

**BIRDS OF A FEATHER?:  
A POSTCOLONIAL READING OF IRVINE WELSH'S  
*MARABOU STORK NIGHTMARES***

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*ABSTRACT*

In this essay Irvine Welsh's most disturbing novel, *Marabou Stork Nightmares* (1995), is placed within a postcolonial framework. The novel centres on the cultural and political context of the set of violent relationships that form the experience of a young working-class Edinburgh man. Welsh draws an analogy between the plight of Scotland's urban poor and the victims of apartheid in South Africa, a comparison whose appropriateness is challenged by critics who see in it an act of appropriation. But the real problem with Welsh's comparative class analysis is its gendered politics, exemplified by the way in which the brutal gang rape at the centre of the novel is displaced onto its margins.

Scotland's place within the British Empire, and its own colonial or semi-colonial status is complex and contradictory. Recently, postcolonial critics have begun to examine the dynamics of Scottish-British identity and Anglo-Scottish relations in the context of imperialism.<sup>1</sup> This has met with some resistance from certain quarters in Scotland: it seems that comparison with Ireland (as an early English colony) is unwelcome, and that comparison with any of the former black colonies is unthinkable. For example, Alan Freeman uses the truncated Burns quote —“to see ourselves as others see us”— to argue against comparisons with what he describes as “the barbaric other.”<sup>2</sup> While Scottish critics appear reluctant to explore the postcolonial option, others are more enthusiastic.

Berthold Schoene-Harwood suggests that the postcolonial route may prove more fruitful than the critical tendency to pigeonhole contemporary Scottish fiction as “postmodern.” Schoene-Harwood remarks that while postmodernism “has helped to

disclose and accentuate the Scottish national identity as a heterogeneous conglomerate of a great diversity of mutable discourses,” there is a worrying inclination to “disregard the unique Scottish postcolonial dilemma, which makes the construction and maintenance of a distinct national identity imperative.”<sup>3</sup> H. Gustav Klaus, who has played a pioneering role in the analysis of modern Scottish working-class culture, argues along similar lines:

This focus on the working class and the concomitant attack on middle-class values, singular as it may appear in the 1980s in an all-British context, is by no means a Scottish peculiarity, but widespread in what goes under the name of “New Literatures in English,” resulting as it does from the association of the native ruling elite with the colonisers.<sup>4</sup>

Klaus points to the key issue of class tensions being displaced in a colonial context. The postcolonial approach, which takes the national and political dimensions of a text seriously, is arguably more useful when it comes to thinking about contemporary Scottish fiction than a postmodern position that separates form and content, and privileges formal experimentation over political commitment. Furthermore, the reorientation of class presents two interesting propositions. First, the possible time lag between critical acceptance of a postcolonial approach and creative innovation within contemporary fiction that makes explicit use of the postcolonial framework. Secondly, Klaus’s comments pave the way for a re-reading of those Scottish writers previously read as peculiarly local exponents of the postmodern in terms of a broader matrix of political and creative relationships. Suddenly, the extrovert postmodernism of Alasdair Gray can be read within the same framework as the insular class-consciousness of Kelman. The work of both writers can be mapped within a postcolonial matrix, informed by an inside/outside tension that dramatises the uncertainty of the location of Self and Other.

The focus of this paper is *Marabou Stork Nightmares* (1995), Irvine Welsh’s second novel, a work of fiction which draws directly on Scotland’s complex relationship with imperialism as both coloniser and colonised. Arguably Welsh’s most disturbing work, *Marabou Stork Nightmares*, is an allegory of violence and vindication that unfolds on three levels, as a comatose hospitalised young man recollects his Edinburgh childhood while at the same time fantasising about a safari park hunt for a flesh-eating bird that preys on flamingos. Welsh plays upon Edinburgh’s imperial past and cosmopolitan pretences throughout his work, but his most provocative move comes when he draws an explicit analogy between the plight of Scotland’s urban poor and the victims of apartheid in South Africa, a comparison whose appropriateness has been challenged by critics who see it as an act of appropriation. But as ideas about Otherness become more sophisticated, questions of class, race, gender and national identity are being increasingly applied across cultures, and social and political segregation is seen to have various analogues. One problem is that the postcolonial field is largely conceived of in non-European terms, with the notable exception of Ireland, but Scotland too now has a claim to postcolonial status.

*Marabou Stork Nightmares* seems to be a far cry from the style and subject matter of Welsh’s first novel, *Trainspotting*, but a crucial point of contact between the two

books can be found in one of *Trainspotting*'s most quoted moments, the notorious passage when Renton denounces his friends and fellow Scots:

Ah hate cunts like that. Cunts like Begbie. Cunts that are intae baseball-batting every fucker that's different; pakis, poofs, n what huv ye. Fuckin failures in a country ay failures. It's nae good blamin it oan the English fir colonising us. Ah don't hate the English. They're just wankers. We are colonised by wankers. We can't even pick a decent, vibrant, healthy culture to be colonised by. No. We're ruled by effete arseholes. What does that make us? The lowest of the fuckin low, the scum of the earth. The most wretched, servile, miserable, pathetic trash that was ever shat intae creation. Ah don't hate the English. They just git oan wi the shite thuv goat. Ah hate the Scots.<sup>5</sup>

Having railed against Begbie for directing his anger at those who are different —“pakis, poofs, n what huv you”— Renton goes on to describe the English as “effete arseholes.” His preference is for a “decent, vibrant, healthy culture.” There's nothing wrong with self-loathing —it can have salutary political effects— but the depiction of others as “effete” plays into the hands of precisely the homophobic and exclusivist perspective that Begbie articulates.

Renton's expression of self-loathing brings together the masculinist discourse of colonialism (the shame is that Scotland's conquerors are “effete,” thus further undermining the masculinity of Scots) as well as the ambivalence about apportioning blame. Postcolonial critics have shown how colonial history and imperialist discourse work to justify the process of colonialism as one of necessary force, and to represent the motives of the colonisers as innocent, even benevolent. Imperialism has consistently presented itself as inherently “progressive,” a civilizing force brought to bear upon backward and incompetent natives. Renton's rant is double-edged: while it rejects the representation of the coloniser as the generous provider of a civilized culture, it retains the image of the colonised as weak and worthless: “fuckin failures in a country ay failures.” In *Marabou Stork Nightmares*, Welsh attempts a more direct and less defeatist analysis of Scotland's relationship with Empire. In particular, he seeks to understand and explain the cycles of violence which underpin a particular construction of masculinity in a colonised society.

*Marabou Stork Nightmares* is the story of Roy Strang, told from the depths of a coma after a suicide attempt, following his participation in a gang rape. The narrative switches between flashbacks of a traumatic childhood in Edinburgh, memories of an awkward eighteen-month residence in South Africa, recollections of more recent life as a violent Hibernian football casual, and semi-conscious descriptions of the comings and goings of his hospital room. Tying all this together is the surreal and imaginary quest to kill the marabou stork. The book is structured around episodes that are identified by their tone and often by changes in typography. Frequently, Roy's “Boys Own” adventure is interrupted by “real-life” invasions of his comatose body —the arguments of what he calls his “genetic disaster” of a family when they come to visit, or bed baths given by Nurse Patricia Devine— which are then assimilated into his fantasy. Similarly, the story of the hunt for the marabou stork synthesises the diverse aspects of Roy's experiences which are recounted in the (apparently) realist sections.

The tension between the different narratives dramatises Roy's struggle to keep control of his life and his story, to strike a balance between alibi and admission. Roy makes it clear from the start that the marabou stork forms part of both an escapist dream and "the personification of all this badness;" the fantasy provides a space to "work it all out," where there is "no comeback." Unfortunately for Roy it is all coming back, not helped by what he calls the "psychic gatecrashers breaking in on [his] private party."<sup>6</sup>

Roy's life is characterised by violence —family beatings, child abuse, sexual abuse, swedging (football hooliganism), rape and revenge. Whilst there is no omniscient narrator to draw attention to the links between the cruelty Roy suffers in childhood and the cruelty he inflicts as a young man, the novel's chronology implies a connection, reinforced through the dense texture of references between the different episodes, and the unifying thread of the hunt for the stork. Two of the most important chapters in this respect are "The Scheme" and "Huckled in the City of Gold," where parallels between different kinds of violence are most clearly drawn. "The Scheme" details life in Muirhouse, a peripheral housing estate in Edinburgh, which Roy describes as "a concentration camp for the poor" (22). Roy's tone is matter of fact throughout, from descriptions of children's games to "a bad batterin fae my Dad" (23). The dispassionate manner in which Roy alludes to this beating as well as a vicious attack by his father's dog (which he is forced to conceal) appears to underline the "normality" of this kind of incident in his everyday life. Later in the book it becomes clear that the events and activities in the scheme that Roy chooses to share with us all have particular significance. For example, at the age of nine, Roy is "charged by the polis for playing football in the street" (21). Whilst this seems to make a point about the criminalisation of the poor from an early age, later in the novel the idea of football as a symbol of resistance is developed through descriptions of his involvement with the Hibs casuals. There are also strong connections made between boredom, exclusion, frustration and violence.

A telling moment in "The Scheme" is a boxing match between Roy and his brother Bernard, presided over by their father. As Roy says, "his coaching advice was always a bit one-sided," partly because Bernard is not his biological son and partly because of his sexuality: "TAKE THAT YA FUCKIN SAPPY BIG POOF" (29). Bernard's homosexuality is a constant source of shame for the men in the Strang family. He is continually referred to as "a girl" or a "pansy" and his behaviour presents a troubling challenge to the images of violent masculinity that surround him. In particular, Bernard is compared unfavourably to Roy's elder brother Tony whose "Italian good looks" appear to guarantee his sexual success with women whilst his appalling treatment of them further confirms his reputation as a "real man." Bernard also prefigures the character of Uncle Gordon, although as a positive, if stereotypical, representation of a gay man. Where Bernard is open about his sexuality (or as open as the social context of Muirhouse will allow), Gordon is secretive, manipulative and abusive, buying Roy's silence with gifts.

Roy's relationship with Uncle Gordon is treated extensively in the "City of Gold" chapters, which describe the Strang family's attempt to escape the poverty of Edinburgh. Roy enjoys —and endures— a short stay in South Africa before his family is forced to return due to the behaviour of his father. Far from being the "City of Gold" his mother promised, Roy finds Johannesburg as drab and bleak as life in Edinburgh: "Close up, downtown Johannesburg just looked like a large Muirhouse-in-the-sun to me" (61). Back home in Scotland, Roy reflects:

South Africa was a sort of paradise to me. Funnily enough, I felt at home there; it was as if it was the place I was really meant to be, rather than shitey Scotland. When I thought back to Edinburgh I recollected it as a dirty, cold, wet, run-down slum; a city of dull, black tenements and crass, concrete housing schemes which were populated by scruffs, but the town still somehow being run by snobs for snobs. (75)

The Strangs imagine South Africa to be “a sort of paradise,” with jobs, wealth, sunshine and respect—all of the things that are not on offer in Muirhouse. Indeed, Welsh takes this opportunity to draw an audacious comparison:

Edinburgh to me represented serfdom. I realised that it was exactly the same situation as Johannesburg; the only difference was that the Kaffirs were white and called schemies or draftpaks. Back in Edinburgh, we would be Kaffirs; condemned to live out our lives in townships like Muirhouse or So-Wester-Hailes-To or Niddrie, self-contained camps with fuck all in them, miles fae the toon. Brought in tae dae the crap jobs that nae other cunt wanted tae dae, then hassled by the polis if we hung around at night in groups. Edinburgh had the same politics as Johannesburg; it had the same politics as any city. (80)

In this passage, social differentiation within Edinburgh is collapsed into racial differentiation in Johannesburg. We are urged to recognise “the same politics.”

A comparison implies parity, but Welsh’s colonial comparison works by equating inequalities, racial and social. Has this statement moved on from the self-loathing of Renton or is it a re-capitulation of a similar sentiment? Welsh claims a solidarity with Black South Africans through the naming of townships/new towns. The pun on Soweto and Wester Hailes develops the central point—that the “only difference” is linguistic: “the Kaffirs were white and called schemies or draftpaks.” To some extent this passage demonstrates the ambiguity of Scotland’s colonial status and the role of Scots in administering the British Empire.

It is instructive to compare this passage with an episode in *Trainspotting* that addresses racist abuse. Stevie, one of the novel’s young white “schemies,” is on his way home from a football match when he is assaulted by some opposing fans. Stevie brushes off their attentions, at least for the time being:

He thought they were going to come back for him, but they turned their attention to abusing an Asian woman and her two small children.  
 – Fuckin Paki slag!  
 – Fuck off back tae yir ain country.  
 They made a chorus of ape noises and gestures as they left the station. (49-50)

Stevie sees the woman as a fellow victim of the thugs, who had called him a “Hibby bastard” and “fenian cunt” in reference to his own team’s Irish roots, but his attempt at sympathy and solidarity falls on stony ground:

What charming, sensitive young men, Stevie said to the woman, who looked at him like a rabbit at a weasel. She saw another white youth with slurred speech,

bleeding and smelling of alcohol. Above all, she saw a football scarf, like the one worn by the youths who abused her. There was no colour difference as far as she was concerned, and she was right, Stevie realised with a grim sadness. (50)

There is no “colour difference” for the Asian woman, just as there was none for Stevie. The racial divide—the one erected by racism—cannot be crossed with impunity. In *Marabou Stork Nightmares*, by contrast, the colour bar is leapt over with suspicious ease. By conflating race and class—only the names are changed—Welsh’s declaration encompasses both fear and desire. Once again, poverty prefigures postcoloniality. It is when this displacement of class onto race is problematised by questions of gender and sexuality that the real difficulties arise.

Roy’s Uncle Gordon is described as “an un-reconstructed pro-apartheid white supremacist” (62), who is eventually blown up by an ANC car bomb. He represents both the deprivation of the Scottish housing scheme and the greed of the colonial authority. However, where the Strangs are seen somewhat sympathetically, Uncle Gordon is placed beyond the moral pale. Like Begbie in *Trainspotting*, he serves the structural function of the unforgivable, allowing the other transgressors to receive, if not sympathy, then at least some measure of understanding. Gordon’s jeep explodes when he is on a camping trip with Roy, an occasion which he has previously used as an opportunity to sexually abuse his nephew. Gordon’s murder leaves Roy unmoved: “as far as I was concerned Gordon was a sneaky, big-headed poofy auld cunt and it was good riddance” (86). The reader is left in no doubt as to the merits of Gordon’s abrupt exit either. His racist and fascist beliefs are stressed in order to justify the “terrorist” attack, but it is his role as a child molester which confirms the underlying proposition that “he deserved it.” Later in the novel Roy’s increasingly unreliable narrative returns to the subject of his relationship with Gordon, suggesting that his Uncle went as far as raping him. Gordon’s bloody demise is forgotten however, because in the context of resistance to apartheid it is read as an act of closure.

Although Welsh is deliberately linking different kinds of violence, he is also suggesting that some kinds of violence are justified by previous, more blameworthy acts of force. It’s a question of source and degree, but also ultimately of kind. The difficulty for Roy is that violence presents both the problem and the solution. The quest for the marabou stork is a quest to end violence through violence. “If I kill the Stork, I’ll kill all the badness in me,” says Roy early on in the book, yet in the closing pages of the novel it becomes clear that Roy himself is the stork —“Captain Beaky they used to call me in school”—and that individual acts of revenge or retribution do not break the cycle of violence, but merely prolong it. Roy is unable to break out of this loop which shapes and explains his personal acts of violence yet he must still take responsibility for those acts, something which he is apparently unable to do until his victim, Kirsty, holds him violently to account. There is no peaceful way out. Even his relatively passive suicide attempt is a failure.

The decisive destruction of Uncle Gordon is instructive. Although the reader is encouraged to identify Roy within a class matrix, the context of Gordon’s class background is strangely elided, overridden by a more explicit, racial discourse. Welsh presents Roy’s South African experience as one that informs his understanding of the

Scottish class system, yet the need to be outside in order to see in is strangely troubled by the figure —Gordon— that cannot be brought into either perspective. Berthold Schoene-Harwood suggests that Welsh recognises the extent to which Scottish sanity and (male) sexuality are on the line as a consequence of colonialism:

While living under the South African apartheid regime Scottish “schemies” may pass for legitimate members of the master race. In Britain, however, they represent a severely disadvantaged underclass, of which the men especially find themselves at risk of “losing their marbles” to the constant taunts and provocations of systemic emasculation.<sup>7</sup>

Uncle Gordon exemplifies the racist supremacist politics and damaged masculinity of an inferiorised and effeminate culture transported to a different colonial context, one in which the scum rises to the top. The gendered nature of this framework points to a lacuna in Welsh’s work, the question of female agency.

The first three sections of *Marabou Stork Nightmares* revolve around a silence, an unspoken event which Roy’s imagination is continually fending off. Numerous interjections into Roy’s fantasy narrative give hints of what is to come, particularly in the form of male clichés justifying rape: “she wis jist in the wrong place at the wrong time” (9), “she fuckin’ well asked for it” (177). Before the realist description of the gang rape, a chapter called “The Flamingo Massacres” combines Roy’s recollection of a night’s fighting with his fantasy confrontation with a pack of marabou storks, further delaying the supposedly “real” representation and revelation of Roy’s crime. The lurid description and guilt-ridden narrative exposure of this chapter work towards creating a response of both pity and horror in the reader. Even before we learn what Roy has done we have been given the means to understand or sympathise with the consequences. By seeing Roy first as victim and then as unwilling aggressor much of the emotional power of the following chapter is removed and Welsh appears to successfully demonstrate the culpability of Roy’s upbringing by focusing on the effect the rape has on him rather than on the woman he has raped.

The rape is continually alluded to throughout the novel but is never named until it becomes part of the system —it goes to court. The “naming” of violent sexual abuse as a political issue forms a major part of the Zero Tolerance campaign, central to the closing part of the novel. Zero Tolerance originated in Edinburgh in 1992, as a public awareness campaign which used the mass media to challenge male violence against women and children. It took the form of a series of striking posters placed on prominent display in pubs, shops, hospitals, football grounds and advertising billboards. Some of the posters contrasted “powerful black and white photographic images of women of all ages in cosy domestic situations with information about the nature and prevalence of domestic and sexual violence.”<sup>8</sup> Others were dominated by the Zero Tolerance logo, a huge letter “Z,” accompanied by statements such as: “No Man Has the Right,” “Male Abuse of Power Is a Crime” and “Blame the Weather, Blame the Drink, Blame the Woman... There Is Never an Excuse.” In the novel, Roy says of the Zero Tolerance posters, in a typically forceful style: “each slogan ripped through me like a psychic machete” (198). This signals the end of his displacement of the rape onto his friend Lexo as it becomes clear that Roy was not, as he says of his victim,

“jist in the wrong place at the wrong time” (9), but the main instigator of the attack. Yet the violence of this image demonstrates the extent to which Roy’s imagination is moulded in violence and remains closed to any other form of resolution.

The message of the Zero Tolerance campaign, which is included in a small acknowledgement before the start of the novel, is: “there is no acceptable level of violence against women and children.” Whilst the majority of Roy’s narrative can be seen to present a series of excuses, or at least a basis for understanding his brutalised behaviour, the Zero Tolerance campaign allows no room for discussion. It belongs to a different order of discourse, reproduced from the posters it is presented as a “truth.” In Welsh’s novel, Zero Tolerance functions as the social sanction which works where all others have failed. The posters’ words chase Roy from Edinburgh to Manchester and back to Edinburgh, and culminate in his failed attempt at self-destruction. Yet they also provide Kirsty with the inspiration to take her violent revenge. The rape trial demonstrates all the prejudices that Zero Tolerance tries to address. The rapists are found not guilty on the grounds that Kirsty was wearing a short skirt, had sexual experience and “danced with several men at the party” (208). When Kirsty faces Roy at the end of the novel, she tells him: “you raped me once, and with the help of the judge and the courts you raped me again” (259). Then she cuts off his penis and chokes him with it—a violent end to a violent life. Yet Kirsty’s act does not seem to be particularly empowering; rather than a direct challenge to a violent and potent male sexuality this is an assault on what she calls “a cabbage.” An act of personal revenge, it echoes Roy’s several acts of abuse, as revenge for the abuse by his uncle, and the rejection of women in general. Kirsty doesn’t even get to end Roy’s life in his imagination. In the final scene Roy recognises himself as the object of his own nightmares, the cruel and elusive marabou stork, and is shot by his explorer buddy, Sandy Jamieson.

In the end, what appears to be open support of a feminist initiative is transformed into a deeply misogynist message. Women are consistently denied their own voice throughout, beginning with Roy’s mother who is seen either as the mouthpiece for her father, or for a discredited popular culture, as she mimics the words to show tunes in a tragic Karaoke version of life; to the large and cheerful Valerie, Uncle Gordon’s black housemaid who gets a walk-on role as evidence of the hardy humanity of Africans; and finally to Kirsty, the butchered flamingo, a bloody symbol of someone else’s life. Even this essay, by following the trajectory of the novel, has marginalised female characters by concentrating on masculine identity. Similarly the shocking revelation of Roy’s misidentification—he is “Captain Beaky,” the leader of the gang—claims the narrative authority, for all its unreliability, as actively and exclusively male.

Although the message of Zero Tolerance is that there is no acceptable level of violence against women and children, Welsh’s use of the campaign seems to suggest that violence between men is tolerable, even necessary. The ANC car bomb which takes out the unpleasant Uncle Gordon is supported by the political position that the use of violence to secure freedom is morally acceptable. Similarly, the social politics of football violence operates as a justificatory discourse, Roy’s position becomes Welsh’s—swedging is a sport between men. Yet by drawing an absolute distinction between the rape and the other forms of violence in the book, after the efforts he has made to establish links, Welsh reinscribes the divisions between public and private,

personal and political, which have been used so often to protect men who assault women and children. The separation of the gang rape from politicised violence has a double implication: firstly, it mystifies rape, placing it beyond the socially explicable; secondly, it suggests that violence is only political on the proviso that it excludes women. In other words, *Marabou Stork Nightmares* presents a reconfigured masculinity, one which posits the idea that political change is necessarily violent, and, drawing on the damaging presumption that violence is an exclusive male preserve, effectively removes the public significance of women's actions.

Roy concludes that ordinary people, male and female, cannot break out of the cycle of violence into which they are born:

It just goes round and round, the hurt. It takes an exceptionally strong person to just say: no more. It takes a weak one to just keep it all to themselves, let it tear them apart without hurting anyone else. (264)

The double-bind presented in this quotation appears to confirm the impossibility of Welsh's position. The cycle is recycled. Schoene-Harwood rebukes Welsh for "failing to introduce a constructive, emancipatory vision of how the vicious circle of violence and violation could be broken" ("Dark," 155-156). Indeed, when Kirsty tells Roy "you've made me just like you... You taught me..." (259-60), the novel's constrictive circularity, its fundamentally homocentric premise, is brought home.

Welsh's division between weak and strong is as troublesome as his distinction between storks and flamingos, perpetrators and victims. The "weak" person is the one who displaces violence and thus continues it, but who is the strong person, the one who chooses to refuse? Welsh has offered us no such position in the novel. Is this then an expression of an idealised "other," one that cannot exist in an "inferiorised" society? Welsh's attempts to connect Black African experience with that of the Scottish working class are not undone by their clumsiness or inappropriateness, but by the intervention of a discourse of sexual difference.

The label "postcolonial" is not a badge of honour or of self-righteousness, nor can it function as a solution to the puzzle of any given text. Likewise the flaws in Welsh's novel do not prevent it from being read as "postcolonial" fiction. Rather, the disruption of a straightforward interaction between race and class by the exclusion of women from this experience points to cruces of complicity in such systems. The fraught matrix of class, race and gender addressed by postcolonial readings offers the possibility of recognising the process which prioritises certain aspects of social experience without discarding the connections made between them.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> For some recent attempts to map out the space of Scotland in postcolonial terms see Gillian Carter, "Women, Postcolonialism, and Nationalism: A Scottish Example," *SPAN* 41 (1995): 65-74; Roderick Watson, "Postcolonial Subjects?: Language, Narrative Authority and Class in Contemporary Scottish Culture," *The European English Messenger* 7.1 (1998): 21-31; Michael Gardiner, "Democracy and Scottish Postcoloniality," *Scotlands* 3.2 (1996): 24-41.

- <sup>2</sup> See Alan Freeman, "Ourselves as Others: *Marabou Stork Nightmares*," *Edinburgh Review* 95 (1996): 135-41.
- <sup>3</sup> Berthold Schoene-Harwood, "'Emerging as the Others of Ourselves': Scottish Multiculturalism and the Challenge of the Body in the Postcolonial Condition," *Scottish Literary Journal* 25.1 (1998): 54.
- <sup>4</sup> H. Gustav Klaus, "1984 Glasgow: Alasdair Gray, Tom Leonard, James Kelman," *Études Écossaises* 2 (1992): 31.
- <sup>5</sup> Irvine Welsh, *Trainspotting* (London: Minerva, 1994) 78. Future references to this work will be by page number in the text.
- <sup>6</sup> Irvine Welsh, *Marabou Stork Nightmares* (London: Vintage, 1996) 17. Future references to this work will be by page number in the text.
- <sup>7</sup> Berthold Schoene-Harwood, "The Dark Continent of Masculinity: Irvine Welsh's *Marabou Stork Nightmares*," *Writing Men: Literary Masculinities from Frankenstein to the New Man* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2000) 152.
- <sup>8</sup> Fiona Mackay, *The Case of Zero Tolerance: Women's Politics in Action?* (Edinburgh: Waverley Papers, 1995) 7.