg.co.za/article/1999-01-15-the-ecstasy-and-the-agony
- Benwell, B. (2003). Introduction: Masculinity and Men's Lifestyle Magazines. In B. Benwell (Ed.) *Masculinity and Men's Lifestyle Magazines* (pp. 6-29). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Berggren, K. (2014). Sticky Masculinity: Post-structuralism, Phenomenology and Subjectivity in Critical Studies on Men. *Men and Masculinities, 17*(3), 231-252. doi:10.1177/1097184X14539510
- Berman, J. (1996, July 1). Irvine Welsh. *Bomb.* Retrieved from https://bombmagazine.org/articles/irvine-welsh/
- Blair, J., Blair, K., & Mitchell, D. (2005). *The Psychopath: Emotion and the Brain.* Oxford; Malden MA;: Blackwell Publishers.
- Blair, R.J.R., Peschardt, K.S., Budhani, S., Mitchell, D.G.V. and Pine, D.S. (2006), The Development of Psychopathy. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 47: 262–276. doi:10.1111/j.1469-7610.2006.01596.x
- Boccardi, M., Frisoni, G. B., Hare, R. D., Cavedo, E., Najt, P., Pievani, M., . . . Tiihonen, J. (2011). Cortex and Amygdala Morphology in Psychopathy. *Psychiatry Research: Neuroimaging, 193*(2), 85-92. doi:10.1016/j.pscychresns.2010.12.013
- Bowker, L. H. (1998). *Masculinities and Violence*. London: Sage Publications.
- Boyle, D (Director). (2007). *Trainspotting* [Motion picture]. United Kingdom: Channel Four Films.
- Boyle, D. (Director). (2016) *T2 Trainspotting.* [DVD]. United Kingdom. Artbees, DNA Films, Decibel Films, Cloud Eight Films, TriStar Pictures, Film4, Creative Scotland.
- Buford, B. (2001). *Among the Thugs*. London: Arrow.
- Byers, T. B. (1995). Terminating the Postmodern: Masculinity and Pomophobia. *MFS: Modern Fiction Studies, 41*(1), 35-73.
- Carrigan, T., Connell, B., & Lee, J. (1985). Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity. *Theory and Society*, 14(5), 551-604. doi:10.1007/BF00160017
- Chandler, D. & Munday, R. *A Dictionary of Social Media*. (2016).Retrieved from http://www.oxfordreference.com.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/9780191803093.001.0001/acref-9780191803093-e-390
- Clanfield, P. & Lloyd, C. (2010). Welsh and Edinburgh. In B. Schoene (Ed.), *Edinburgh Companion to Irvine Welsh.* (pp. 100-108). (Edinburgh Companions to Scottish Literature). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Connell, R.W. (2005). *Masculinities* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Polity.
- Connell, R. W., & Messerschmidt, J. W. (2005). Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept. *Gender and Society, 19*(6), 829-859. doi:10.1177/0891243205278639
- Cornwall, A. & Lindisfarne, N. (Eds.) (1994). *Dislocating Masculinity. Comparative Enthographies*. London: Routledge.
- Farred, G. (2004). Wankerdom: Trainspotting as a Rejection of the Postcolonial? *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 103(1), 215-226.

- Fine, C. (2017). *Testosterone rex: Unmaking the Myths of our Gendered Minds*. Retrieved from https://ebookcentral.proquest.com
- Felski, R. (2011). "Context Stinks!". *New Literary History, 42*(4), 573-591
- Felski, R. (2016). Comparison and Translation: A Perspective from Actor-network Theory. *Comparative Literature Studies, 53*(4), 747-765. doi:10.5325/complitstudies.53.4.0747
- Fletcher, D. R. (2011). The Development of Working Prisons: Transforming Inmates from the Lumpenproletariat to the Contingent Workforce? *British Journal of Community Justice*, 9(1/2), 111-124.
- Gill, R. (2003). Power and the Production of Subjects: A Genealogy of New Man and the New Lad. In B. Benwell (Ed.) *Masculinity and Men's Lifestyle Magazines* (pp. 34-56). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Gomart, E. & Hennion, A. (1999). A Sociology of Attachment: Music Amateurs, Drug Users. In J. Law & J. Hassard (Eds.) *Actor Network Theory and After* (pp. 220-247). Blackwell Publishers: Oxford.
- Guilianotti, R. (1994). Taking Liberties: Hibs Casuals and Scottish Law. In R. Guilianotti, N. Bonney, & M. Hepworth (Eds.) *Football, Violence and Social Identity* (2nd ed.) (pp. 229-261). Routledge: London.
- Hare, R. D. (1999). *Without Conscience: The Disturbing World of the Psychopaths Among Us*. New York;London: Guilford Press.
- Harper, C. C., & McLanahan, S. S. (2004). Father Absence and Youth Incarceration. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 14*(3), 369-397. doi:10.1111/j.1532-7795.2004.00079.x
- Hart, M. (2002). Solvent Abuse: Irvine Welsh and Scotland. *Postmodern Culture, 12*(2), n. page doi:10.1353/pmc.2002.0011
- Harvie, C. (2004). *Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics, 1707 to the Present* (4th ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Hazelton, C.K. (2016, April 3). Irvine Welsh: 'I thought, what if Begbie was the most self-controlled guy in the room?'. *The Guardian.* Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/apr/03/irvine-welsh-interview-blade-artist-trainspotting-porno-begbie
- Herbrechter, S. (2000). From Trainspotting to Filth - Masculinity and Cultural Politics in Irvine Welsh's Writing. In R. West & F. Lay (Eds.) *Subverting Masculinity: Hegemonic and Alternative Versions of Masculinity in Contemporary Culture* (pp. 109-127). Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Higdon, D. L. (2004). 'Wild Justice' in the works of Irvine Welsh. *Studies in Scottish Literature, 33*, 421-434.
- Horton, P. (2001). Trainspotting: A Topography of the Masculine Abject. *English (Leicester), 50*(198), 219-234. doi:10.1093/english/50.198.219
- Huebner, D. M., Davis, M. C., Nemeroff, C. J., & Aiken, L. S. (2002). The Impact of Internalized Homophobia on HIV Preventive Interventions. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 30*(3), 327-348. doi:10.1023/A:1015325303002
- Innes, K. (2007) Mark Renton's Bairns: Identity and Language in the Post-Trainspotting Novel. In Schoene, B. (Ed.), *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature* (pp.301-309) (1st ed.). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. doi:10.3366/j.ctt1g09vnh
- International Classification of Diseases. (2017). *2017/18 ICD-10-CM Diagnosis Code F60.2*. Retrieved from http://www.icd10data.com/ICD10CM/Codes/F01-F99/F60-F69/F60-/F60.2.

- Jakupcak, M. (2003). Masculine Gender Role Stress and Men's Fear of Emotions as Predictors of Self-Reported Aggression and Violence. *Violence and Victims, 18* (5), 533-541.
- Jones, C. (2010). Welsh and Gender. In B. Schoene (Ed.), *Edinburgh Companion to Irvine Welsh.* (pp. 54-64). (Edinburgh Companions to Scottish Literature). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Karnicky, J. (2003). Irvine Welsh's Novel Subjectivities. *Social Text. 21* (3), 135-153.
- Kellas, J. G. (1998). *The Politics of Nationalism and Ethnicity* (2nd ed.). Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Kelly, A. (2005). *Irvine Welsh*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Kelly, J. (2007). Hibernian Football Club: The Forgotten Irish? *Sport in Society, 10*(3), 514-536. doi:10.1080/17430430701333950
- Kiehl, K. A. (2014). *The Psychopath Whisperer: Inside the Minds of Those Without a Conscience*. London: Oneworld.
- Kiehl, K. A., & Hoffman, M. B. (2011). The Criminal Psychopath: History, Neuroscience, Treatment, and Economics. *Jurimetrics*, *51*, 355–397.
- Knapp, S., & Michaels, W. B. (1982). Against Theory. *Critical Inquiry*, 8(4), 723-742. doi:10.1086/448178
- Latour, B. (1999) On recalling ANT. *The Sociological Review*, 47(S1), 15-25. doi:10.1111/j.1467-954X.1999.tb03480.x
- Latour, B. (2005). *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* . Retrieved from https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/hud/detail.action?docID=422646
- Law, J. (1992). Notes on the Theory of the Actor-Network: Ordering, Strategy and Heterogeneity . *Systems Practice,* (5), 379-393. Retrieved from http://heterogeneities.net/publications/Law1992NotesOnTheTheoryOfTheActor Network.pdf.
- Law, J. (1999). After ANT: Complexity, Naming and Topology. In J. Law & J. Hassard (Eds.) *Actor Network Theory and After* (pp. 1-14). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Lucy, N., Hartley, J., Briggs, R., Hartley, J. A., & Hartley, J. (2015). *A Dictionary of Postmodernism* (First ed.) West Sussex, England: Wiley Blackwell.
- Lugton, A. (2012). *The Making of Hibernian: Volume 1*. Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd.
- Mackey, W. C., & Immerman, R. S. (2004). The Presence of the Social Father in Inhibiting Young Men's Violence. *Mankind Quarterly*, 44(3-4), 339-360.
- Maley, W. (2000). Denizens, Citizens, Tourists and Others: Marginality and Mobility in the Writings of James Kelman and Irvine Welsh. In D. Bell & A. Haddour (Eds.) *City Visions* (pp. 60-72). Harlow: Pearson Education.
- Martin, D.L., Harrod, R.P., & Perez, V.R. (2014). Conclusion: Implications and Future Directions. In D . L. Martin, R . P. Harrod, & V . R. Perez (Eds.) *The Bioarchaeology of Violence* (pp. 276-280). Florida: University press of Florida.
- McCall, G. S., & Shields, N. (2008). Examining the Evidence from Small-scale Societies and Early Prehistory and Implications for Modern Theories of Aggression and Violence. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 13(1), 1-9. doi:10.1016/j.avb.2007.04.001
- McGuire, M. (2010). Irvine Welsh: The Novels. In B. Schoene (Ed.), *Edinburgh Companion to Irvine Welsh.* (pp. 19-30). (Edinburgh Companions to Scottish Literature). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Miller, G. (2010) Welsh and Identity Politics. In: Schoene, B. (ed.) *Edinburgh Companion to Irvine Welsh*. (pp. 89-99). (Edinburgh companions to Scottish literature). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. ISBN 9780748639175

- Montogomery, R.T. & Perry, M. (2014). The Social and Cultural Implications of Violence at Qasr Hallabat. In D . L. Martin, R . P. Harrod, & V . R. Perez (Eds.) *The Bioarchaeology of Violence* (pp. 83-110). Florida: University press of Florida.
- Morace, R.A. (2007). *Irvine Welsh*. London: Palgrave.
- Morace, R.A. (2007) Irvine Welsh: Parochialism, Pornography and Globalisation. In Schoene, B. (Ed.), *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Literature* (pp.227-235) (1st ed.). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. doi:10.3366/j.ctt1g09vnh
- Morace, R. A. (2001). *Irvine Welsh's Trainspotting: A Reader's Guide*. New York; London;: Continuum.
- Mosher, D.L. & Tomkins, S.S. (1988). Scripting the Macho Man: Hypermasculine Socialization and Enculturation. *The Journal of Sex Research, 25* (1), 60-84.
- Mullan, J. (2008, June 7). Low behaviour: John Mullan on the Role of Morality in Irvine Welsh's Trainspotting. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/jun/07/irvinewelsh
- Munro, J.N. (2013). *Lust for life!: Irvine Welsh and the Trainspotting Phenomenon*. [Kindle Edition]. Retrieved from www.amazon.co.uk
- Munro, R. (2009). Actor-Network Theory. In S. R. Clegg & M. Haugaard (Eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Power* (pp. 125-139). London: SAGE.
- Murphy, P. (2012, May 12). Renton and Begbie: back on the train gang. *The Irish Times.* Retrieved from https://search-proquest-com.libaccess.hud.ac.uk/docview/1012483105?accountid=11526
- Nicholson, L. & Seidman, S. (2008). Introduction. In L. Nicholson & S. Seidman (Eds.) *Social Postmodernism: Beyond Identity Politics* (pp. 1-38). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Office for National Statistics. (2017). *Overview of Violent Crime and Sexual Offences.* Retrieved from www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/ compendium/focusonviolentcrimeandsexualoffences/yearendingmarch2016/ overviewofviolentcrimeandsexualoffences#profile-of-perpetrators-involved-in-violent-crimes.
- Omar, A.R. (2011). *Masculinity and the Acceptance of Violence: A Study of Social Construction* (MA (Masters of Arts) Thesis). University of Iowa. Received from: http://ir.uiowa.edu/etd/1048.
- *Oxford English Dictionary*. (2017).Retrieved from www.oed.com/view/Entry/126342
- Pease, B. (2000). *Recreating Men: Postmodern Masculinity Politics*. London: SAGE.
- Petrie, D. J. (2004). *Contemporary Scottish fictions: Film, Television and the Novel*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Pittin-Hédon, M.O. (2006). Re-imagining the City: End of the Century Cultural Signs in the Novels of Mcilvanney, Banks, Gray, Welsh, Owens and Rankin. In I. Brown, T. O. Clancy, S. Manning, & M. Pittock (Eds.) *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature: Modern Transformations - New Identities (from 1918) v. 3* (pp. 253-261). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Ronson, J. (2011). *The Psychopath Test*. London: Pan Macmillan.
- Rutherford, J. (1996). Introduction. In R. Chapman & J. Rutherford (Eds.) *Male Order: Unwrapping Masculinity* (New ed.) (pp. 3-20). London: Lawrence & Wishart Ltd.
- Schoene, B. (2010). Introduction. In B. Schoene (Ed.), *Edinburgh Companion to Irvine Welsh.* (pp. 1-8). (Edinburgh Companions to Scottish Literature). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

- Schoene, B. (2004). Nervous Men, Mobile Nation. In E. Bell & G. Miller (Eds.) *Scotland in Theory: Reflections on Culture and Literature* (pp. 121-145). Netherlands: Brill Rodopi.
- Schoene, B. (2010). Welsh, Drugs and Subculture. In B. Schoene (Ed.), *Edinburgh Companion to Irvine Welsh.* (pp. 65-76). (Edinburgh Companions to Scottish Literature). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Sedgwick, E. K. (1985). *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. Guildford; New York; Columbia University Press.
- Smith, A. (2002, August 24). Begbie's Back. *The Guardian.* Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/books/2002/aug/24/fiction.irvinewelsh
- Storey, M. (2005). "And as things fell apart": The Crisis of Postmodern Masculinity in
- Bret Easton Ellis' American Psycho and Dennis Copper's Frisk. *Critique*. 47 (1), 57-72.
- Taylor, A. (1998, August 9). Thieving, Rape, Drugs. And that's just the Police. *The Observer*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/theobserver/1998/aug/09/featuresreview.review
- Thompson .jr, E.H., Pleck, J.H., & Ferrara, D.L. (1992). Men and Masculinities: Scales for Masculinity Ideology and Masculinity-Related Constructs. *Sex Roles, 27* (11/12), 573-607.
- Welsh, I. (2013). *Porno*. London: Vintage Random House.
- Welsh, I. (2013). *Skagboys*. London: Vintage Random House.
- Welsh, I. (1996). *Trainspotting*. London: Mandarin Paperbacks.
- Welsh, I. (2016). *The Blade Artist*. London: Penguin.
- Welsh, L. (2002, September 6). Porno By Irvine Welsh. *The Independent.* Retrieved from http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/reviews/porno-by-irvine-welsh-175769.html