# LOWEST OF THE LOW: SCENES OF SHAME AND SELF-DEPRECATION IN CONTEMPORARY SCOTTISH CINEMA

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This thesis explores the factors leading to the images of self-deprecation and shame in contemporary Scottish film. It would seem that the causes of these reoccurring motifs may be because the Scottish people are unable to escape from their past and are uneasy about the future of the nation. There is an internal struggle for both Scottish men and women, who try to adhere to their predetermined roles in Scottish culture, but this role leads to violence, alcoholism, and shame. In addition, there is also a fear for the future of the nation that represented in films that feature a connection between children and the creation of life with the death of Scotland's past. This thesis will focus on films created under a recent boom in film production in Scotland beginning in 1994 till the present day.

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# CHAPTER 1

## SCOTTISH IDENTITY AND THE HISTORY OF SCOTTISH CINEMA

Scotland is a small nation, on the fringes of the British world, whose cinematic output is mostly marginalized in comparison to its national counterparts; there is a generally small corpus of work. There has not been a great volume of critical analysis of recurring themes manifesting themselves in the recent wave of film production that began in the early 1990s. This increase in film production was in part due to an initiative by the Scottish government to produce film for a worldwide audience and to help foster a national culture. A nation defines itself by what it produces in cinema. John Hill believed "that only a national cinema can adequately address the specifications, preoccupation and experience of contemporary cultural life" (John Hill quoted in Petrie Screening Scotland 172). In contemporary Scottish cinema these reoccurring themes are self-deprecation and shame.

Overall, most of the written work on Scottish film has focused on the history and development of the Scottish film industry. While a few authors have focused on a critical approach to these films, these analyses have usually limited themselves to the films that have garnered critical and international acclaim like Danny Boyle's Trainspotting (1996) and Lynne Ramsay's Ratcatcher (1999). As a whole, most of these critical approaches have been focused on the films individually, and not as a whole. In addition, there has been a large amount of criticism regarding the portrayal of Scottish characters in foreign cinemas like the British or United States Cinema. This includes, in particular, the inaccurate portrayal of Scottish characters in such films as Brigadoon (1954), Braveheart (1995), and Rob Roy (1995). As well as film studies, this work will draw

heavily on Scottish literary criticism and a study of Scottish culture. The intention of this study is to look at the overriding themes in these films and see how they reflect a national consciousness or character.

In Scottish cinema, there are reoccurring themes and motifs that make the products distinctly Scottish. Overall, the films tend to be gritty realist dramas showing the hardships of growing up in the urban squalor of Scotland's two largest cities, Glasgow and Edinburgh. These films' darker tones and frequent subject of death and survival have led many to believe that Scotland is a nation of "Miserable Bastards" (Boztas). There has been a national sense of shame, which is an emotion resulting from an awareness of inadequacy or guilt. This feeling of shame has led to feelings of self-deprecation and national anxiety for the future. Not only do these themes reoccur in Scottish film, but in Scottish literature as well.

One must not only look at the history of Scottish filmmaking, but also the history of British filmmaking as a whole. Both areas have a long history of documentary and realist filmmaking. John Grierson, a Scotsman and one of the founding fathers of the documentary movement, filmed many documentaries in Scotland such as The Drifters (1929), Granton Trawler (1934), and Night Mail (1936). Britain's history of documentary fed the early films of the British New Wave. Films like Look Back in Anger (1958), Saturday Night and Sunday Morning (1960), and Kes (1969) which focused heavily on realist dramas featuring the working class. The British New Wave was very heavily centered on masculine story-lines and was seen as being geared to a masculine audience. This more realistic representation of social life would fit in the infrastructure of

Scottish filmmaking, especially when Scotland as a whole considers itself to be a working class nation.

It seems that the next generation of filmmakers were just using the realist templates to get their films made. Obviously, in a small country where there are only 8-15 films produced a year, it is difficult for first time filmmakers to get their footing in the market. There is a feeling that these filmmakers need to make their mark on not just a national scene, but also on the European art scene. These films can be seen as a way of quenching Scotland's desire to be recognized in the European Union. With films like Small Faces (1996), Ratcatcher (1999), and many others gaining acclaim internationally, Scotland is making a name for itself. Scottish actor Martin Compston believes that the industry is in a filmmaking rut and is too afraid to tackle other genres like comedy or horror (Compston quoted in Pendreigh – "The Horror of Making Movies"). Studying the effects of genre choices, and how they are perceived, will show insight into the intent of not only the filmmakers themselves, but also funding organizations in Scotland like the Scottish Screen. It can be seen as an internal imperative with the Scottish Screen, as they seem to be only funding films that will bring prestige. Realist dramas are considered to be high art, whereas other genres like comedy and horror are not. There are a few exceptions to these realist kitchen sink dramas such as Craig Strachan's horror film Wild Country (2005).

Misery is prevalent in Scottish film, and it tends to manifest itself in two forms: self-deprecation and shame. To better understand why these themes keep reoccurring, these issues were examined by looking at the sociology of Scotland as a whole. It would appear that the culture of the nation as a whole has a general feeling of shame and a

lack of self worth. The basis for these feelings are economical, educational, historical, political, and mental. During this boom in filmmaking and in literature, the question of identity has continuously come into question. Scotland is still recovering from the failed initiative for political devolution from Great Britain in 1979. This attempt was preceded by a rise in nationalism and growing sense that the country could survive without the union. When the movement faltered, Thatcher's Tory government took over and their plan for economic privatization further decimated the country's failing industries and living conditions. As the problems continued, the national identity of the country continued to break apart and there was a growing resentment for the South. At the same time, there was a growing sense of patriotism and difference growing in Scotland that led to gains by the Scottish National Party in Parliament. This new sense of what it meant to be Scottish, as well the growing patriotic fervor led to the Scottish people voting for political devolution in 1997, and creating their own parliament. It is just one step away from being an independent nation.

## Questions of Scottish National Identity

When looking for the source of self-deprecation and shame in Scottish culture, many would point to the national inferiority complex, and even further the lack of a national identity. Is there one singular identity for any nation as a whole? In particular, is there a singular national identity for the nation of Scotland, or is it everything that England is not? Scottish identity appears to be caught in a series of binaries: in culture between being Scottish or anglicized, in language between English and Scots, in religion between Protestant and Catholic, in politics between Labor and Conservative,

and finally in regionalism between the Highlands and Lowlands. Many have argued that Scottish identity is very schizophrenic. G. Gregory Smith attempted to identify the schizophrenic nature of the Scottish identity in 1919 by developing the theory of the caledonian antisyzygy, an internal struggle in the Scottish character to find who they really are. Edwin Muir went on to describe the predicament of the Scottish character in that the Scots think in Scots but have to communicate in English.

It is also valuable to look at the "bluster and cringe" view of Scottish culture, alleged by Ken Simpson, the Founding Director of the Centre for Scottish Cultural Studies at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow. Bluster is the half of Scottish culture who boasts loudly about the great gifts to the modern world by the Scots. The other half of the character, cringe, represents the anglicized Scots: who stays away from such epic retelling of his past, and chooses to identify more with London than Edinburgh, and is thus looked down upon by his fellow countryman. These feelings will eventually lead to shame and depression.

Carl MacDougall, in his book Painting the Forth Bridge, searches for a national identity by looking at its manifestations in the arts in the nation's past. Focusing on the sociology of the nation during the twentieth century and how national icons are viewed, McDougall uses the work of Edwin Muir's Scottish Journey (1935)as template in looking at what it means to be Scottish. Muir's work is another attempt to capture the elusive idea of what is the Scottish identity. He focuses on the housing and substance abuse problems around the country, especially in the major urban areas. In particular, he looks to dissect Scotland's icons such as Robert Burns and Sir Walter Scott, not how they shaped the Scotland of today, but instead how Scottish have romanticize and

worship these men. MacDougall writes that the Scottish lack of identity is based on the Scottish people's lack of a national hero. They are looking for someone who can do for them what they cannot do for themselves; someone who can give them a distinct identity.

Cairns Craig's studies of Scottish literature focus on the reoccurring phenomenon of self-deprecation and shame running through the works of Scottish authors from the height of Scottish literary renaissance in the 1920s to present writers like Irvine Welsh and Alasdair Gray. In his book The Modern Scottish Novel, Craig argues various reasons for these phenomena in literature. When looking at a national history, he looks to the influence of Calvinism on history and the national imagination. He stresses that Calvinism (in particular John Knox's Presbyterianism) was the main form of government and controlled the education for the nation, and has caused the Scottish people to reject their own past. It forced the people to give up their old ways and beliefs to live life as God's chosen people. This has led the Scottish people unable to connect to their national history and culture, and over time has caused the history of the country to fall into myth and stereotypes that they now cannot escape.

This destruction of their own past have forced the Scottish people to accept a false, romanticized identity associated with kitsch images of Scottish highland culture man made famous by the works of Sir Walter Scott and his historical epics like Rob Roy (1818) and Waverly (1814). The Scottish people's adoption of this romanticized view of their culture is called "tartanization." These images, no matter how famous and quintessentially Scottish they are, are essentially a creation of fiction and not necessarily a true representation of Scotland's history and culture, which Cairns Craig

also covers in his book. Beveridge and Turnbull, citing Frantz Fanon's work Black Skin, White Mask (1952), wrote that this adoption is a way for the Scottish people to differentiate themselves from their colonizers, the English. And furthermore,Lindsay Paterson wrote in the Bulletin of Scottish Politics, that these are as the "only set of signs Scots have at their disposal for the construction of a meaning of themselves and their country" (Beveridge and Turnbell 13).

While the church gave the Scottish people structure and education, but it also gave the country a sense of a fear of a greater power, a fear of God. It was this fear that was linked to Scotland's fear to vote for its own parliament in 1979. Craig argues, since Calvinism was the foundation of both religion and education, it shaped the Scottish character.

In addition, the Scottish character has lived in fear of his accent and language. In particular, there is a fear of using the dialect and language of the Scottish working class. Often where language is a clear indication of social class and background, there is often a certain stigma attached to how one speaks. When in school, proper English is taught, and the local dialects in Scotland are essentially denounced. Craig cites the lack of a unified national language as a contributing factor to a lack of an identity, stating that Scots is another foundation of the self (Craig 93). In Ireland, there was a sense of national identity with the preservation of Irish Gaelic, but in Scotland, there was no singular national language. The nation was divided by language with Gaelic being spoken in the highlands, and Scots and English being used by the anglicized lowlands.

Duncan Petrie tries to focus on many issues of Scottish films in his book Contemporary Scottish Fictions. Petrie has been the most prominent writer concerned

about the critical recurring themes in both Scottish film and literature. His work focuses greatly on themes of politics, gender, and economics in his analysis of Scottish narrative culture. In particular, he seems to focus on how the economic factors have influenced the status of people in Scotland, in particular the growing difference in class structure brought on by economic recession and an attempt at recovery under Thatcher's government. Aside from "tartanization" Petrie focuses on the role of the Scottish male in Scottish urban films and novels set in Glasgow; teaching the Clydeside identity; a mythology of the Scottish twentieth century working class. It focuses on the constant struggle, both politically and economically, between Scotland and England in the form of the struggles of Socialism and independence versus the Conservatives favoring the union.

## The History of Scottish Cinema

The first thing to consider in a study of Scottish cinema is what constitutes a national cinema being produced there. First of all, Scotland produces enough feature and short length films to be considered as having national film movement. In respect to a Scottish culture, there has been a cultural revival gaining momentum since the 1980s and 1990s with the onset of blossoming national literature and the growth of a film infrastructure.

Some would argue that the definition of a Scottish film is one that is filmed there. Scotland has always been the setting for film productions from all over the world from Hollywood, London, and even Bollywood (Pendreigh 6). There is no doubt about the use of Scottish iconography for Hollywood blockbusters such as Brigadoon, Braveheart,

and Rob Roy. Filmmakers love Scotland for its rural landscape, which "allows them to project their particular fantasies and, imaginatively, its ability to allow them to visualize the past" (Jackson 113). What is problematic is how they try to market themselves within the film community. The Scottish Screen is an agency built on fostering filmmaking opportunities in Scotland by promoting its vast areas of land for filming: With 37% of the UK land mass, populated by a mere 8% of the UK's population, Scotland has more space and more wilderness than practically any other European country.

Scotland boasts the highest mountains, deepest lochs as well as large and accessible tracts of forest and unspoilt moorland. We also have one of the longest coastlines in Europe, an incredible 6,000 miles of coast and rugged cliffs or pearl-white beaches, with 790 islands along the shoreline. Scotland also has the longest daylight hours in the UK with up to 18 hours of daylight in the midsummer, ensuring longer shooting days (Scottish Screen).

London has historically looked north for a nostalgic and naturalistic setting for their films and television shows, such as Alfred Hitchcock's The 39 Steps (1935) and Monarch of the Glen (2000). The popular BBC television program, Monarch of the Glen, an escapist drama depicting the quaintness of the Scottish culture and the majesty of its geography, drew heavily on the success of its BBC predecessor, Ballykissangel (1996), a similar drama set in Ireland. Indian filmmaking has increasingly used Scotland more and more for its filmmaking because of the recent development of the major cities and the dramatic landscape and castles throughout the country (Pendreigh 6). Recently, Scotland has increasingly relied on co-productions with other European countries to

produce many films. Peter Mullan's The Magdalene Sisters (2002) was completed with the help of Irish funding, and there have also been Danish co-productions such as Lars Von Trier's Breaking the Waves (1996). Another film with Danish funding, as well as funding from France and Sweden, was Wilbur Wants to Kill Himself (2002), which was filmed in Glasgow and featured Scottish characters.

The earliest examples of successful filmmaking in Scotland are observed in the Ealing comedies of Britain in the post war period. Films like Whisky Galore! (1949) and The Maggie (1954) were very successful in Scotland, but they came under attack for promoting Scottish stereotypes (Leech 147). Both films were directed by Alexander Mackendrick, an American with Scottish heritage who rose through the ranks of the studio. He started out with Ealing studios as a storyboard artist and gained film experience from directing advertising shorts and wartime documentaries (Grigor 104). Both of the mentioned films focus on quaint Scottish villagers resisting the modernity of the outside world. They are a prime example of how the outside world viewed the Scottish people. It is these images from these two films of the Scottish people that Martin McLoone describes as "those wily, essentially irrational, but lovable rogues." McLoone goes on to write that these depictions were created and continued as a way "to reinforce the dominance of the center and its right to rule," which creates an "internal colonialism" (McLoone). These two films focus on outsiders unable to understand the customs of the remote Scottish people, a theme to be reused in films like The Wicker Man (1973) and Local Hero (1983).

Scotland has a history with domestic filmmaking, and a long distinguished history of documentary filmmaking. John Grierson, the father of documentary and also the man

who coined the term documentary, was a Scotsman from Sterling. Scotland's relationship with documentary filmmaking led to the creation of the longest continually running film festival in the world, the Edinburgh Film Festival. It began as a festival dedicated to documentary filmmaking, but over the years the festival's focus has shifted from the documentary and towards director retrospectives and international films.

In the 1970s, following in the same tradition of the British New Wave, Bill Douglas filmed three semi-autobiographical short films My Childhood (1972), My Ain Folk (1973), and My Way Home (1978). Considered by many as the greatest films ever to be produced in Scotland, they follow a young boy growing up in poverty in a small Scottish mining town, growing to adolescence, and trying to make his way in the world. In making his trilogy, Douglas was completely rejected for funding by the Scottish Film Foundation because he was not presenting a progressive view of Scotland. The stark realism and art house beauty of these films would become the model for many future films like Lynne Ramsay's Ratcatcher.

In December 1977, a conference of filmmakers took place at Carlton Studios in Edinburgh, an important step in trying to create a network for a domestic filmmaking infrastructure in Scotland. At this time, most production companies were one to two man teams who usually focused on documentary and promotional film production. The conference, named Cinema in a Small Country, was funded by two organizations, the Association of Independent Producers and the Scottish Arts Council, and was a gathering of Scottish filmmakers as well as filmmakers from around the world. They hoped to set down the particularities of filming in Scotland and started voicing the concerns of filmmaking to the Scottish government (Bruce 75-8). It was independent

producers that laid the groundwork for the future of Scottish filmmaking, helping foster a bridge between filmmakers in Scotland and funding in London (Hunter 156). They were the ones who originally made the transition to narrative filmmaking and initiated film production with funding from agencies like Channel Four and Independent Television.

Bill Forsyth was the next major filmmaker to make his mark in Scottish filmmaking. He got his start in filmmaking by answering an ad in the newspaper looking for young men to work for a small production company in Glasgow. He rose from working on a small production unit doing professional projects to filming short films in the 1960s and 1970s. His made his first feature film, That Sinking Feeling, in 1979 and went on an impressive streak of filmmaking by filming three more films by 1984: Gregory's Girl (1981), Local Hero (1983), and Comfort and Joy (1984). In that time he went from his small screening of That Sinking Feeling at the Edinburgh Film Festival, to occupying a sold out opening night slot with Comfort and Joy (Hunter 156). Comfort and Joy was to be his last film to be made in Scotland before a ten years break with his home country, when he directed Being Human (1994) with Robin Williams (Bruce 228). Forsyth was important to Scottish filmmaking because he helped get Scottish filmmaking seen by an international audience. His success followed the critical acclaim of the Bill Douglas trilogy, and helped open the eyes of the world that there was talent in Scotland. Both Douglas and Forsyth were also the first Scottish filmmakers to have their work critically studied.

The biggest wave of substantial filmmaking began to flourish in the late 1980s and early 1990s with the development of local funding initiatives and support from television entities like Channel Four in Great Britain. Obviously, the biggest factor in the

increase of filmmaking was the increase of funding. The three key funding centers were the Scottish Film Production Fund, initially launched in 1982, the Glasgow Film Fund in 1992, and the Scottish National Lottery Fund in 1995. The Scottish Film Production Fund was important in particular because it put “film as a creative art on the same footing as those other arts that have for long enjoyed public funding through the Scottish Arts Council” (Lockerbie 171). Film was now just as viable a resource as music, art, and literature for creating a distinct Scottish identity. Prior to the creation of the Scottish Film Production Fund, there was The Scottish Film Council, which has existed since 1932, but the entity’s funds were not allocated for production, and filmmakers had been forced to look for public funding in London. The Scottish Film Production Fund created a cooperative effort between the Scottish Arts Council and the Scottish Film Council, with an aim to create a Scottish cinema, because “a self respecting national culture cannot simply consume the images of others. It needs to produce it own images of itself and reflect its own sensibility in what is the major art form of the twentieth century” (Lockerbie). The Glasgow Film Fund was developed as an initiative to help fund feature films in Glasgow. The fund was a collaboration between the Glasgow Development Agency, Glasgow City Council and the Strathclyde Regional Council as a way to bring more business to the Glasgow area (Petrie Screening Scotland 175-176). The first film to be produced with financial backing was Shallow Grave, which went on to be a success. The Scottish National Lottery Fund was a policy by the British government to distribute revenue from the national lottery. The funds were deemed for good causes and delegated to the Art Councils of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

The Scottish Film Production fund eventually would be placed in charge of administering the fund (Petrie Screening Scotland 177).

In 1997, the Scottish Screen was created and took control of the Scottish Film Production Fund, the Glasgow Film Fund and the Lottery's finances. Incidentally, the Hollywood epic Braveheart, a film both praised and reviled in Scotland, helped create a new sense of national identity, and had a huge effect on popular culture. "In its opening months it was mentioned in 74 articles in the The Scotsman, football supporters adopted the blue war paint Gibson sported in the movie, political commentators started talking about the 'the Braveheart factor' and support for the Scottish National Party soared" (Pendreigh 9). The film led the Scottish government to look into funding film production in their own backyard, which led to the development of the Scottish Screen, a funding and film development agency based in Glasgow. These entities did not fund filmmaking entirely, but "collectively these resources enabled many Scottish feature film projects to be both properly developed to the point of having a realistic chance of interesting financiers, and in many cases securing at least a percentage of their production cost," which would improve their chances of securing funding from London based entities like Channel Four, BBC films, and BFI productions (Devolving British Cinema). These developments have allowed for a uniquely Scottish art form to prosper in European and world arenas.

In addition to feature filmmaking, Scottish Screen has focused on the funding of short films. The most successful of their schemes was Tartan Shorts, initially launched in 1993 under the Scottish Film Production Fund and later the Scottish Screen; it led to early exposure and accolades for Scottish filmmakers. The first success of the project

came with the production of Peter Capaldi's film Franz Kafka's It's a Wonderful Life (1993), which won an Oscar for best live action short (Pendreigh 78). Peter Mullan and Lynne Ramsey each directed innovative short films under the Tartan Shorts scheme, Fridge (1995) and Gasman (1997). Each film helped its director make their debut in feature filmmaking (Devolving British Cinema). Ramsey's Gasman went on win second prize at Cannes Film Festival, which was the second award from Cannes for Ramsay, who gained the previous award with her graduation film from the National Film and Television School, Small Deaths (1996). The Scottish Screen has gone on and "promoted several schemes, though Tartan Shorts remained the flagship" (Pendreigh 79).

Scotland's recent film output has produced a sizeable number of accomplished directors including Bill Douglas, Bill Forsyth, Michael Caton-Jones, Lynne Ramsay, Peter Mullan, David MacKenzie, and Gilles MacKinnon. Many of these filmmakers have gone on to make films outside of Scotland with non-Scottish subject matter (i.e. Bill Forsyth's Breaking In (1989), Michael Caton-Jones's Memphis Belle (1990), Gilles MacKinnon's Hideous Kinky (1998), and David MacKenzie's Asylum (2005)). Non-Scottish filmmakers have also come in and produced critically acclaimed films filmed in Scotland and on Scottish subject matter. British directors Danny Boyle and Ken Loach have both been successful in claiming their own place in the Scottish filmmaking scene. Danny Boyle's film Shallow Grave (1994) was considered to be the first major film under the Scottish filmmaking infrastructure and went on to become an unexpected hit, making more than 5 million pounds at the British box office (Petrie Screening Scotland 176). Two years later, he followed the success of Shallow Grave with Trainspotting,

launching the career of Ewan McGregor and glamorizing heroin addiction in the slums of Scotland with interesting characters and a commercially successful film soundtrack. Ken Loach, who made his name with the social realism movement in Britain, has also had a long relationship with Scotland. He has produced numerous films with Scottish characters and subject matters. In 1990, he produced Riffraff with Scottish actor Robert Carlyle, and again used Carlyle in 1996 to make Carla's Song. Since then he has completed three more 'Scottish' films: My Name is Joe (1998), Sweet Sixteen (2002), and A Fond Kiss (2004). All of these focus on the life of working class or marginalized people in Scotland struggling to deal with their pasts, family, and trying to find ways to survive.

## Design of the Thesis

This study will be a historical approach to not just Scottish film, but to Scottish culture and identity in the last thirty years, in particular the period following the demise of a referendum for home rule in 1979. This study will question Scottish identity, and what it does mean to be Scottish in a present tense, but with hopes to stay away from work already established discussing the portrayal of the Scottish in Hollywood and other international cinemas, which was often based on stereotypes and kitsch. This will be a study of how the Scottish portray themselves and about their choices in the films they make. The key to this study is to look at all these possible factors and piece together the sources of these feelings and visuals. This will begin by looking at the changing political nature of Scotland, from total dependence on the British Government in London to the creation of the Scottish National Parliament in Edinburgh in recent years. In particular,

this study focuses on how the feelings of self-identification have changed after the failed attempt by Scotland for devolution in 1979, versus now where there is a new sense of independence (Petrie 7). Additionally, this study will look at the economic struggles of Scotland under the Thatcher's conservative government. These elements have affected the culture and national identity of this small country that prides itself on its working class merits, but struggles with a history being "God's chosen people" under Calvinism, while still being under the control of Great Britain and watching the demise of their economy. Another focus will be on how the economy has affected the home life of Scotland, and how living conditions affected the directors coming out Scotland, and how they portrayed this in their films.

Chapter 2 focuses on the role of the Scottish male in Scottish culture and how it is depicted on film. The chapter will show as a whole how Scottish culture is historically and still very patriarchal, and how the role of the male in Scotland is often painted in a very negative light. The role of the Scottish male is often depicted as the noble savage of the Scottish highlands or as the gritty 'Hard Man' of the urban centers. All of these images are based on the strength, skill, and prowess of manhood. Yet, in the recent wave of films about Scottish males, the power and masculinity has been called into question. For example, in Trainspotting, the main character Renton's sexual prowess is compromised by his addiction to heroin. Further indictments of the male figure in Scottish film are in the films of Lynne Ramsay, which depict the negative aspects of Scottish masculinity and Richard Jobson's film Sixteen Years of Alcohol that depicts masculinity unable to escape from its past. Finally in David Mackenzie's The Last Great Wilderness, three men have to overcome their past by opening and overcoming these

preconceived notions of masculinity in Scotland. There is an internal struggle in the Scottish male, who is struggling to achieve his predetermined roles in Scottish Culture. In so many of these films and in their culture, this struggle in the Scottish male leads to violence, substance abuse, and shame.

Chapter 3 focuses on the role of women in Scottish culture and how they are depicted in Scottish film. In a patriarchal society like Scotland, women are often depicted as peripheral characters who fit into these predetermined roles as servants to men. Chapter 3 also focuses on how the image of women is changed when a woman is the central character of films like Morvern Callar (2002). Furthermore, how the voice of the title character changes from the book written by Alan Warner, to that in the film directed by a female director Lynne Ramsay. The role of shame and self-deprecation play a major role in the lives of the girls in Mullan's film The Magdalene Sisters as they are looked down upon by their families and the community.

Chapter 4 looks at the relationship between children and death in many Scottish films. Death overall has a prominent spot in many of these films, but there is often a connection with a child character, who has to deal with these traumatic events or is the cause. In these films, there is a loss of innocence for these characters. It is a time where many of these characters are making that transition from childhood to adulthood and witnessing the grim realities of life. For a nation in the early stages of presenting itself on an international stage, it is a moment of growth for the nation. With this growth, there is a sense of a loss of innocence and a sense of anxiety about the future of the country. In Ratcatcher, the main character James is haunted through the film by the death of his friend that he witnessed. In Small Faces, young Lex is responsible for his

older brother Bobby's death, when he reveals his location to a rival gang leader. In Young Adam, the revelation of pregnancy eventually leads to the pregnant woman's death. In Trainspotting, one of the many symbols of the characters' heroin addiction is the death of a young baby, who later comes back to haunt Renton in his post-heroin delirium. In many cases, these characters are not always children, but are often very childlike, as with the title character Morvern Callar, whose childlike fascination with her surroundings, matches that of a small child. It is a time where many of these characters are making that transition from childhood to adulthood and witnessing the grim realities of life. There is a growing sense of loss of innocence in Scottish Culture, a sense that they have to deal with their current plight.

The concluding section of this thesis will tie all of the points addressed in the previous three chapters together. This section will look at where these elements of shame and self-deprecation come from and why are they prevalent in these films. In addition, this section will look into the future of Scottish filmmaking.

# CHAPTER 2

## ALCOHOL, SOCCER, AND VIOLENCE: SCENES OF THE SHAMEFUL SCOTTISH MALE IN CONTEMPORARY SCOTTISH CINEMA

Historically, Scottish culture has been very patriarchal and the role of the male in Scottish culture is often portrayed as stereotypically patriarchal. He is often depicted as the noble savage of the Scottish highlands, or as the gritty 'Hard Man' of the urban wastelands of Glasgow or Edinburgh. At the core of all of these images is an iconography based on strength, skill, camaraderie, and sexual prowess. In the 1990s, in British film as a whole, traditional masculinity has been called into question with films like Brassed Off (1996), The Full Monty (1997), Velvet Goldmine (1998), and Billy Elliot (2000). This was a decade in film that produced a "range of more fluid and provocative images of masculinity "…which engaged the idea of the changeability of gender and sexual relations (Monk 156). What these films had was a "preoccupation with men," who were "clearly the product of a perceived crisis in male economic power and gender privilege, the images of men and masculinity it spawned were often complex, hybrid and contradictory" (Monk 157). In Scotland in particular, there is an internal struggle within the Scottish male, who is struggling to achieve his predetermined role in Scottish culture. It is this same male that often fears progress and sees himself stuck in a lot he cannot escape. In the Scottish male character there is this sense of "seeing the bottle half-empty" (Goodwin) and as characters who fall victim to the deplorable traits of "anguish, cynicism and violence" (Caughie). It is a form of stagnation and stasis for these characters, which leads these masculine figures to harken back to the glory days of war time and the post war industrial male: the height of the Scottish working class experience.

In three films produced in Scotland, the characterization of men depicts three stages of the Scottish man. In Ratcatcher (1999), depicts the most basic version of the shameful Scottish 'Hard Man' stuck in stasis with no desire to improve his lot in life. 16 Years of Alcohol (2004), represents the next progression of the Scottish male, who tries to face his demons, but is unable to escape his life because he cannot escape who he is. Finally with The Last Great Wilderness (2002), you have three Scottish males who are all in moments of crisis in their masculinity, who overcome them.

## The Predicament of the Scottish Male

To the rest of the world, the Scotland as a whole, appears to be a backward looking country "immersed in its heritage" and is held back by its traditions, class divisions and its collapsing economy (Leonard 283). In Scotland, this image is no different, especially in films depicting Glasgow, the once proud, now decaying second city of the Scottish Empire. In contrast to this masculine stagnation, women in many recent working class depictions are seen as more progressive of the two sexes, especially in British films of the 1990s like The Full Monty and Brassed Off. In Scotland, this trend was also present, but unlike other British films, the masculine depiction did not soften and in many cases, this image became much harder. In so many of these films and in their culture, this struggle in the Scottish male to stay in control is what leads these characters to violence, substance abuse, and shame.

Duncan Petrie wrote that there is an inability of the modern Scottish male to break free of the culture's preconceived mold of this iconic figure, which is "rooted in male comradeship, the football match, the pub, and an exaggerated use of the Scots

vernacular, emphasizing a no-nonsense and vigorous masculine attitude to which women have no legitimate recourse" (Petrie 65). Scottish screenwriter Bill Bryden described the Scottish identity as:

> Prejudiced, Christian (when it suits you), well-educated. Nostalgic, willing to travel, pro-Irish (they're in the same boat), aggressive, proud, single-minded, occasionally pissed, occasionally singing, not mean (as a nation we are rather generous you'll find), willing to accept second place too often expecting to lose, easily embarrassed. Passionate and football daft, standing there, thousands of us, in Wembley Stadium at the game. (Bryden in Kravitz).

At the core of this masculine identity is teamwork and national pride. There is a sense of history in these characters that will never die, and it is a sense of knowing where one comes from. The problem lies in the fact that the history that the nation chooses to identify with is history based on myth rather than reality.

Much of masculine identity in Scotland, as well as the whole of Britain, is wrapped up in soccer culture. This soccer culture is celebrated in very much the same way that working class culture is worshipped. The game has been re-appropriated from a gentleman's game into a celebration of working class values "where skill and cunning were valued, but hardness, stamina, courage, and loyalty were even more important" (Holt 173). Robson in his article about soccer tradition sees it as a "metaphor for long-standing patterns of both familial lineage and affiliation through place" (Robson 223). For whom one cheers is a form of self-identification and is based on family, religion, and location. In Glasgow, this is most apparent with two football clubs in particular: the Rangers, who have historically been associated with Protestant Unionist, and the Celtic football club who are associated with Irish Catholic families. Their fierce rivalry has been the source of sectarian violence in Glasgow for decades. Oftentimes, there is a high degree of violence associated with rival fans, with casualty wards in Glasgow reporting

their highest admissions following old firm soccer matches between the Rangers and Celtics (Fracassini). On a national scale, the rivalry between Scotland and England has led to many violent attacks on those who cheer for England in recent World Cup play, a sign of the intense bitterness and rivalry with the neighbors to the south. And to make matters worse, the Scottish team usually loses to England, only adding to the Scottish resentment for the English.

Furthermore, in Ken Simpson's binary, bluster and cringe, he creates two characters of the Scottish national culture. Bluster is one half of the Scottish identity that boasts loudly about the great gifts to the modern world that have been made by the Scots. He is the epitome of the defiant Scottish identity of the greatest nation god has ever created. In contrast, the other half, cringe, represents the anglicized Scots, who stays away from such epic retelling of the past, and chooses to identify more with London than Edinburgh. He is embarrassed by his boisterous counterpoint and looks to avoid anything that will give away his true origins. Thus cringe is looked down upon by his fellow countryman, which leads to feelings of shame and depression (Simpson). Simpson's binary constructs a dichotomy that also represents the masculine and feminine binary in Scotland. Beginning with bluster, you have an example of the stereotypical Scottish male. This is the boastful of the two; he is inward looking and is constantly looking towards the past for answers. This is a stasis in character for the Scottish male. This is the type of identity that easily connects itself to an extroverted existence associated with national pride and teamwork. As we well later see, cringe will come to represent the feminine identities in Scottish culture.

Scottish film and fiction traditionally has focused on how Scottish males thrive in

a patriarchal society and hope to reject their nation's colonization and submission by looking for ways to adopt masculine tendencies and disassociate with anything feminine. Historically, Scotland has rejected Catholicism with its feminine deity in the Virgin Mary in favor of a powerful masculine figure of Presbyterianism, John Knox (Petrie 64-65). In addition to this rejection of the feminine, the control that men once had is now dissolving. For women, roles and job opportunities have grown at the same time as mens' perceived role as breadwinners has been diminished through unemployment and a changing economy ultimately leading to the inability for the men to fill the role of the provider and head of the family. When Thatcher took control of the British government in 1979, two months after the Scottish failed attempt for devolution, she looked to fix the economic recession affecting the United Kingdom at the time. The effects on Scotland and the north of Britain were devastating, leading to a rise in unemployment and cut backs in public spending, privatization of public utilities, and the curbing of the power of the worker's unions. Michael Cannon describes the collapse of the Scottish economy and how it was felt by its people in his novel The Borough:

When the decline in the heavy industry cut deepest the Borough fell silent. Redundant men watched television with their self-esteem atrophied. Small retailers, dependent on workforce trade, closed doors and boarded their windows. Rusting cranes stood like some social hieroglyphs – an indictment and a reminder. (Catton)

The failing economy essentially crippled Scotland, whose working class were dependent on these factors. The silent shipping yards and the substandard housing of the inner boroughs were constant reminders of the downfall of "God's chosen people." To make matters worse, all of this came from a woman, the "Iron Lady" of Britain

(Petrie). It was one thing to be controlled by the ‘feminized’ English, but it was even worse to have the Scottish male’s economic livelihood and power symbolically destroyed by a woman.

## Trainspotting as an Example of Scottish Male Identity

For Andrew Ross, Scotland’s preoccupation with its history is a “medium through which a people who believe themselves to be a nation distinguishes itself from their colonizers and to debate their own post-colonial future” (Ross 18). This mode of thinking has given Scotland a sense of national identity that has become identifiable around the world, but has led many to ignore the conditions in the country that are less than ideal. This overall feeling of historic persecution and defeat at the hands of the English has caused the Scottish to be unable to focus on the “condition of the nation, of its decaying state, of the consequences of its inactivity, of predictable, over determined practices” and all that remains is that Scotland has solidified into “shite” (Farred 220). Danny Boyle’s film Trainspotting, based on the novel by Irvine Welsh, beautifully captures the feeling that nothing is being accomplished in Scotland because there is always something else to distract its population. In the movie the character, Renton, explains why he chooses not to deal with his current lot in life and instead chooses something that numbs him:

> Choose your future. Choose life... But why would I want to do a thing like that? I chose not to choose life. I chose somethin' else. And the reasons? There are no reasons. Who needs reasons when you've got heroin?

For Renton heroin is a quick distraction from the decaying existence he lives in. Renton, a symbol of the Scottish everyman’s general malaise, shows how his existence leads to

a feeling where nothing is ever going to change, and thus he finds solace in heroin. While sitting in the Scottish wilds, surrounded by a common Scottish iconography, Tommy asks Renton if he's proud to be Scottish. Renton responds with:

> It's SHITE being Scottish! We're the lowest of the low. The scum of the fucking Earth! The most wretched miserable servile pathetic trash that was ever shat on civilization. Some people hate the English. I don't. They're just wankers. We, on the other hand, are colonized by wankers. Can't even find a decent culture to get colonized by. We're ruled by effete assholes. It's a shite state of affairs to be in, Tommy, and all the fresh air in the world won't make any fucking difference!

It is here that this image of masculine stasis in Scottish culture is most clearly exemplified in Scottish film. Scottish nihilism is interacting with the Scottish mythic identity. As the two interact, nihilism, shame and reality begin to win out in the struggle. Nothing more clearly states this than Tommy, the most outgoing of Renton's friends, who succumbs to depression after his girlfriend leaves him. This depression and shame lead him down a road to heroin for its numbing effects and finally to AIDS and death. Only when Renton finally escapes the clutches of his heroin addiction can he finally leave the stasis of his existence in Leith and escape to London and elsewhere.

For a nation obsessed with its own past, there is little consideration paid to the present or the future. A large part of the Scottish mentality is this perception that Scotland is place where nothing really happens. Even when the Scottish are spotlighted for distinctions, they are unable to sustain their progress. In 1990, Glasgow was classified as the European City of Culture, however, despite this distinction of urban renewal an cultural growth, nothing was done to continue it. Many see Glasgow as a town that is the shell of what it once was and as a place where nothing changes. Even the Scottish band from Glasgow, Del Amitri complains in their song "Nothing Ever Happens" that no matter what, nothing ever happens in their town. Even if something

drastic changes or something miraculous does happens, everyone will still continue to do the same thing they always do, nothing. The lack of pride in their surroundings is evident in Bill Forsyth's film The Sinking Feeling (1980), when they ask, "What is Glasgow famous for?" to which they answer "Muggers… Drunks…" Furthermore, Alasdair Gray's character Jock McLeish questions the noble identity of Scotland in the book 1982, Janine: "The truth is that we are a nation of arselickers, though we disguise it with surfaces: A surface of generous, openhanded manliness, a surface of dour practical integrity, a surface of futile maudlin defiance like when we break goal posts and windows after football matches on foreign soil…" (Gray). In all these accounts, we have men continuously questioning who the Scottish really are. This is a constant struggle of the past versus reality. This point of contention is visible through those that cannot deal with who they are and often turn to different abuses to ignore the problems like the pub, soccer, violence, and substance abuse.

In three films produced in Scotland, the depiction of men depicts three stages of Scottish masculinity. These three stages reflect the changing male dynamic in Scotland where men are struggling to break free from the social confines of the nation. First of all, Lynne Ramsay's Ratcatcher (1999), a depiction of life in the decay of Glasgow. James' Da is the prototypical Scottish male who is resistant to change and quick to react violently when challenged. 16 Years of Alcohol (2004) is the next progression of the Scottish male, who tries to face his demons, but is unable to escape his life. Finally in, The Last Great Wilderness (2002), there are three Scottish males who are all in moments of crisis in their masculinity and are forced to face their personal demons

through acknowledgments of their problems and a softening of their emotional defenses.

## Ratcatcher

Lynne Ramsay, the director of Ratcatcher, was born in Glasgow and grew up in the working class district of Maryhill, which is near the neighborhoods where Ratcatcher was filmed. Living in the decaying Maryhill housing projects, Ramsay witnessed first hand the deteriorating conditions of the working class men around her. The film is located in a "very specific time and place: a Glasgow beset by the garbage men's strike of 1973 which left the city swamped by ominous, black plastic bags bloated with detritus, and the attendant army of rats" (Francke). Ramsay's films often focus on the childlike fascinations of her characters as they try to understand their changing surroundings. She herself has said that she is "fascinated by the age around eleven and twelve when you're not quite defined as a person… There's something really lovely about being in that state of not knowing where you should be in the world" (Fuller).

Ratcatcher centers on the actions of James Gillespie, a preteen adolescent who is witness to the drowning of one of his neighbors, Ryan Quinn, as the two boys wrestle around in the putrid canal behind their decaying housing projects in Glasgow. Young James lives with his family: his caring but abused mother, his drunk and shiftless father, his ever absent older sister Ellen, and his pixie like younger sister, Anne Marie. James is emotionally distant from his whole family, with the exception of his mother, for whom he deeply loves and cares about. The only other emotional connections for James in the film are his young, slowwitted neighbor Kenny, a boy his own age, and Margaret Anne,

a neighborhood girl who is constantly victimized by a gang of teenage boys who roam the neighborhood leaving violence and destruction in their wake. James, like the Scottish males, is unable to deal with his plight, because he sees no change in the future. For James, he feels he is to blame because he cannot help his family escape the neighborhood, and so he decides to drown himself.

As with many of Ramsay's film, there is a lack of strong father figures in Ratchatcher and the fathers are looked at as largely distant characters, who are only there to be providers. In the case of Ryan Quinn's death, the young boy is ordered by his mother to stay with his father and not go out and play. Yet his father is absent and he goes out to play and accidentally drowns in the canal. Ryan's mother later rejects her husband's attempt at consoling her and he sits in shame on the crumbling staircase outside their apartment.

The Scottish males are only able to function in their own social spheres, and unable to function within their families. For example Ryan Quinn's father is unable to comfort his own wife, and is rejected for absenteeism. Following the funeral of the young boy, all the men in of the neighborhood are all standing together, smoking, and only able to say how it is a shame. In Scotland, and in working class society in particular, men had no connection to their families beyond just being a breadwinner. In fact, as early as the mid-nineteenth century, the Church of Scotland urged fathers to be financially responsible for their children both legitimate and illegitimate. The message conveyed here by Scottish society was that fatherhood entailed "material support and little more" (Abrams 221-2). Furthermore, when men were at home, they were to be pampered by their wives, because they worked in dangerous environments to provide a

living for their families (Gordon-Hall). This mentality led to a disconnect between men and their families, and when a man could not provide material and emotional support for his family, the feeling of inadequacy increased, further pushing them away from their families and into the company of others in similar situations.

James' father, a man who seems to be a drunk, womanizer, and a unemployed non-provider, exemplifies the prototypical urban Scottish male of the economic recession. As his family voices their desire to leave the squalor that is their neighborhood, James' father constantly tries to convince them it is not so bad. It is the stasis in James' father that depicts him as perfectly content lying around the house and drinking beer while watching soccer, a sign of his impotency and lack of power to provide for his family. James and his family are visually surrounded by the failures of Scottish masculinity: decaying housing, bloated trash bags, swarms of rats, polluted canal waters, physically and emotionally abused women and children.

Later, James' father is honored with a medal from the neighborhood when he saves young Kenny from drowning in the canal. He is only home because he in bed asleep when he should have been at work, again exemplifying the image of the unemployed working class man unwilling to provide for his family. He is quick to celebrate his good deed with his mates at the pub getting drunk and cavorting with women instead of staying at home with his family, who patiently wait. He is celebrated as a hero for his actions, but his inability to provide for his family is not acknowledged. As he leaves the bar in a drunken daze, he meets the ire of the neighborhood gang, who slashes his face with a knife, an act of establishing their masculinity over their elders. He stumbles home, covered in his own blood, and attacks his wife because he

was bested by another, younger man. He is vengeful and insecure, and has to reassert his power over his wife and his family, because he cannot take responsibility for their own contrived predicament.

## 16 Years of Alcohol

Richard Jobson's 16 Years of Alcohol is a semi autobiographical tale about a young man by the name of Frankie, who at a young age turns to alcoholism as a way of coping with his family and life falling apart around him. Jobson, himself, started his career as the front man for the Scottish punk band The Skids, with whom he released several albums and landed a series of top-10 singles on the British charts. Since his foray into punk music he embarked on successful careers as a poet, model, writer, and TV presenter. After the success of his semi autobiographical novel 16 Years of Alcohol, and after the coaxing of Chinese filmmaker Wong Kar-Wai, he decided to turn his book into a film. The book and subsequent film's main character, Frankie, is a mixture of Jobson himself and his now deceased brother. Jobson's story is about a man who "uses alcohol to feel a kind of sense of his own importance and identity" and who is "really more addicted to violence than alcohol. It's the alcohol that makes him capable of doing things that normal people would probably never dream of doing" (Joggerst).

Given Jobson's history with punk culture, it would be likely that the politics of skinhead and punk culture would play a major role in the identity of Frankie. Where both cultures are intermingling and are both based on style and music, punk was "rock and roll by people who didn't have very much skill as musicians but still felt the need to express themselves" (Punk Music). Punk music had many roots that grew out of the

skinhead culture that developed in Britain during the 1950s. This emerging culture grew in response to “the relative worsening of the situation of the working class, through the second half of the sixties, and especially the more rapidly worsening situation of the lower working class.” It was a culture for young Britains that exacerbated young men and women’s sense of exclusion, and furthering an “Us-Them” consciousness (Clark 99). Usually these identities are associated with decaying urban centers like Glasgow, which had one of the highest populations of skinheads in Britain in the sixties (No Mean City).

This “Us-Them” mentality easily fit into the Scottish masculine identity, especially the Scottish antagonism towards the English. For Frankie, his “Us-Them” mentality is at the center of many of his confrontations and leads to a sense of isolation for him that causes him to violently lash out. Throughout the film, he is constantly looking for a way to find his voice. It is not till the end, when Frankie becomes an actor that is he finally able to break free from this burden. Much like Jobson, Frankie’s break into the arts mirrors the path that Jobson had to take to escape the struggles of working class Scotland.

The film chronicles the 16 years of Frankie’s addiction to violence and alcohol from age 10 to 26. As the years roll by, he descends further into a world of alcohol and gang violence in Edinburgh. Through self-determination and the help of two women at different points in his life, he begins to dig himself out of the hole his life has been in. Frankie is constantly at odds with his surroundings and lives his life in a world of self-doubt and stasis. As he repeats throughout the film, “Sometimes, for some people, things don't work out as they'd hoped,” which ends up being a self-fulfilling prophecy for

Frankie, who can never escape his demons because “someone has to pay.” Again, Scottish nihilism is active, much like Renton in Trainspotting.

Much like the father in Ratcatcher, Frankie is the prototypical Scottish ‘Hard Man’: alcoholic and violent. In the beginning of the film, he leads a group of young thugs, his “Droogs,” around Edinburgh, leveling violence on any poor soul that crosses their path. When we first see Frankie, he is in a bar, haunted by his past of alcoholism, and his father. He gains the strength to resist his urges, and storms out looking for help from his girlfriend Mary, but to no avail. He runs through the gothic corridors of the city and stumbles into a dark corridor, where he is cornered and beaten to death by members of his former gang. As he lies there, nearing death, he reflects on his troubled past. He returns to his childhood, when everything was perfect for him. He lived with his beautiful mother and his charismatic father, who playfully reenacts the gunfight from Shane (1953) with his son.

The iconography of the American western has many similarities with the image of the Scottish highlander. Usually set in the American west, the western focuses on the vastness of the environment and how the people tame the wilderness (Phillips 238). Many seminal films of the genre, including Shane, focus on a settler community resisting the power of a greedy and powerful landowner. Like Shane, Rob Roy focuses on a Scottish clan living in their community while resisting a greedy noble man. Furthermore, the film featured a climatic final duel between the cowboy like highlander Rob Roy and a foppish English nobleman. Similar elements are also found in Mel Gibson’s Braveheart, wherein a small, innocent community is threatened by a greedy, invading king looking to expand his empire. These western themes also fall into the

"Us-Them" mentality that Frankie and many Scottish males feel. Especially for a society where they are looking for clear definition of identity when they posit themselves as being Scottish as opposed to being British.

For Frankie, as a young child, everything fits into this simple "Us-Them" dichotomy. Frankie's perfect existence is destroyed by an outside force, the other woman. Everything begins to fall apart for Frankie when he witnesses his father's infidelity with another woman outside a party at the local pub. Frankie turns to alcohol to cope with a crumbling social and mental existence, just like all of the male figures he grows up around that are constantly imbibing alcohol. As a child, it is easy for Frankie's childhood to be associated with these western motifs, because it is a genre where everything is so clear-cut. Once his perfect life is shattered, he turns to alcohol and grows up to assume the brutish personality that becomes another simple black – white existence. In a dance club, listening to reggae music, Frankie and his mates dance in a series of freeze frames clothed in white shirts and black jackets. These are characters stuck in their positions, in a room painted with thick red and white lines across the back walls. The other dance club patrons line the wall, watching. Like everything in Frankie's life, it is being played out in front of an audience.

As he grows older, he becomes an alcoholic bully obsessed with Bruce Lee, A Clockwork Orange (1971), and punk music that lead him into a world of violence and fearlessness. Frankie is completely immersed in skinhead culture, which is a culture steeped in a working class mentality. This culture was also a way for the underclass to express themselves. For Jobson, as a 16 year old, he became involved in music as a way of finding his voice. While trying to find his voice, according to Jobson, he found his

natural home in cinema. Just like Jobson, in his film 16 Years of Alcohol, Frankie is constantly looking for his voice (Joggerst). Like so many men in Scotland, he is trapped. Visually, Edinburgh is presented as maze of narrow alleys, stone stairways, and dark corridors. The dismal and decaying look of the medieval town acts as a vision for dismal and decaying life of Frankie and his mates.

Frankie is constantly trapped, and on display for others to watch with shock caused by Frankie's chain of violent encounters. The first appearance of Frankie as an adult appears when Frankie is out with his gang and brutally attacks a drunk in a drainage culvert. The group is stuck in a one-way path of continuous violence and alcohol, where there are no other options. In one bar scene, Frankie's friends attempt to steal beer from behind the bar, but are caught. While trying to defuse the situation with the bartender, Frankie is eloquent enough to talk down the bartender from calling the police but is still compelled to assault him to show where his real power lies. As his attack continues, the camera slowly pans across the shocked bar attendants as they watch in stunned disbelief. Furthermore, his mates look on in amazement. While Frankie is sparring in a park with Miller, the most rebellious of his followers, the two fight in the center of a circular pavilion with seats all around. Like gladiators on display, Frankie's physical prowess is exhibited as he dominates Miller. All of these examples reinforce how so much of Frankie's life is on display and how this leads to feelings of entrapment for him.

So much of Frankie's predilection for violence is associated with his feeling of entrapment. He finally begins to ascend from the entrapment of his situation when he meets Helen, a young art student. Upon meeting Helen, and later Mary, a young woman

he meets in an AA meeting, he begins to work towards changing his life. Yet no matter how hard Frankie tries, he cannot escape his past or his lot in life. Again, these two women in Frankie's life are a way for Frankie to break free from his stasis and progress, but in the end, he is still victim to his past. Initially, it is because of Helen that Frankie leaves his Droogs behind for a more cultured life, but Frankie's interloping in her university lifestyle will not work. Frankie's chance meeting with her takes place at the record shop where she works. The exterior façade of the building is garishly painted in bright yellow and blue, a stark contrast to the grey stone buildings of Frankie's existence. Also the building is located near a covered walkway, where Frankie and his mates enter into the shot. Continuing the visual theme of Frankie's entrapment within Edinburgh, this tunnel is his inability to escape his path in life, but with his trip to the record store, a place of entertainment, he is able to escape this path. Unfortunately on his new path his 'Hard Man' tendencies will not subside even though he tries to involve himself in Helen's world and completely leave his violent past behind. He is constantly wracked with jealously and feels inferior to the men in her university life. While on a stroll on the beach with Helen, the two come upon a classmate of hers, Jake. Quickly thereafter, Frankie accuses Helen of cheating on him with Jake. Also at a university art showing, Frankie confronts a man and a woman who he believes look down upon him, and threatens violence against them until Helen pulls him away. Frankie cannot escape his past, and is increasingly suspicious of his new lifestyle.

For the next stage of Frankie's progression, he turns to the assistance and support of another woman, Mary. With the help of Mary, Frankie gains more success with his alcohol addiction and violence. He even excels in becoming an actor in a small

theatrical production. Yet in the end, as with class identity in Britain, Frankie cannot escape from who he is or his past. With Frankie, he cannot escape his past when he runs into his drunken father, who is now a mere shadow of the man he once was. Furthermore Frankie cannot escape his fear of betrayal when he believes Mary is having an affair with their play director. He falls helplessly back into the world of fighting his demons as he looks to the bar for support, but is tracked down by his former mates, who are now led by his once beaten rival, Miller, who is out for revenge.

As the film closes, he is lying on the floor, awash in red light, in pain, still believing that "someone has to pay" and the 'someone' is all too evident. In a combination of Scottish Calvinist philosophy and class identity, the message resonates clearly: you cannot escape from your past or you lot in life. In contrasts to James' Da in Ratcatcher, Frankie attempts to do something with his life. He is the next stage of the Scottish male. Although he ultimately fails to escape his lot in life, he still makes an attempt.

## The Last Great Wilderness

As a filmmaker, David Mackenzie's films, Last Great Wilderness, Young Adam (2003), Asylum (2005), and Hallam Foe (2007) have all focused on the grittiness of sexuality and violence (Cornwell). In The Last Great Wilderness, Mackenzie depicts characters trying to understand their identity through their differing sexual identities. All the characters in this film have traveled from the 'civilized' world to the edge of the world as a way to grow into who they are. Mackenzie himself grew up in central Scotland with his younger brother and actor, Alistair Mackenzie, a contrast from many of the other

filmmakers in Scotland, who grew up in the urban centers. Mackenzie grew up not far from the location where the popular BBC program Monarch of the Glen was filmed, a show that relied heavily on the iconic images of Scotland.

Mackenzie, looking to film a road movie in Britain, turned to the highlands of Scotland as a location on the edge of civilization where many issues of identity can be called into question. The road movie is based on the idea of character development and transition. Naturally, the highlands of Scotland invoke a certain image of highland culture and masculinity, and with a road movie, it allows for this traditional image to become malleable and changeable. Within the film, there is Charlie, the British every-man looking for revenge while contrasting and interacting with the hyper-sexualized European looking to get away from everyone. The film is filled with imagery of traveling and transition either by driving or walking. Even the film begins with iconic images of travel using images of Charlie asleep at a travel stop or with an extreme close up of Charlie's headlight as he travels on the highway. The highlands act as the frontier of Europe, the end of the journey for the characters.

Within that journey, Mackenzie's first feature film questions masculinity and its different stages. It focuses on the story of Charlie and Vincente as they travel to the northwest of Scotland. Charlie is planning on exacting his revenge on the pop star that stole his wife, and Vincente a half Spanish, half British male prostitute who slept with the wrong man's wife, is running for his life. As they travel across the Scottish countryside evading Vincente's hunters, their vehicle runs out of gas and they seek shelter at the mysterious Moor Lodge, where "Normal rules don't apply," and as its sign conveniently reads, you can "leave your troubles behind."

As Charlie and Vincente enter into the Moor Lodge, the walls are filled with an assortment of stuffed birds. Migratory birds are nature's iconic image of migration, and showing them in a taxidermied state underscores the notion that they have reached their final destination and are preserved there. In contrast to the journey motif, at the funeral of the house matriarch, the residents of the Moor Lodge are asked to walk across a bed of flaming coals. The only one who does attempt the coal walk is Magnus, the one character who is the most resistant to moving past his own personal demons.

On the estate, Charlie and Vincente meet with an eccentric mix of residents who are all trying to cope with their various mental and emotional afflictions with the help of the head of the household and their counselor, Ruaridh. In particular, they meet Claire, an emotionally scarred woman, who witnessed the murder of a friend at the hands of her jealous husband. There is also the ghost of young Flora, a depressed young girl who attempted to kill herself, but was killed by her father Magnus, the deerstalker of the estate. All of the residents have all been forced to the fringes of civilization, because their differing afflictions are deemed unacceptable by the outside world and look to the Moor Lodge as a place of refuge.

The Last Great Wilderness focuses on the lives of three men who are all in the middle of individual crisis of manhood. The crisis is heightened more when characters like Ruaridh references icons of Scottish masculinity like Sean Connery. First of all, there is Charlie, who is continually reminded of the loss of his wife by a hit song on the radio by his wife's new lover about her. Secondly, Vincente, is running to preserve his life and avoid castration by evading the enemies he has made as a gigolo, Then there is Magnus, the deerstalker of the Moor Lodge's estate, who is racked with guilt over the

death of his young daughter, Flora. Charlie and Vincent are two men who are complete opposites of one another. Charlie is a depressed man, whose sexual prowess is questioned because his wife left him, and Vincente himself, the exotic Spaniard, whose sexual prowess has made him a marked man. Both men are coded as men who are struggling with their identities, which are linked to their masculinity. For Charlie, he has to be loved and be a sexual conqueror, which he accomplishes with the guarded and emotionally scarred Claire. For Vincente the change is in the opposite direction. Originally, where women have been a source for his profit and pleasure, everything changes when he continuously encounters the ghost of a Flora, Magnus' daughter. His power is clearly diminished when he has a sexual encounter with Morag, a nymphomaniac and resident of the lodge. As the night winds down, Morag and Vincente begin to partake in sex in her room, but midway through the act, the ghost of Flora, walks through the room and is only seen by Vincente. Out of fright and amazement, he loses his interest, which angers Morag who scoffs at the notion that this was a man who was paid for his sexual ability.

Their identities as men are further called into question following the death of the house matriarch, Ellie. She had requested a party in her honor where all men dress like women and vice versa. While Claire dresses Charlie, the two make love, and in the middle of a tear-fueled sex scene, Charlie begins to reclaim who he once was. It is the beginning of a relationship where both characters can help each other to heal. He becomes more open and less rigid and now has the ability to listen and dance to the song that was written about his wife.

Vincente on the other hand, further descends into the softening of his

masculinity. As he puts on his white dress, scarf, and applies lipstick while looking into a mirror, he is visited again by the mysterious ghost of Flora that leads him to Ruaridh's room. In his room, Ruaridh has taped his sessions with all of his patients, including young Flora before her death. Vincente has become obsessed with her, and begins to weep over the young woman. The ability that Vincente once had of not caring for women is now gone.

Finally there is the grief stricken Magnus, who cannot cope with the loss of his daughter in a house fire on the property. Fearing that his daughter would leave him he locked her in her room every night, but as their house caught on fire, she was trapped in her room. Unable to rescue her, and to keep her from suffering, he shot her through her bedroom window. Since the accident, Magnus has continuously blamed himself for her death, and is unable to shoot any of the game on the estate. For his position as deerstalker on the estate, he is in charge patrolling the estate's countryside and monitoring the health and safety of the livestock on the property. The image of the deerstalker harkens back to the Highland "Tartanry" image of Scotland with the noble highlander, the iconic image of Scottish masculinity, but it is an image that Magnus cannot uphold. He cannot kill a single deer on the property; he lives in seclusion in a trailer out in the wilderness where he mourns his daughter daily. He complains to Charlie and Vincente that he cannot escape the smell of the fire. He surrounds himself with pictures of her. When Vincente finds a picture of Flora in his trailer and realizes whose ghost he is seeing, Magnus snatches it away from him, securing it from him. Again at the fire walking ceremony celebrating the life of the recently deceased matriarch of the Moor Lodge, Ellie, all the Lodge residents except for Magnus walk

across the fiery coals. Instead, Magnus wanders away from the group to find the grave of his daughter and begins to weep. Finally, when Magnus discovers that Flora was once a patient of Ruaridh for depression and thoughts of suicide, he storms off into the night, and violently lashes out at Vincente and later Charlie, who come to help him. The next morning he breaks down into alcohol induced hysterics and finally realizes what he did was not murder, but he did what he did because he loved her and wanted to keep Flora from suffering. Ignoring any chance to keep the image of a strong Scottish man, Magnus breaks down to Charlie who helps him realize it was not his fault.

The Last Great Wilderness is a film about transitions and journeys, both physical and psychological. In contrast to the two earlier films, Mackenzie's work is a study of men in different stages of transitions. They are all initially stuck in a stagnated existence, but are able to escape from it.

## Conclusion

All three of these films deal with different depictions of the Scottish male, but are all related in the tendency of the characters to violence, substance abuse, and shame. In Ratcatcher, James' father epitomizes the most stereotypical image of the Scottish three films, who feels no need to change his life. With 16 Years of Alcohol, you have Frankie, who tries to rise above his lot in life, but cannot escape who he is. Finally in The Last Great Wilderness, everything becomes a bit more confused with three men in crisis. You have masculine characters that are softened, but they have to reclaim their masculinity before their crisis can be solved. These films are great examples of differing levels of shame in the Scottish male, and how they deal with it.

# CHAPTER 3

## CHAOS VERSUS SECURITY: WOMEN IN CONTEMPORARY SCOTTISH CINEMA

The role of the Scottish male is often the noble savage of the Scottish highlands or the gritty 'Hard Man' of the urban centers. These images reflect an iconography of strength, skill, and the prowess of manhood, but when it comes to the women in this patriarchal society, both the depiction and the experience are quite different. As Myra MacDonald said, women act as a "dumping ground for all the values society wants off its back but must be perceived to cherish" (MacDonald from McArthur 118). While men are seen as the driving force of the empire, women are the moral guardians of the nation, the iconic image of everything the Scottish hold dear (Petrie Contemporary Scottish Fictions 65).

For Scottish men, there is a sense of stagnation. It is a fear of change that harkens back to the past and leads to power struggles among men looking to keep the control they once held and are now losing. In contrast to this masculine stagnation, women in many recent working class depictions are the more progressive of the two, especially in British films of the 1990s like The Full Monty and Scottish films like Shallow Grave (1994) and Morvern Callar (2001), in which women become stronger and men softer. The roots of this separation lay in the early 1980s. Scottish filmmaker Bill Forsyth's second film Gregory's Girl (1981) was one of the first movies to demystify "maleness" by having a girl as the school's best soccer player, while Gregory, the title character, is an awkward teenage boy who cannot communicate with girls (Petrie 54).

To interpret the significance of these separate depictions, we must first consider the actual roles men and women play in Scotland itself. In the working class districts of

the north, women had to find work to supplement the income of their husbands and support their families. Over the last half century there has been a "steady rise in women's employment," but with that steady increase, women "continue to be over-represented in part-time, temporary, low-paid or low-status jobs" (MacInnes 110-1). Lower income jobs for women have continued the perception of reliance on men as the breadwinners of the family.

In a 1994 study analyzing the views in Great Britain and Europe of a man's role as a breadwinner, those polled in Scotland were less likely to agree that "a man's job is to earn money" and "a woman's job is to look after the home and family" than any other region in the British Isles (MacInnes 116). Scotland was also more progressive when it came to women choosing between children and working than their English counterparts. In addition, the younger and more educated respondents were more likely to disagree with the statements.

Expanded options for employment and richer lifestyles have given women an exit from the confines of masculine dependence. Women would no longer be silenced by the system, and, as Barbara Hobson wrote, this new voice was an alternative to loyalty (Hobson). Growing employment (albeit at a lower pay rate) and educational opportunities have allowed women to break free from male dominated environments and present a new vision of Scotland. Within these growing opportunities, there is a point of contention between the older generation's views and the new Scotland. It was likely these conservative views shaped the reality of the younger generations and led them to question their progress.

While greater employment and educational opportunities seem like a nation

moving in the right direction, women are subject to patriarchal dominance. In Britain, young women have historically and to this day been the victims of sexual and emotional abuse by men, especially in the impoverished areas like Glasgow. In mining communities, similar to other working class cities, men were to be pampered by their wives because of the dangerous nature of their work (Gordon Hall). With their diminishing role as providers, men are still using sex as a means of establishing their dominance, and women are using sex to try and secure male companionship. Sadly, many Scottish teenage girls believe that sex is their duty to men (MacDougall 178). This increased sexual activity in Scotland, and in the rest of the United Kingdom, has led to one of the highest rates of teen pregnancy in the world. The first worldwide survey of the sexual activity of young girls showed that 87 percent of the 41,700 children born to mothers aged 15 to 19 years old in the United Kingdom were born outside of marriage. These figures are higher than many third world and developing countries, and is also significantly than those in the United States, which stands at 62 percent. Furthermore, the Scottish Health Statistics of 1997 show that pregnancies in girls aged 13 to 15 had risen by 10 percent to 916, the highest number in a decade (MacDougall 178). It would appear that the statistics indicate that women in Great Britain, and particularly in Scotland, are being taken advantage of by their male counterparts.

## Scottish Identity and the Female Predicament

The Scottish national identity is seen as a split identity that is full of binaries. The difference between the masculine and feminine experience in Scotland is very indicative of these binaries. While it is true that identity is always in flux, many have

argued that Scottish identity is also very schizophrenic. G. Gregory Smith attempted to identify the schizophrenic nature of the Scottish identity in 1919 with the theory of the caledonian antisyzygy, an internal struggle in Scottish characters to find who they really are.

We then have Ken Simpson's binary, bluster and cringe. On the one hand, bluster is the half of the Scottish identity that boasts loudly about the great gifts of the Scots to the modern world. Masculine identity can be linked to bluster, the boisterous Scotsman who is constantly looking backwards. On the hand there is cringe, the quiet and embarrassed half. Cringe is a secondary identity regulated to the background, and he is the more introverted of the two, not wanting to draw attention to himself. He represents the female experience. Of the two, he is the more feminine, especially when he is associated with Scotland's neighbor to the south, England. Cringe is more of a cultural and emotional center, as opposed to the inward looking bluster. Most of all, cringe lives in fear, a fear of who they both are, a fear of stepping out and drawing attention to themselves, and a fear of moving on.

The stasis of masculinity that bluster represents has helped foster a stasis in the female identity as well. Women are expected to be subservient to men, but they are also the cherished icon of virtue and sanctity, which makes them slaves to men's power and desires. Scotland's long history with Calvinism under John Knox stresses these predestined positions that give everyone their place, and in which women are stuck under men. For women, there are two aspects of the Scottish identity, "constraining Presbyterian culture and the wild Scotland on the edge of the sea – where nature offers a meeting place for a new understanding" (Treisman 54). The sea and the wilds of

Scotland have become places where women go for answers. In many cases, when women try to break free of these societal expectations, they are “forced back into submission by men who figure centrally in their lives” (March 112). This dichotomy is illustrated through a desire by women to leave the safe confines that men desire to stay in for security. Often in both literature and film this is displayed with women who are more closely linked to chaos, facing vast open locations or ways of breaking free from prescribed routines. Often women are forced to the boundaries between the civilized world of order and peace and the vast unknown, such as the ocean or the wilds of the country-side (Treisman 54).

Cairns Craig cites the lack of a unified national language as a contributing factor to the lack of an identity, stating that dialect is a foundation of the self (Craig 93). On a smaller level, there has been a lack of a distinct, female Scottish voice in the history of Scottish writers, which has been dominated by names like Sir Walter Scott, Robert Burns, and more recently Alasdair Gray, James Kelman, and Irvine Welsh. As a whole, Scotland’s greatest heroes are male warriors, such as William Wallace, Rob Roy MacGregor, or the young pretender Prince Charles Edward Stuart (‘Bonnie Prince Charlie’). Then there were the intellectual heroes of the Scottish Enlightenment, like David Hume and Robert Burns. Nowhere in that list do we find a woman. Even the acclaimed and talented writer Willa Muir always took a back seat to her more well-known husband Edwin Muir, who with his book Scottish Journey became one of the first authors to attempt to catalogue and describe the Scottish national identity. Willa placed her own self-interest behind that of her husband.

This problem for women - having no heroes - mirrors a problem for Scotland in

general. The Scottish as a whole are searching for a hero to save them. As MacDougall writes:

> Few figures have fit the bill completely, so we elevate minor celebrities to a status they do not deserve or we mythologize the few genuine heroes who do exist. In this we are not alone; it's a recognizable part of the process and as necessary as the demythologizing which often follows. That Scotland has a tendency to skip the demythologizing, and to classify our candidates as either heroes, or villains, is evidence of our lack of faith in ourselves and, essentially, in our national identity. (60)

And with no heroes, Scottish women have no reason to look to the past for guidance. It is this lack of a past to rely on that Cairns Craig claims is part of the Scottish identity confusion. For him, Scotland has no true past because the Scottish are in a continual phase of destroying themselves or disassociating from their actual past and artistic identity (Craig 35). Perhaps it was Calvinism that forced the people to give up their old ways and beliefs in order to live as God's chosen people; or else it was their union with England, which forced them to give up their national identity for the greater British identity, which was really an English identity.

## Jackie Kay's Trumpet and the Fluidity of Gender

Women are essentially pigeonholed even more, because, as Craig further explains, often where language is a clear indication of social class and background, there is a stigma attached to how one speaks. When in school, one must learn proper English, and the local dialects in Scotland are essentially denounced. Recently there has been a rise of acclaimed female writers such as Janice Galloway, Liz Lochhead, A.L. Kennedy, and Jackie Kay, all of whom write about the female experience in Scotland. All of these authors capture the experience of alienation and the issue of

identity in a male dominated society. Many of these writers faced an uphill struggle. Galloway was never exposed to female writers in school and was ridiculed by her family if she bought books written by women, because, as her sister would tell her, “women canny write” (March 108). As a writer, Galloway’s stories tend to focus on women who are “alienated by the very relationships that should be nurturing them” (110).

Jackie Kay’s experience in Scotland is even more dramatic. Kay, a black woman adopted and raised by white Scottish parents in Glasgow is also a lesbian single mother still living in Glasgow (Lumsden 79). For her, identity does not sit in an absolute spot in the many binaries of Scottish identity. She once said, “I think I will always be interested in identity, how fluid it is, how people can invent themselves, how it can never be fixed or frozen” (Jackie Kay 73). Not surprisingly, identity plays a key role in much of her work, especially her first novel, Trumpet, which focuses on the death of a renowned black male trumpet player, Joss Moody. Upon Moody’s death, it is revealed that Moody is actually a woman. The novel travels through the different stories of the people who knew Moody but focuses on three characters: Joss’ wife, Joss’ adopted son Coleman, and Sophie Stones, the reporter writing about the controversy. Coleman is continuously questioning who he is, now that everything he knew has been destroyed. What he considered a normal existence is erased when he realizes his “father” was not a man, and that his ideal parents are now a mixed raced lesbian couple. Despite the identity change he must deal with and his struggle with how the rest of the world will see him, he works with Sophia Stones to set the world straight about the identity of his father.

Kay’s novel on the fluidity of identity harkens back to a binary of masculine stasis and the female desire to change. In particular, it focuses on gender and the ability to

change it, especially with Joss, who basically wills his female body into that of a man (Lumsden 87). Joss is essentially falling victim to the patriarchal order of Scotland: to be a success, she must play by men's rules, either by masculinizing herself or by becoming an object of desire and sexual conquest for men. Kay's novel is not alone in demonstrating this element of gender and body changeability. Elements of it appear in films like Lynne Ramsay's Morvern Callar and Auerbach's Dear Frankie.

These same elements that many female writers address in their novels are also addressed in many Scottish films. Morvern Callar, the title character of Lynne Ramsay's second film, is a young girl who has lost her boyfriend. Completely destabilized by his suicide, she begins to disconnect from the world around her. Peter Mullan's The Magdalene Sisters features three women who have been effectively banished to the Magdalene launderettes for wayward women run by the Catholic Church of Ireland. Chastised as fallen women and alienated from the rest of the world, the three victims are forced to live in a prison-like environment. Sharman MacDonald's play The Winter Guest, which later became a film directed by Alan Rickman, follows numerous characters in a coastal Scottish town. First there is Francis, who must deal with the recent death of her husband and her mother who comes to help her daughter cope. Then there are Chloe and Lily, two elderly women who travel around to other people's funerals to deal with their own upcoming mortality. Finally there is Francis' son, Alex, who cannot connect with his mother and was constantly neglected by both of his parents (Treisman 58). All of these characters turn to the sea for answers and the realization of their problems.

It is possible to view these characters in terms of Lacanian mirror theory, in which

turning to water is a means of reflection. In Lacan's mirror theory, a fragmented identity attempts to identify itself with an image of wholeness found in a mirror reflection. In the end, since the mirror image is not a true representation of the identity, the identity becomes alienated from itself. This alienation is a further point of contention for the feminine identity in Scotland. When there is no physical mirror for these characters, they evaluate their identities in the context of their surroundings. In the case of Joss in Trumpet, the image that Joss and his family identify with is Joss as a jazz musician. Joss and his wife have created an image of their lives as a married man and woman with a son, but once the reality of Joss' sex is revealed, Joss' family must hide from the media.

In the 1980s, working class films shifted their central focus from the male working class hero to the plight of the working class woman and her struggles in a male dominated world. These films became generic hybrids of 1960s realist film and the women's film (Hill 174). Women in these films are often depicted as peripheral characters; as such they fit into their predetermined roles as servants in a patriarchal society.

Throughout these films, the female characters often feel shame upon encountering the disapproving look of those around them, or in the case of Morvern Callar, the lack of a returned look. They are searching for acceptance but are unable to gain it. Just like in the works of Janice Galloway, these women are "alienated by the very relationships that should be nurturing them" (March 110). In Morvern Callar, a young girl who loses her boyfriend, and begins to explores her surroundings by losing all previous attachments. Peter Mullan's The Magdalene Sisters tells the story of three

women who have been effectively banished from their communities by a rigid patriarchal order. The three women are alienated because of societies' fear of change. The image of the alone woman is also evident in Dear Frankie, in which the mother of a deaf little boy named Frankie tries to hide the identity of her son's father by hiring an outsider to play the boy's father. Out of fear for the shame and disappointment Frankie could face, she is forced to perpetuate a lie to make her son happy. Afraid of disapproving looks, these women are forced into these unhealthy and stagnant situations. Thus, they are forever stuck in this perpetual stasis and have little chance of escape.

## Morvern Callar

Lynne Ramsay's second feature film, Morvern Callar, based on the novel by Alan Warner, is the story of a young girl, Morvern, who wakes up on Christmas morning to find that her boyfriend has committed suicide leaving her an unpublished manuscript. Morvern starts a "detachment and obsessive fascinations with the surface of her world" (Petrie - Contemporary Scottish Fictions 105), as she becomes fascinated with objects often not seen. She never fully deals with the loss of her boyfriend and immerses herself into a catatonic state. The only masculine role of any major significance is Morvern's boyfriend, James Gillespie (incidentally the same name as little boy in Ramsay's film Ratcatcher), who is dead before the film even begins. James is a provider for Morvern, giving her money and an escape from her monotony as an ordinary grocery store clerk. His influence is positive, disregarding that he accomplishes it through the clichéd artist's claim to fame: committing suicide. His dead

body lying in the middle of their apartment, and the letter and Christmas gifts he left behind for Morvern all characterize his voice in the film, the only male voice of importance. All of the other masculine roles are mostly filled with nameless young men who are only concerned with partying in Scotland and in Spain or using Morvern and her friend Lanna for their own gratification.

Throughout the film, the fluidity of gender and control come into question, as does the ability to switch back and forth between genders. Morvern herself is often passing back and forth between feminine and masculine traits (Petrie 105). Morvern is not a whole person by herself; she is a very much a codependent person looking for security from others. After the loss of James, she initially seeks refuge with Lanna, her best friend. With the loss of James, she loses her other half and her source of monetary and emotional support. Financially, he has only left her enough money to take care of his body and an unpublished manuscript with instructions for getting it published. By sending off the manuscript with her own name on it, Morvern begins the process of becoming James and in a sense filling his masculine identity.

First, she takes his voice by claiming his words as her own. Second, she discovers his bank card and takes all of his money. Third, she removes the body from her apartment floor by dismembering it and cleans any evidence of his death there. During the process of dismemberment, Morvern is clothed only in her underwear, sunglasses, and the cassette player he gave her for Christmas (Johnson). As she begins to slowly cut away at the body, immersed in the music, she is sprayed with his blood, a symbol of the transfer of his role unto her. The destruction of his body allows her to gain his identity through a macabre baptism. Finally, she carries him out into the

Scottish wilderness and buries him. This immersion in the highlands furthers her gender change with its iconic image  as a location it is both associated with feminine traits, as well as that of the noble highlander.

Soon afterwards, Morvern becomes a provider and someone with control when she enters into a deep, pseudo-lesbian relationship with Lanna. She is never completely secure, either in the role of power she now possesses or in the old role that she once held. She is stuck somewhere in the middle. With the pseudo-lesbian relationship, Morvern is taking the masculine role as a provider for Lanna, and it becomes even more explicit when Lanna moves into Morvern's apartment. One night in the bed that they now share, Lanna, out of guilt, reveals to Morvern that she and James once slept together, thus furthering even more Morvern's role-switching with James.

The fluidity of gender is further demonstrated during a sex-, drugs-, and alchohol-filled trip to Spain with Lanna, which Morvern pays for with the money she stole from James. During one of the spring break-like games of debauchery and sexuality their resort holds, Morvern and Lanna are watching a yellow sack by the pool. Two figures, a young man and a woman, are stumbling around inside, prompted by a resort employee with a megaphone.  When the unseen couple runs out of time, the bag is pulled down to reveal that they have switched bathing suits. The young woman is half naked in the man's swimming trunks, and the man is standing in her bikini much to the celebration of the cheering crowd (incidentally, in the book by Alan Warner, it is Morvern herself who takes part in the game). The look on the woman's face is one of total humiliation, and it is matched by Morvern as she watches the whole thing with a lost, bewildered expression.

In the next scene, Lanna and Morvern are standing in a bathroom talking to two men; in a background corner stands the same girl from the game, in an almost catatonic state. Morvern, ignoring the flirtatious small talk between Lanna and the men, walks towards the wall. In the frame, Morvern is on the left, a bathroom mirror is on the right, and centered in the back is the girl. Morvern looks into the mirror and leans forward, obscuring the view of the girl, and her reflection in the mirror is doubled. When she twists to look at the girl, the camera closes in on the girl and then reverses back to Morvern. In the metaphorical game of switching identities, she is now the girl. It is a point of confrontation for Morvern, who is struggling with her inability to become comfortable in her new role.

Throughout the film with the gender role of Morvern constantly switching positions, the use of the gaze also changes. Laura Mulvey describes in her seminal essay, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” how “the determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure... In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness” (Mulvey). The nature of the gaze and the need to satisfy it and gain its returned gaze factors into many scenes. First, at the party that Morvern and Lanna attend at the beginning of the film, Morvern breaks away from the group, traveling to the ocean shore in the dark, facing the vastness of the sea, and embracing the unknown with the chaos of the party behind her. Out of the darkness, a spotlight from a passing boat shines on the coast, and Morvern stands eerily silent in the dark. The light stops on her as an old man on the boat spots her. Morvern lifts up her skirt and reveals her underwear to this

passing voyeur, trying to keep his attention, trying to find someone else. She's looking for the fulfillment of a reacting male gaze, because she can no longer get it from James, a "crisis presented by the removal of his returned look, the loss of his engagement" (Johnson).

Until that point of the film, Morvern has only been seen in two different settings, either in James's direct presence, or in total isolation around town, looking for a way to "relieve her isolation" (Johnson). Now she embraces all of his Christmas gifts, like the lighter that she carries with her throughout the film and the music of the cassette player that surrounds her and stands in for James' embrace. These objects substitute for the gaze, and through them she drowns out the rest of the world.

Such isolation is a common effect of autism. Both hysteria and autism are representative of a traumatic experience, but "hysteria signifies a 'feminine' falling apart of the self," a loss of control over the situation, and "autism represents a 'masculine' contraction of the self pulling itself together," closing oneself off from the world (Scheone 126). Morvern never lashes out or loses control over her situation. Retreating instead, she again takes on a more masculine trait.

In the end, she falls back into the anonymity of rave culture, retreating to a place where she can reside in the background and effectively live in her own catatonic state. There she can be in the presence of others but is never required to meet anyone's gaze It is a place where identity is nothing more than a passing glance, and where there is no means of communication. Even at a Christmas party that Lanna and Morvern attend, they are unable to talk to one another because of the sound. The only communication

for Morvern is passing glances and inaudible dialogue. In both of her relationships – first with James and now with Lanna - Morvern is the silent partner.

In a very unconventional way, the dominant gaze is twisted by Morvern's inability to return the other character's gaze due to her own shame. It is shame that causes a character to focus on other subjects and the spectator to use different, unconventional glances. Recalling Mulvey, the gaze is the reflection of desire, especially from the male point of view, and the only way to break this structure is to challenge these notions (Mulvey). But the film does not simply challenge them by giving Morvern the control of the gaze; it also makes her the center of various masculine gazes. From the man on the passing boat, to the book publishers hanging on her every word, there is a desire to understand and know the inner workings of her mind (Peary).

Then there is Morvern's own gaze, which is caught between her shame and the fascination of looking at life from a distance. Morvern is very childlike at times and very naïve in her pursuits . As for her relationship with James, "He's an intellectual in a relationship with a non-academic, simpler, almost autistic girl," who often disappears into long focused gazes at the unseen (Peary). She looks at the world with a child-like fascination, touching everything from the cigarette lighter, to a hole in her sock, to the rug in her apartment, to the maggots on a carrot in the grocery store where she works and to the worms she sees in the mud of the Scottish wilderness. It is this continuous looking that links "the reach of her eye with the reach of her hand, merging the senses of seeing and feeling in an effort at contact and engagement" (Johnson). She is looking for any engagement she can find and often focuses on the unseen, like the worms and the maggots, or the cockroach wandering through her resort room and into the hallway.

These creatures are usually overlooked, much like herself, who is often overshadowed by other characters like Lanna. When she walks into the grocery store, she is seen and greeted by her coworkers and manager, but in every instance, she looks away, refusing their gaze. Morvern cannot stand to be looked at because she is alone and ashamed of being caught in the lie she told, that James ran away. Morvern's inability to meet the gaze of other characters is what leads her to gaze instead at these unseen elements, such as the maggot. Because of the shame she feels for lying and for betraying James, she resists what she once enjoyed and immerses herself in her own world. And instead of the view of the spectator looking upon the shamed woman, which is evident by another gaze, we get to experience the downward gaze and see what she sees.

As Liza Johnson writes of Morvern Callar, shame functions:

> Not simply to re-inscribe dominant relations of gendered power nor to reproduce infinite chains of negative affect. Rather, through this simultaneity, shame can be understood as a type of enabling knowledge by which to see and feel desires and attachments, even weird ones, with a kind of singularity that demands neither identification nor repulsion, that functions, perhaps, more like empathy (Johnson).

While Morvern is looking for the returned engagement, she is also uncomfortable with it when she finds it, and so she looks away. In the bathroom, looking directly into the camera with her naked body exposed, she meets the camera's gaze. After a moment, she closes her eyes to avoid the look and then reopens them to see if the gaze is still there. Seeing that it is, she rolls over in the bathtub and curls up into a fetal position to hide herself from the viewer. The viewer does not just see her as a shamed woman, but also sees how she is unable to break free of that shame.

## The Magdalene Sisters

Even though the Magdalene Sisters is an Irish story, the theme of shame exhibited by the three women, Margaret, Bernadette, and Rose, is consistent with the female experience in Scotland and the British isles as a whole. The Magdalene Sisters, eventhough it takes place in Ireland in the 1960s, is considered a Scottish film because Peter Mullan is a Scottish filmmaker, and the film was co-funded by the Scottish Screen. Mullan's film perfectly captures the shame and stasis felt by many of the women of the time. In all three of their stories, the women are the victims banished from a patriarchal society that celebrated the virtuous woman. The villains, the Catholic Church, led to the formation of Magdalene Asylums as a place to hide the women who did not meet that virtuous image. The Catholic Church is one of the most patriarchal intuitions in the world, and in Ireland, like Calvinism in Scotland, it controlled everything, including the local and national governments. Every aspect of the women's lives is controlled by men or de-sexed women (the nuns of the asylum). The whole asylum is a place of muted growth for its inhabitants, who are allowed no form of expression. They are forced into menial jobs, in which they effectively serve as cogs in a wheel of manual labor. They are dressed in muted brown clothes and forced to live in dormitories in which everything has to be in pristine order. There is no room for thoughts outside of the box; there is no room for chaos. Throughout the film, the women are constantly subjected to images of their entrapment in the form of objects crisscrossing the screen, in addition to the high walls and long corridors of the asylum itself.

So much of the shame faced by the three women results from the looks associated with them. Their to-be-looked-at-ness does not stem from lust or desire. The

whole film is predicated on the gaze and shameful look of the people of the town and the sisters of the Magdalene Asylum. The orphan Bernadette enjoys the attention of neighborhood boys she attracts. Unbeknownst to her, she has also gained the attention of the orphanage's priest. From above in his office, an angry godlike figure, he stands next to one of the nuns of the orphanage and the faceless duo looks down upon the young girl as she is pulled away by her friends.

Much like Morvern, these women are also looking for the comfort of a return gaze, but they are left hanging onto nothing, grasping for anything. While at a wedding, Margaret is sexually assaulted by her cousin. The whole wedding is a series of shots of the guests gazing at a priest singing an epic ballad while playing a bodhran drum. Visually the drum is an iconic image of Ireland, harkening back to a previous time when morals were different. Once Margaret tells someone about her assault, the news travels to her father and other male members of her family, then eventually to the church priest. As the men gather in a closed off room to discuss the incident, away from the eyes of the young woman, there are numerous exchanges of looks toward Margaret. The next morning, she is carted off to the Magdalene Asylum by her priest, as her mother watches from the window, too scared to say anything, while Margaret sits in the car looking out at her mother and father, also too scared to say anything. Margaret's mother has no voice, but sits silently in the house, while Margaret's younger brother questions their father and is allowed to have voice because he is a male.

Another example of the disgrace and shame that the girls feel is during the holidays when the girls are dressed up and paraded down to the local village, escorted by a pipe band under crisscrossing lines of streamers above the streets. At first the girls

are happy and look up, but once they get into town, their demeanors change when they encounter the look of disgrace from the villagers, especially the women. The girls are stripped of any shred of pride, and they cast their eyes down away from those whose are judging them. At the heart of the parade's pageantry, the pipers play traditional bagpipe music, again harkening back to the days when women were viewed as the icons of virtue and purity. Here women are on display for the public, being escorted like prisoners from the asylum by a military group to show the might of the system that imprisons them.

Even further degradation of the girls by the asylum staff is found in a shower sequence. Forced to strip down in the showers, they are lined up in front of the fully clothed nuns and ridiculed about their bodies. Their bodies are under the focus of a masculine gaze of a patriarchal order. The women are forced to run in place naked while their bodies are compared in breast size and hairiness. Again, the women gaze downward, looking away from their judges. The shame hits a crescendo as a young woman named Crispina begins to cry and cannot explain why when the nuns interrogate her.

Following the birth of her son, Rose is holding the baby in the hospital and looking for her mother to show her how beautiful her child is. Rose begs her mother to look at the child, but to no avail; the mother will not look at either her daughter or grandson. Even while she is being forced to sign the forms to give up her son for adoption, Rose cannot get her father to look at her.

Then there is Crispina, a mentally handicapped young woman, who is taken advantage of by the priest of the asylum. When a priest is caught in the act of raping

her, he runs away from the onlookers while she stands there screaming, “You are not a man of God!” She was looking to the priest and the patriarchal order of the church for comfort, but is instead subjected to the sight of the nude priest running away in shame. Further destabilized by the incident, she soon descends further into her mental unbalance and, like Morvern, becomes completely closed off and catatonic. Much like Margaret, she had a preconceived view of reality that, once shattered, shakes her identity. While Margaret only casts her eyes downward in shame, Crispina falls into her deteriorating mental condition. The fracturing of Crispina’s identity is caused by her inability to deal with the reality that she had perceived for herself.

Fear of the vastness of nature and the unknown is not uncommon in Scottish writing. The asylum is located in the countryside away from the local village. Once a gate is left open and Margaret has the ability to escape, but she is unable to. She is held back by her fear of the vastness and the unknown. She has nothing to look forward to; she knows no one and she cannot rely on her family for comfort. It is not until the end of the film that she is rescued from the asylum by her younger brother. Eventually Bernadette and Rose escape by exchanging their asylum garbs for modern clothes and hairstyles. They become unrecognizable forms of their former selves, which allows them to escape the order and restriction of their former lives.

## Dear Frankie

Shona Auerbach’s film is all about the fear of perception and acceptance. Throughout the film, Lizzie is constantly worried about her son’s general well being and how others will perceive him. She is constantly wracked with guilt about the things that

she has allowed to happen to her son and is constantly stalked, both physically and emotionally, by the events of her past.

Physically, she is running away from her abusive estranged husband, Davey, who is dying and just wants to see his son Frankie one last time. Lizzie left him when she could no longer take his abuse and the anguish of knowing her husband's attack on Frankie is what caused him to lose his hearing. Since then, Lizzie, Frankie, and Lizzie's mother have traveled around Scotland trying to evade her husband. Like it does for Charlie and Vincente in The Last Great Wilderness, the Scottish coast acts as the end of the road for Lizzie and her son, the point at which she can no longer run away from the past. To decide what to do, she is forced to look at the world she has created for her son, and revaluate it. But unlike Charlie in The Last Great Wilderness, she does not change, but instead tries to keep the lie going for her own comfort.

Emotionally, Lizzie lives in fear of Frankie learning about his father. All Lizzie wants is a normal father–son relationship for her child, but she cannot give it to him. She hides everything about their past from Frankie and has lied by telling him that his father is working on a freighter traveling around the world. To further the illusion , Lizzie has been writing letters to Frankie as this fictional father figure, giving fantastic accounts from around the world and sending stamps which Frankie collects in a photo album. Without a father figure for her son, Lizzie is constantly willing to defend her child because he's not "normal." She has internalized her son's predicament and feels the need to defend him by explaining that he is deaf but an excellent lip reader. When Frankie is turned away from buying cigarettes for his grandmother, Lizzie hurries to confront Marie, the shop owner. After explaining that she could not sell the cigarettes to

Frankie because he was underage, Marie comments that Frankie is “clever,” to which Lizzie quickly responds “for a deaf kid?” She does not encourage her son to try and speak, because it might give away his condition.

Lizzie’s constant fear of how others see her is part of her inability to confidently communicate with people about her past or even take compliments from men. When meeting her estranged husband at the hospital, she tells Frankie’s father that the boy excels at geography. Frankie’s father, Davey, compliments her by saying that Frankie must take after her; she quickly responds that he was the one who had the chance to go to a university. And when a stranger asks how could a man leave her and Frankie, she tells him that she was the one who left. Like Morvern’s inability to accept a returned look, Lizzie is unable to feel comfortable with the gaze of others because she is ashamed of her situation.

When she is explaining her plight to the stranger who ends up taking the role of Frankie’s father, she trembles throughout the conversation and is unable to maintain eye contact. She clutches her glass of water and Frankie’s letter, the only thing that provides her comfort and stability. When looking at a local pub for a suitable man to play Frankie’s father, Lizzie walks into the dark bar and is instantly met by the gaze of all the men there. In a POV shot, dark and slightly disorienting, she is the center of every man’s gaze. She is even accused of being a prostitute by the bartender. She cannot feel comfortable as an object of desire or lust. She runs out to a park bench facing the sea and begins to cry, looking out to the water for the answers she cannot find.

Lizzie and her son are continuously looking to the sea for answers, continuing the association with the sea for Scottish women. Early on, even Frankie’s young friend

Catriona associates the sea with women by mentioning that she once believed that the sea was full of mermaids. In addition, the film takes place in Glasgow, which became Scotland's iconic center for its shipping industry. Lizzie goes to the sea to look for answers for how she is going to fix her problem, and it is after she spends the night staring out into the port that she runs into Marie, who she confides in. And it is Marie who comes to Lizzie's aid by finding Frankie a surrogate father.

Furthermore, Frankie also has an obsession with the sea. Frankie goes there looking to learn who his father is. His room is filled with drawings of sea creatures and a map of the world tracking the whereabouts of his father's fictitious ship. Inside their apartment building, the stairwell features paintings of lighthouses and sailboats. Even Marie's fish and chips shop is filled with painted murals of the sea and whales. The sea motif acts as a visual signifier of the continuous ebb and flow of Lizzie's and Frankie's existence.

Freud saw the water as a place of rebirth for women (Triesman 54), and for Lizzie it is a means of transformation. To again reference Lacan, she creates an image or mask for herself so that she can communicate with her son. Lizzie uses the sea as a location where she can create a fictional father with fictional adventures. But in the letters, it is not the voice of Frankie's father on the stationery, but Lizzie's. In explaining her plight to the stranger, she claims that the letters are the only way for her to hear her son's voice. At the age of nine, Frankie is looking to identify with his father. He is constantly staring at the stranger and looking to him for approval. Lizzie has to symbolically assume another identity and another gender to gain the recognition of her

son. She has to assume dual identities to make her son feel normal and to have a connection with him .

## Conclusion

In Scottish culture, women occupy a precarious position. One moment they are seen as an icon of virtue and chastity; the next moment, they are seen as the negative opposite of men. In a nation so enveloped in its past, women are seen as a gateway to the future. Normally, that would be a good situation to be in, but with Scotland's fondness for its own past, women have no place. Reflecting the patriarchal society of Scotland, women in these films are reduced to peripheral characters, fit into predetermined roles as the servants of men. In the men versus women binary, women are the restricted ones of the two. Constantly they are told what they can and cannot be. In a society where everyone has their place, many women are unable to break free and thus feel trapped . It comes down to a choice for woman between security and the chaos of life outside the mold.

In Morvern we find a girl who has become destabilized and lost. She is constantly looking for something to fill the void left by her dead boyfriend. In the moment of lost identity, she takes on the role of her dead lover and her identity begins to change. In Mullan's The Magdalene Sisters, the three girls are looked down upon by their families and community. The women are imprisoned by a patriarchal system desperate to keep its power in any way possible in a backwards-looking nation. In Dear Frankie, Lizzie is afraid of what others will think about her son; she lives in shame that she has left her husband and lied to her son about the identity of his father. Because she is ashamed of

what she has done, she is unable to take a compliment from or even be the center of any man's desire.

All of these women are in a constant struggle between security and the unknown. They have been pushed into situations beyond their control and are ashamed of who they are. In the end, they must live their lives in shame.

# CHAPTER 4

## FEARING THE FUTURE: CHILDREN AND DEATH IN CONTEMPORARY SCOTTISH CINEMA

It is easy to see that the country of Scotland and its people are in the middle of an identity crisis, where both men and women are struggling to break free of preconceived roles in society. In films focusing on the lives of children, death and violence have prominent spots. In many of these films, there is often a connection with a child or childlike character who must deal with these traumatic events or is the cause. In Ratcatcher, the main character James is haunted throughout the film by witnessing the death of his friend, Ryan Quinn. Young Lex is responsible for his older brother Bobby's death, when he betrays Bobby's location to a rival gang leader in Small Faces. In Young Adam, the revelation of pregnancy eventually leads to the pregnant woman's death. One of the many victims of Renton's heroin addiction in Trainspotting is the death of a baby girl, who later comes back to haunt Renton in his post-heroin delirium. The title character of Morvern Callar matches that of a small child discovering the world around her. In British Cinema, the topic of children and their loss of innocence has been approached before. Ken Loach's Kes (1969) and Lindsay Anderson's If (1968) both focus on children in school environments, and both films use the school environment as a "metaphor for the nation" (Leach, 190).

In Scottish film, many of the characters experience a loss of innocence and encounter the grim realities of life when making the transition from childhood to adulthood. Similarly, in the early stages of presenting itself on an international stage away from mother Britain, it is a moment of growth for Scotland. With this evolution, there is an expression of loss of innocence and a sense of anxiety about the future of

the country. As a way of forming a new self, a purging of past identities is tested. A sense of shame about Scottish identity and a struggle or inability of escaping from past traditions is the ultimate result of this act of purging. This inability to escape is based in the general malaise or nihilism of the social conditions of the country. Contrary to their forefathers, the children are not breaking free from the same vices: they are succumbing to alcohol abuse and violence.

## The Deteriorating Conditions in Scotland

The national identity of Scotland has become identifiable around the world, but has led many to ignore the distressing conditions in the country that is in a state of decay. Beyond just a physical decay of Scotland within the inner cities, there is a sense of social decay. One third of all Scottish households are headed by single parents and substandard housing is affecting children's living conditions, where a quarter of homes are affected by dampness (Macdougall 73).

At one time the population was at a point of shrinking due to low birth rates and emigration (McCrone). Due to poor nutrition and early teen pregnancy, one in three children is born underweight, which could lead to a future of health problems like heart disease (MacDougal 173). In addition, one in every ten Scots is believed to live with some form of heart and circulatory disease (Heart attacks). With these statistics and the harsh realities, a future of poor health, and a lack of hope and optimism, a future of substance abuse may be eminent for these young children.

The iconic image of the violent soccer hooligan is often associated with Scotland; that stereotypical image involves a basis in truth. Scotland is one of the most violent

nations in the developed world. A study of twenty-one countries by the United Nations found that more than two thousand Scots are attacked every week. These findings are ten times higher than those actually reported in police records. In particular, the rate of violent crime in Glasgow is on par with the most violent cities in Eastern Europe. Furthermore, three percent of the Scottish public have been the victims of violent crime (Fracassini). Edinburgh itself has the highest murder rate of mainland Britain, with more murders per capita than London (Macdougall 69).

At the center of many of these violent crimes are children. Children, some as young as eight years old, have been forced in some cases to sign anti-social behavior contracts in an attempt to force an end their bad behavior in sections of Edinburgh (Youth of Today). Education is one of the best ways to combat the deteriorating conditions of the nation, but children's attendance in the school systems is less than stellar. In a study by the Scottish Executive branch, there were 42,990 cases of state primary and secondary pupils being suspended in the 2005-6 school year, with an average of 226 students suspended on each of the school year's 190 days of required attendance. In one in four of these cases, the child was sent home for physical assault on teachers or fellow pupils (MacMahon).

Most of Scotland's and Britain's violent assaults cases can attribute much of their violence to the nation's addiction to alcohol. With the high level of alcohol abuse, there is a high level of physical abuse and since the 1970s, the number of alcohol related deaths have nearly doubled, and that number is continuously rising (Tolan). From 1997 to 2005, there was a three hundred percent increase in the number of women admitted to the hospital for alcohol related afflictions, such as liver damage. In addition to alcohol

abuse in the general population, alcohol abuse for minors was also alarmingly high. There has been over 1,100 minors admitted to the emergency room for alcohol related conditions (Dinwiddie). Twenty percent of those minors were under the age of fourteen (MacDonell). In a 2006 survey by the World Health Organization, nearly half of all Scottish 15-year-olds drink alcohol every week. By comparison, in France, the figure is 23 percent while in Norway and Sweden is at 20 percent (Youth of Today). More specifically, an article in The Herald, a Glasgow-based newspaper, reported that 53 percent of boys aged 15 in Scotland have been drunk at least ten times compared to only 24 percent for the same age demographic in France. Young girls aged 13 in Scotland are seven times more likely to have been drunk than their counterparts in France (Macdougall 15). Scotland's figures are drastically higher than nations associated with high consumption of alcohol, especially where drinking within the family is normal. These conditions are accelerated with the accessibility of alcohol in Scotland; Scottish teens have some of the highest levels of teen alcohol according the World Health Organization due to the low cost of alcohol. This staggering statistic is in direct opposition to other drinks like juice and soda, which can cost up to eleven times the cost of alcohol (Tolan). According to 1998 article in The Herald, "The poorer areas of Glasgow simply do not have access to fresh food. They do not have cars to drive to the supermarket so they cannot buy cheap fruit and vegetables" (MacDougall 173). This excessive use of the dangerous substance of alcohol is essentially being used by these young people as a way of gaining confidence (15). In a nation where shame is prevalent, the idea of gaining liquid confidence from a depressant readily indicates of the mental state of the nation.

In his book, The Myth of Delinquency: An Anatomy of Juvenile Nihilism, author Elliot Leyton argues that delinquency is a reaction to both physical and psychological abuse. Key to the problem for many of these children is that they are displaced both from society and from their family environment. For children, there is often a sense of disconnect with members of their own families, especially with their fathers. For adolescent men, especially in these younger stages of growth, there is an element of searching for an object of identification. As stated before, the sole responsibility of the Scottish father in the family dynamic is one of financial support. He is not asked to be of any more service because his role as provider was much too dangerous and important to be concerned with the affairs of the family.

Identity for these children is formed by their relations to their familial structure. Scottish psychologist R.D. Laing wrote that every relationship “implies a definition of self by others and other by self... A person's 'own' identity can never be completely abstracted from his identity-for-others." (Self and Others). For Laing, identity is based on how a subject fits in other’s preconceived ideas and how others interpret the subject’s actions as creating the subject’s identity. This idea fits well into the class system of Britain, as the system does not tell someone what to be, but who they are. A person is stuck in a preconceived role. Furthermore, a subject posits their created identity against some accepted social definition of reality and places onto his or her experience and then acts as if that creation reflects their own experience (Politics of the Family 69) Laing writes that, “These signals do not tell him to be naughty; they define what he does as naughty. In this way, he learns that he is naughty, and how to be naughty in his particular family." (Politics of the Family 119-20). Through this form of identification,

there is no challenge to the social realities. Anything that could be perceived as different is a threat to the normal structures and thus leads to a stagnation in the system. Now, in the early stages of nationhood, Scotland must reexamine its past and present self, a nation that has essentially failed. Existing in this decay of both living conditions and in familial structures has led to a forced inability to escape these social conditions and to a younger sense of nihilism. Lynne Ramsay said that as a child, "you accept your environment" in describing her film Ratcatcher (Fuller). And within in this acceptance of an environment there builds this stasis that the Scottish male accepts.

## The Cinema of Lost Children, The Legacy of Douglas and Truffaut

Scottish filmmaker Bill Douglas created what was considered some of the greatest films ever to be produced in Scotland. In the tradition of the British New Wave, Douglas filmed three semi-autobiographical short films My Childhood (1972), My Ain Folk (1973), and My Way Home (1978). The films follow a young boy, Jaime growing up in poverty in a small Scottish mining town, growing to adolescence, and trying to make his way in the world while being continuously passed on to different individuals or families trying to take care of him. Initially Douglas had been completely rejected for funding of this trilogy by the Scottish Film Foundation because he was not presenting a progressive view of Scotland. Douglas' films depict life in post-WWII Scotland in a dying mining town where the prospects of escape or advancement are virtually non-existent, elements still prevalent in Scottish films today. The stark realism of these films would become the model for many future films such as Lynne Ramsay's Ratcatcher. As Brian Pendreigh wrote, [Douglas] was a filmmaker who depicted the world "without

sentimentality and with little dialogue, leaving the audience, like his protagonist, to work out what it means" (70).

Douglas' work owes so much to Francois Truffaut's film The 400 Blows (1959) a seminal film about children as products of their environment and the state. Truffaut's film was inspired by the experiments of the German Emperor Frederic II (Insdorf in Hermes). In an attempt to understand the need for human contact in the development of children, young children were denied human interaction. Orphans were selected and sectioned off from other children. The nurses of the orphanages were neither allowed to speak nor show any affection to these selected orphans. The results were disastrous; none of the children developed any form of communication and were unable to survive. Truffaut said "It is of this experiment by Emperor Frederic that we were thinking in writing the scenario of The 400 Blows. We tried to imagine what would be the behavior of a child who survived such a treatment, on the brink of his thirteenth year. On the verge of revolt" (Insdorf).

Truffaut's film has become the prototypical film of children lost in the system, with the iconic final shot of Antoine on the beach after he has run away from the boys' home. This image would be represented three times in Scottish films like Ken Loach's Sweet Sixteen, when Liam flees to the beach after murdering his mother's boyfriend Stan. A variation can be found at the end of David Mackenzie's second film, Young Adam, when the main character Joe is lost within the justice system after he witnesses an innocent man being sentenced to death for a murder he didn't commit. Finally, in Lynne Ramsay's Ratcatcher, the young James Gillipsie realizes the inescapability of his family structure and is so wracked with the guilt of his friend that he throws himself into the

same canal that killed his friend. For children in Scottish cinema, water has become a marker of death. As stated in earlier chapters, traditionally in Scottish cinema and literature, the sea has become a place for women to go to for answers but when children are involved it becomes a marker for death, manifesting either metaphorically like Liam in Sweet Sixteen, or as a physical death like James Gillipsie.

There is a growing sense of loss and the losing of innocence in Scottish Culture. The Scots are trying to deal with their current plight as Scotland emerges politically in Europe. For centuries, the Scottish population has been asking for self rule, and now they have it. It is a moment of growth for the nation. So in the nation, there is a sense of innocence lost and a sense of anxiety about the future of the country. It is no doubt that the cinema can air the anxiety of a culture. The horror genre is filled with instances of films playing on a culture's fears and taboo. It is not coincidental that the first major Scottish horror film Wild Country is a story about a group young of friends trying to save an infant child from an unseen feral creature tracking them through the highlands. There is an anxiety about the nation's future when so much of the youth culture is growing up in deteriorating conditions and is swept up in a culture of substance abuse and violence.

## Orphans

Scottish actor and filmmaker Peter Mullan's directorial debut feature film Orphans is a metaphor for the changing situation in Scotland. Mullan was born in Peterhead on the east coast of Scotland, north of Aberdeen, to a working class family. He was the third-youngest of eight children, growing up in Cardonald, a district in Glasgow, near the shipyards. As he grew older, he became involved with the local gang, the Car-D gang,

whose activities included skipping school, fighting with other gangs, chasing girls, and getting drunk. His involvement did not envelope his life as he was later asked to leave because it was not the life for him (Matheou).

Once Mullan left the Car-D's behind, he began his studies at the University of Glasgow, focusing on Drama and Economic history. With his educational and working class background, Mullan became an outspoken left-wing militant while gaining small roles in films like Braveheart, Shallow Grave, and Trainspotting. He gained critical acclaim as the lead in fellow leftist filmmaker Ken Loach's film My Name Is Joe (1998). Fiercely loyal to his working class background, his leftist leanings have been the focus of his films. Mullan himself said that "I can earn a middle-class income... but every part of my being, now, has been shaped by the 37 years of having virtually no income. We live an almost determinedly frightened working-class lifestyle, in the sense of being frightened of not working" (Matheou). Mullan's second feature film, The Magdalene Sisters, was a scathing attack on the Catholic church of Ireland and their abuse of power. While Mullan was raised a Catholic, he has considered himself a Marxist since he was 15. He doesn't think about God on a daily basis, focusing his thoughts more on politics and science.

His first film Orphans is Mullan's look at Scotland following the demise of the British welfare state and a way for Mullan to deal with the death of his own mother, which had left him as an orphan in his own way. Released in 1997, at the height of the devolution in Scotland, Mullan said that Orphans was a story about the death of the mothers of Scotland: Mother Industry, Mother City, Mother Church, and Mother Britain (Martin Jones 231).

Orphans tells the story of four siblings --Thomas, Michael, Sheila and John-- who gather to mourn the death of their mother. After a tearful goodbye, the four go to a local pub for a drink. During a karaoke performance, Thomas, the eldest son, performs a song dedicated to his mother and suddenly breaks down into tears. When Duncan, a pub patron, ridicules him, Michael, the second-eldest, attacks Duncan and emerges with a stab wound in the side. As Michael tries to stop the bleeding, the youngest sibling John vows revenge. As the night progresses, each sibling is forced into different situations: Thomas holds vigil in the church over his mother's casket. John searches for Duncan with the aid of a psychopathic fish and chips delivery man, Tanga. Sheila is lost in the city when her motorized wheelchair ceases to work. Michael suffers blood-loss as he tries to make it till morning so that he can pass off his wound as a work-related injury and collect workers' compensation.

Although the four siblings are in the early stages of adulthood, ranging in ages from early twenties to the mid-thirties, they are presented as children unhinged by the loss of their stabilizing force, their mother. In one of the film’s opening scenes, the children are all huddled around their dead matriarch. While the children are expressing their final goodbyes to their mother, the scene is filled with the sound of children playing in the background. In the next scene, the camera pans to the left, transitioning to a flashback where the children are much younger. Again, they are huddling around their mother seeking comfort during a violent storm. Beyond being visually presented as children early in the film, the characters are in a position of new identity constructions or becoming Scottish (Martin-Jones 231).

Michael is stabbed in the side in a bar brawl trying to defend his brother Thomas

from ridicule. Taking on Christian iconography, Michael is looking to be a savior by sacrificing his own well being for his family and finding a way to provide for them. It is a way for Michael to reaffirm his masculine role in a post-industrial society (Martin-Jones 231). This Christlike iconography continues when Michael falls in a cross-like form onto a wooden pallet floating down the Clyde river.

Secondly there is Thomas, the oldest of the children and the self-proclaimed protector of his mother. Thomas' obsession with his mother also pulls him into his connection with the Catholic church. He is the sworn protector of his mother's body in the church and the caregiver for his disabled sister Sheila. At a pub's karaoke night, Thomas sings a love song in honor of his mother. He is the one of the four children that clings longest to the older, traditional ways of mourning. For John, David Martin-Jones writes that he is the image of anger in the disaffected working class of the changing economic world in Scotland. Finally, Sheila is taken care of by the neighborhood as community reaction after the destruction of the welfare state (Martin-Jones 231). Furthermore, Sheila's disability also gives her a childlike quality.

The connection between children and death is further made visible in the pub scene where the siblings gather after saying their final goodbyes. The opening singer, an overly jolly man wearing a t-shirt with the face of a baby on it, is celebrating the birth of his first son and is singing a celebratory tune. The next man comes up to lead the crowd in singing chooses the traditional Scottish ballad Loch Lomond, which is a song believed to be about captured soldier awaiting his own death. When Michael is unconscious on a subway car in a pool of his own blood, he is awakened to find himself being watched by a young boy, who is quickly dragged away by his mother. And finally,

John tracks down Duncan, the man who stabbed his brother, Michael. As John fires off a warning shot, he is startled to find that Duncan is carrying his own child with him. In retaliation, when Duncan chases John down, he brings his child along. In that moment, John realizes that his 'Hard Man' tendencies have gone too far, as he almost killed a child.

For these developing, childlike identities, the death of their mother and stabilizing platform was Mullan's way of dealing with the changing environment in which he was living in. The national anxiety of the nation is visible in the four children's different struggles within the night.

## Small Faces

Small Faces is filmmaker Gillies Mackinnon's semi-autobiographical film about his youth in Glasgow amidst the violence and urban squalor of project life. At first it might be perceived as a reactionary film in the realist tradition, depicting gangland violence in Scotland; rather, it is a film characterizing the changing situation of Scotland. The film is about the death of the Scottish 'Hard Man' identity that the nation itself is transitioning from. For a country that identifies itself with a working class identity, the country is moving away from its industrial tradition to a service culture. The connection of children and death is obvious by the story of the film involving gang warfare in Scotland during the 1960s. In the turbulent times of 1960s, at the center of the film is the struggle between Scotland's past and future. Small Faces is a film about a young boy faced with the possibility of falling into the stasis of 'Hard Man' masculinity versus a progressive future through art and education. The struggle of the film is the future of

Scotland  Beyond the identity crisis, the film is an indictment of the decay of Scotland and the lack of moral judgement of the young Scottish male.

The film opens with Lex MacLean, a 13 year old boy in the early stages of masculine identification, with aspirations for a future in art while in the middle of a war-zone. Lex's environment and his ambitions set up a dichotomy of violence versus art; Lex's two older brothers represent both sides. Bobby, the oldest of the three students, is mentally disabled and is constantly having dreams of his own death. Bobby is a slow-witted bruiser for the local gang, The Glen. Lex enjoys art, but is caught up with the gangs when he mischievously fires an air gun at Malky Johnson, the gang leader of the Tongs. In return for protection from Malky and the Tongs, Charlie Sloan, the Glen gang leader pulls Lex and Alan into their gang war. Within the turf war between the Glen and Tongs, Lex is forced to betray his brother which leads to Bobby's death on an ice rink.

The Glen acts as the opposing end of the binary to Alan, the middle MacLean son, a young art student with a future away from the urban decay of the failed working class.  This binary is representative of a conflict between high culture and primitivism of neighborhood gang culture of The Glen. This is best exemplified as the two collide early in the film, when Alan and Lex are commissioned to add the face of The Glen's leader Charlie Sloan into a piece of art inside an art gallery. After the piece of art work is defaced, Alan and Lex with members of The Glen run around screaming, intermixed with close-ups of different pieces of art. The final shot of art is an extreme close-up of a painting of a man looking down in horror of the mayhem at the young boys below.

Like Lex, the character of Gorbals is unique due to his conflicting identities of the past and of the future. The name Gorbals is related to a Glasgow neighborhood

commonly associated with the Glasgow shipping industry and a working class identity, but as of recently has been a site of housing rejuvenation (Gorbals Area Housing Partnership). He is the person who introduces Lex to Malky, which leads to Malky's demise. Gorbals also proclaims that he's a pacifist and will not associate with his surroundings, the war zone that is Tongland, home of the Tong's, the Glen's rivals. He is a conflict of identities, with his pacifism and the imagery that his name invokes: a changing Scotland, trying to resist its past tendencies.

Aside from the depictions of Scottish gang violence, there is a further connection between childhood and death. Lex, the youngest of all the children gives the gift of death to both of his brothers, metaphorically and physically. In the film's opening, Lex bestows a gift of a skeleton to his brother Alan for his art studies for his birthday, further connecting the act of child birth with the image of death. For the oldest of the Maclean boys. Bobby's childlike mind marks Bobby as man much younger than his physical appearance. Due to his childlike mind, when Bobby find sthe skeleton under Alan's bed following one of his deathly visions, he destroys it hoping to ward off his inevitable future. Lex is responsible for the eventual demise of Bobby at an ice skating rink, where he is stabbed in the back while skating because of Lex's communication with the rival gang leader, Malky Johnson. Furthermore, Bobby's death is connected to the childlike activity of ice skating.

This image of death is also connected with water as Bobby's body is dragged across the ice as bright red blood trails his body. Whereas, water is seen as place of cleansing and rebirth. In Small Faces, the use of water is a way of cleansing of Scotland's past identity. This connection between water and death is further exemplified

between Lex and Malky. Even after Bobby's death, Lex vows to get revenge on Malky. After running away from home because of the shame of his involvement in Bobby's murder, Lex phones Malky at his apartment. With rain pouring down on the phone both, Lex threatens to kill him. The rain in the bright red of the scene connects rain with the bright red of Bobby's blood with the red paint of the phone booth. After a failed attempt by Lex to sneak into Malky's apartment, Malky chases him out of the complex with a shotgun in hand. As Malky looks out from the landing outside of his apartment, he fires into the air, with a blue light highlighting his face; again water is suggested by the blue light. Out of fear, and in an example of 'Hard Man' brutality and insecurity, Malky attacks his half brother, Gorbals.

After Malky's attack on Gorbals, the young pacifist sneaks into his brother's room and turns on the gas for the space heater, filling the room with toxic gas. After Malky wakes and lights a match, he is destroyed by the subsequent gas explosion. In the next shot, the films cuts to a movie theatre and a children's singalong where Lex has fallen asleep: again, the connection of death to the future of the nation is made. Lex soon learns of Malky's death and runs to his apartment. As he runs up the stairs, he runs through ankle deep waters flowing from Malky's charred and destroyed apartment. These two younger brothers murdered their brothers and thus are essentially purging themselves of being dragged into the entrapment of their brother's choices. They are the new Scotland that is responsible for the death of the Scottish 'Hard Man' found in both Bobby and Malky's death.

## Sweet Sixteen

Ken Loach's long list of films is a testament to his ability as a filmmaker. Although he was born and raised in England, his association with social realism films of the British new wave and political leanings have lead to his association with Scotland. This began as early as 1990 with his film Riff Raff about a Glaswegian construction worker played by Scottish actor Robert Carlyle. Since then, he has directed four more films: Carla's Song (1996), My Name is Joe (1998), Sweet Sixteen, and A Fond Kiss (2004) with Scottish characters and locations. Loach's socialist tendencies tend to glorify the working class Scottish people that he depicts in his films (Pendreigh 53).

Loach's film Sweet Sixteen is a coming of age story of young boy named Liam. He initially lives with his grandfather and his mother's boyfriend while his mother is away in prison. Looking to find a better life than his mother's, he moves in with his older sister Chantelle and her son Callum, while trying to raise money to buy a mobile home for his mother to live in away from her drug dealer boyfriend, Stan. Liam works his way up through the ranks of the local underworld, he is able to provide a home for his mother, sister, and nephew, but his happy ending shatters when his mother cannot leave Stan.

Liam, like Lex and Gorbals in Small Faces, is the new generation of the Scottish populace, and seeks to provide a new life for his literal mother and metaphorical matriarch, Scotland, away from the abusive and violent past that Stan represents. The film follows Liam's journey into manhood from his initially innocent child identity to his bloody confrontation with Stan on his sixteenth birthday.

Liam's journey begins with Liam and his best friend Pinball (again connecting Liam to childhood activities), charging young children money to look through a

telescope onto the stars. After not wanting to be an accomplice for Stan, while visiting his mother at the prison, Liam is kicked out of his house and his grandfather throws all of Liam's possessions out onto the front yard. Among his possessions is a broken space shuttle model, harkening back to the wonderment and innocence of the children of the opening scene.

Looking for a way to give his mother a better life away from Stan, Liam begins to sell heroin as a way of financing his purchase of a mobile home on a loch outside of town for his mother. As before with feminine characters, the loch is a place of the potential rebirth Liam's mother and Liam's familial structure, but in the end, water itself is a signifier of death and failure. For Liam, his success as a drug dealer has caught the eye of the local drug kingpin who decides to hire Liam. In his first test of loyalty, he asked to kill a man in the restroom of a night club. After the initial moral struggle, he charges into the restroom after the marked man before he is stopped before the deed can be accomplished. In addition to the obvious connection of water and the bathroom, Liam is congratulated by new his fellow "hard men" in front of a large cascading water wall in the night club.

In the continual Oedipal struggle between Stan and Liam for control of Liam's mother, Liam finally confronts his mother at Stan's apartment after her release from prison. She explains to him that she cannot just leave Stan. Much like the country as whole, with all its initiatives and progress, Scotland cannot escape its violent and alcoholic past. The struggle over Liam's mother turns violent as Liam stabs Stan and runs out the door to the beach. Again, Loach is connecting act of murder with the water, and connecting it with the death of Liam's innocence on his sixteenth birthday.

Referencing Truffaut's The 400 Blows, Liam runs to the coast as the child of the nation who has been lost in the system. As he stands on the beach, Liam receives a phone call from his sister Chantelle, who tells him that it was all such a waste, to which Liam responds that his cell phone batteries are running down and hangs up the phone. On that day, the innocent child from the opening is effectively dead, because his future, like his mobile phone, is about to die.

## Young Adam

David MacKenzies's third feature film, Young Adam is a gritty film examining the life of a drifter named Joe as he lives and works on a small barge with his boss Les Gault and his family that travels between Edinburgh and Glasgow. The Gault's barge, the Atlantic Eve, becomes a location for infidelity and distrust as Joe seduces Ella, Les' wife and the owner of the barge. One afternoon, Joe and Les discover the body of Joe's former lover Cathie floating in the dark waters of the river Clyde. As the police investigate, a suspect is arrested, but it is revealed that Joe witnessed her death, but is too afraid to come forward to save an innocent man.

The films begins metaphorically and physically with the waters of the River Clyde. The opening features a swan swimming among the boats in the putrid waters of the river and the canal. The scene is a mix of medium shots of the swan's feet churning underwater, with shots of the floating dead body of Cathie, Joe's former lover. Early on, there is a connection created with death and the waters of the river. The connection of the beauty of Cathie and the swan evokes a connection to the story of Zeus and Leda. Zeus, coming to earth under the guise of a swan, rapes Leda, who bore two children for

him. One of two children born to Zeus and Leda was Helen of Troy who led to one of the greatest wars in history. By the intermingling of these two images, an iconography of an unnatural sexuality is created; this best describes the masochistic sexuality of Joe and Cathie.

Though the wandering waters of the river appear to be a signifier for the drifter lifestyle of Joe Taylor, the Clyde River and the series of canals and locks that the Atlantic Eve voyage are a creation of man, whose banks and flow are not in a continual state of flux. They were created to provide an inland water route for sea-going vessels between the River Forth and the River Clyde at the narrowest part of the Scottish Lowlands. With built in walls, the waterways evoke the notion of the inability for escape for the Scottish male psyche. Joe, a young man with aspirations to be a writer and to travel to China, never achieves his goals and is stuck being a hired hand to the Gaults on their barge. Trapped, an inevitable sense of nihilism rests firmly in Joe and Les, who, upon discovering the body of Cathie, show no visible emotion. Les simply complains about Joe's inability to pull the body from the water efficiently.

Once the police take away Cathie's body, there is a manifest connection between children and death: as the police carry her body away on a palette, neighborhood children are chased off as they try to glimpse the body. Through flashback, it is revealed that Joe and Cathie were former lovers and that she had become pregnant with his child. When she reveals her pregnancy to Joe, he walks away from her and in her distress she tries to chase him, only to slip and fall into the river and drown. His connection with a child and the creation of life leads to her death, as expressed continually in the relationship with the imagery of water.

Upon Joe and Cathie's first encounter there are visual cues about their future and specifically about her ultimate demise. The scene is set on the beach with many families on holiday. Joe walks on the beach and looks out on the people there. He first focuses on a child playing on the beach and then turns his attention to Cathie sitting alone. Already, the film is focusing on the connection between Cathie and children. Joe walks over to her and sits down next to her without saying a word. She looks uncomfortable as Joe pulls out his pack of cigarettes, lights one and gives it to her. The two pass the cigarette back and forth as their sexual relationship begins. During their conversation, it is revealed that Cathie cannot swim. This meeting at the ocean front is used as the beginning of the eventual death of Cathie.

Prior to Cathie's fall into the water, Joe and Cathie engage in sex on the street running along the canal. The two strip out of their clothes and have sex underneath a truck while being bathed in a blue light as as both the street and the parked truck drip with moisture. In another flashback, the two lie together in a rowboat in the middle of a loch in the highlands, where she reminds Joe that she cannot swim. Furthermore, in Joe and Cathie's shared flat, Cathie challenges Joe's desire to be a writer, he reacts by throwing custard and ketchup upon her and proceeds to sexually assault her and then leaves. Albeit these liquids were not water, they still connect her to the water motif. Finally, after Joe attends the trial of the man accused of murdering Cathie, Joe exits a covered walkway at the courthouse into a courtyard, where the crowd is bathed in a blue light. In all of these images, it is Cathie's image constantly being associated with the water and her demise. Just like her character, she cannot swim and escape it, and Joe cannot escape his crimes.

Furthermore, the actual act of sex is equated to death. After the first sexual encounter between Joe and Ella Gault on the banks of the river, the awkward silence of the proceeding events is broken by Joe mentioning the write up about Cathie's body in the local paper. The most basic act associated with the creation of life is then juxtaposed with the image of death, Cathie's corpse. While on the boat, Ella, more pleased with her tryst with Joe, asks if he would like to eat. She asks if he would like for her to fry him up an egg and he declines. Again, one of the most basic iconic images of birth and creation, the egg, is presented to Joe and he declines. Even when that image is presented by Ella, it is presented with the caveat that it will be destroyed.

## Conclusion

Throughout Scottish film, images are presented that are constantly connecting the creation of life and birth to death. This connection between early life and death is synonymous with the nation's anxiety towards their upcoming future. Children are the primary connection between these images and creation of life. It would appear that Scotland is in state of an identity purge from their industrial past to more service based economy. Children, or the act of creating life are a way of are a sign of a young nation in the early stages of forming its identity. Children's role in the nation's shame is based in the horrendous conditions that they are being raised in. The horrible conditions lead many to worry about the future of nation. It is this anxiety for the future is leading to images of self-deprecation and shame that are prevalent in films from Scotland.

# CHAPTER 5

## IN CONCLUSION AND ONWARD

In conclusion in my findings about the nature of Scottish filmmaking, I believe that there is an ongoing struggle within the Scottish identity about its past and its future. Beyond the struggle of a constructing a national identity, Scotland is in the process of creating a cinematic identity, because a nation defines itself by what it produces in cinema. As John Hill wrote, “only a national cinema can adequately address the specifications, preoccupation and experience of contemporary cultural life” (Petrie - Screening Scotland 172). Then where does that leave Scotland? Film acts as a metaphor for the feelings of a nation and these elements have led to a fear within the country and feelings of shame and self-deprecation. Film culture tends to reflect the feelings of the culture it represents, and in the case of Scottish films, these feelings of shame and anxiety are apparent. The most blatant example would be Renton’s rant in Trainspotting.

For a nation whose myths and iconic imagery have permeated the world’s imagination, Scotland’s national cinema is creating a disconcerting image for the rest of the world to consume. The industry is falling back on gritty realist dramas that contrasts with the image that the Scottish tourism board and the rest of the world possesses. Beveridge and Turnbell argued that Scotland’s identity is based on a false identity. It is an image of the mythic Scottish highlander and alcohol induced soccer hooliganism. An image that is fueled even further by the Tartan army; a throng of traveling Scottish soccer fans wearing kilts and covered in patriotic face paint.

Scotland’s fear is associated with breaking free of pre-conceived cultural beliefs.

The problems lies with Scotland's preoccupation with its own past. The nation's mythical past is filled with mythical heroes who won praise by glory on the battlefield or in intellectual centers. For women, they have no heroes to look to for guidance and have continuously told what they can and cannot be. Even with the possibilities of a bright future for Scotland, there is a collision between an inaccurate history and their conflicting identities.

At the center of this conflict of identity is the role of predestination. Whereas as stated in Chapter 2, Scottish culture is a very patriarchal society and the role of the male in Scottish culture is often based on strength, skill, camaraderie, and sexual prowess. In British film as a whole, masculinity has been called into question, where men become more in tune with their feelings and are better equipped to communicate these feelings. In contrast, in Scotland, these depictions of men have not softened. In many of these cases the depictions have centered on men struggling to reassert his dominance in many powerless situations such as unemployment or facing substance abuse. The Scottish male's obsession with the past and pre-determined roles in society has led to a stasis for these characters, which leads to masculine figures harkening back to the glory days of the war time and post war industrial male, the height of the Scottish working class experience. Instead of progressing in this time of change, these masculine characters are unable to adjust and leads to feelings of shame about their lives in a world that is moving on.

Women in Scottish film, also feel the pressure of predestined roles in society. These preconceived roles are hindering the development of female characters. The problem for women is that they are continuously at odds with the stagnation of their

environment. Furthermore, they are forced to the margins of society where they are often left without a voice to express their feelings and emotions. Often women characters are forced to the margins or the wilds of the Scottish landscape as a place to express themselves or to find their voice. Whether it is Lizzie in Dear Frankie, or Morvern Callar, these women are alienated by relationships that should be nurturing them. For Lizzie, her relationship with her son should be a place of comfort for her, but instead it is a place of shame because she cannot provide him a real father. For these women, they live in fear of who they really are. They are forced to conform to rules of a patriarchal society who refuses to let go of its archaic beliefs.

For children, their role in the nation's anxiety does not fair much better. Children or the act of creating life is often associated with death. This connection with early life and death is synonymous with the nation's anxiety towards their upcoming future. With Scotland's new parliament and thoughts of full devolution from Britain becoming common talk within the country, there is a fear of what this new power will bring. As the Scottish people take more and more legislative power from the British Parliament and become more visible in the European political arena, they must concern themselves with the conditions of the country. The nation of mist and mountains and friendly hosts is in reality a nation struggling with poverty, poor housing conditions, and substance abuse. It is a nation on the brink of prosperity, but is unable to properly to provide for its own future, the children of Scotland.

At the center of all these film is a constant struggle between the future of the nation and its past. It is a struggle between stasis versus progress. In the these films, there is a conflict between the Scottish identity of the past versus what the nation is

becoming. In Small Faces, children are responsible for the death of the identity of the nation's past. Young Lex and Gorbals are responsible for the deaths of Bobby and Malky. Both Lex and Gorbals represent the future of Scotland as responsible for the death of the Scottish "Hardman." In this act of purging of the nation's identity, the Scottish are ashamed of their inability of escaping from past traditions, because in spite of their bright future, they cannot escape from the same vices of their forefathers. This inability to escape is based in the general malaise or nihilism of the social conditions of the country.

## The Future of Scottish Filmmaking

The future of filmmaking in Scotland lies in diversifying their output. There are now initiatives to change the world's view of Scottish "Miserablism." One change in particular is that happy endings are now a requirement for funding for short and feature length films. Beyond just changing the films in Scotland to have happier endings, there needs to be a change in who is making these films.

One of the keys to the diversification of the images produced of Scotland lies in the expansion in the role of women in the Scottish filmmaking industry, in particular with the expansion of female filmmakers, writers, and actresses. For female filmmakers, the future looks bright with the success of filmmaker Lynne Ramsay and producer Gillian Berrie. Berrie has become one of the most powerful players in the Scottish film industry. Berrie, with filmmaker David Mackenzie, have teamed up to form a joint venture to create Sigma Films, a production company based in Glasgow that is responsible for critically acclaimed films like Young Adam, Wilbur Wants to Kill Himself, Dear Frankie,

Red Road, and Hallam Foe. Sigma Films has a close alliance with Lars Von Trier production company Zentropa Entertainments, acting as UK co-producer on their feature films. Within this relationship they have developed female filmmakers like Andrea Arnold, whose first feature film Red Road, won the Special Jury Prize at the Cannes International Film Festival, won 5 Scottish BAFTAS. Arnold garnered herself a BAFTA award for special achievement by a British director/producer or writer in their first feature film. Sigma Films next project with Zentropa, will also be the first feature film of another beginning female filmmaker Morag Mackinnon.

There have been concerns about the low number of high profile female roles in the Scottish film industry. The concerns centered around the 2007 Scottish BAFTA awards where there was only one nomination for best actress category in a Scottish film. Sophia Myles' role in David Mackenzie's Hallam Foe, faced no other nominations for the award, which is not all that different than years past where there were usually only two nominations for the same category. For example, the same category for men in 2007 is a much more contested fair with three nominees: Jamie Bell for Hallam Foe, James McAvoy for The Last King of Scotland (2006), and Angus Peter Campbell for Seachd (2007) (Ramswamy).

The problem lies in the fact that most of the films produced in the industry are centered on the exploits of men, which harkens back to the industries association with working class dramas. There are the notable exceptions to the male centered dramas with films like Morvern Callar, The Magdalene Sisters, and Dear Frankie. Two out of three of these films are directed by female filmmakers. The further inclusion of women into the Scottish filmmaking industry is just the first step in the transformation of the

industry and the image it creates.

Unfortunately, any transformation in the industry might not seem likely. The life blood of the Scottish film industry is funding, and that funding is controlled by the Scottish Screen, whose job is to foster a cinematic production center and a film culture in Scotland. For a cinema to continue in Scotland, funding must continuously be secured, domestically or internationally. In January 2006, it was announced that the Scottish Screen would be absorbed by the Scottish Arts Council to form a new entity called Creative Scotland that will be under the jurisdiction of the Scottish Executive branch. It will be interesting to see how this new partnership will affect the choices made about the funding of different film productions. It would appear that the new agency would continue the modus operandi of the Scottish Screen by supporting films that will garner the most attention in the European art scene instead of producing the most financial viable products. So there will likely not be the too much of a difference in the cinematic output. Again, it it another example of the stasis of the Scottish culture, where there is a fear of change. For the industry to grow and have any chance of surviving, the industry must progress instead of relying on its past tendencies.

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