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INVESTIGATING GENRE AND GENDER IN MENNA GALLIE'S *STRIKE FOR A KINGDOM* (1959)

John Perrott Jenkins

Abstract

Posing as no more than a whodunnit, Menna Gallie's first novel introduced a new and distinctive voice into post-war anglophone Welsh writing. It was witty, comic, affectionate, often irreverent and distinctively Welsh – she claimed that she wrote with a Welsh accent. But a lightness of touch mediated through a traditionally unchallenging genre can conceal a deadly seriousness of purpose. This essay suggests that *Strike for a Kingdom* is a remarkable text inviting just such a bi-focal reading. As a seemingly artless whodunnit it provides the required transgressive act leading to a return to the established order expected by a predominantly bourgeois readership. As a politically charged narrative the novel's value lies not in its generic formulations but in its coded representation of how colonising Anglocentric power systems, especially structural patriarchy, class hierarchy and accompanying gender differentiation, represented principally through a police inspector, run counter to indigenous forms of passive, collective masculinity in the western mining valleys.

Keywords: Menna Gallie, masculinity, genre, colonisation, law, justice, marriage, power.

Set in the fictional pit village of Cilhendre during the 1926 strike, Menna Gallie's whodunnit *Strike for a Kingdom* (1959) centres ostensibly on a humorously incompetent police enquiry into the death of an authoritarian colliery manager. Its blend of intrigue, wit and lively characterisation was rewarded by its place as joint runner-up for the later re-named Crime Writers' Gold Dagger Award. However, as with

much popular generic fiction, after the spotlight passed elsewhere it retired into the backstage shadows. It required a combination of factors – the emergence of genre and gender as subjects of serious literary enquiry, and the desire to revive and assess the work of neglected Welsh writers in English – to lead later to re-evaluations of Gallie's oeuvre.¹ Yet while scholars like Angela V. John, Jane Aaron, Katie Gramich and Stephen Knight have brought Gallie's fiction to greater notice, in Wales at least, much of their work takes the form of introductions to her republished novels, general essays on her oeuvre, or brief overviews in surveys of Welsh fiction. As Gill Plain notes in another context: 'All of these approaches are necessary: the problem is not their existence, but rather the absence of substantial text-based analyses that would supplement their debates.'² Accordingly, this article attempts a substantial text-based analysis of a single Gallie novel. It proposes that the novel's value lies not in its 'rich ... comic rhetoric,'³ but in its coded representation of how colonising Anglocentric power systems, especially structural patriarchy, class hierarchy and accompanying gender differentiation, run contrary to normative male 'structures of feeling' and social organisation in the mining valleys.⁴

Moving to England provided Menna Gallie with the critical distance necessary to review her relationship with Wales. During her stay in Staffordshire between 1950 and 1954, while her husband was professor of philosophy at what is now Keele University, her hostility towards a dominating form of masculinity began to crystallise.⁵ She records that: 'It needed England to indicate to me the boredom, the irritation, the need to smack down the rigger type. Their inherent fascism hadn't actually struck me then.'⁶ Gallie's use of the term 'rigger' carries class and cultural associations – like the abbreviated 'footer' for football, it was the language of public schools and Oxbridge⁷ – that connect the word more widely to a form of structural patriarchy posited on social hierarchy, gender discrimination, demonstrative heterosexuality and the expression of self through 'othering'. In *Strike for a Kingdom* it is represented principally by the anglicised, conceited Welshman, Inspector Ernest Evans who carries the novel's critique of masculinity shaped by English-British imperial exceptionalism, class difference and the exhibition of power.

In the *Pleasure of the Text*, Roland Barthes outlines two different forms of textual reading: the *lisible* – one that 'goes straight to the articulations of the anecdote' in order to reach closure; and the *scriptible*, an

‘applied’ form of reading that attempts to respond to ‘the layering of significance’ in a text.⁸ Gill Plain observes that while genre narrative is generally associated with the first form of reading, when crime fiction is given an ‘applied’ focus, ‘then both the text and its pleasures are rendered profoundly different.’⁹ Gallie herself implied that *Strike for a Kingdom* was amenable to such bifocal readings when she hinted at substantive differences between a novel and a whodunnit in her comment that *Strike for a Kingdom* is ‘a novel which disguised itself as a thriller.’¹⁰ This essay attempts to read ‘the layering of significance’ in Gallie’s novel, and begins with a discussion of how she manipulates the typologies of the bourgeois whodunnit so that the clue-puzzle form of *Strike for a Kingdom* itself becomes a sustained alibi, a declaration of generic ‘innocence’ in a powerfully subversive novel.

Generic ‘innocence’ in *Strike for a Kingdom*

The whodunnit format presented Gallie with the immediate challenge of locating an ideologically charged novel in a genre that is expected to ‘prioritise [readers’] pleasure and entertainment.’¹¹ Gill Plain, for example, comments on how:

the political efficacy of crime fiction re-stages the conflict between form and content, asking whether radical characterisation and plot construction will inevitably be undermined by the constraints of generic form: namely, closure, resolution, and restoration of order.¹²

Plain’s observation identifies the difficulties facing a whodunnit like *Strike for a Kingdom*, especially one set in the 1926 strike, where any ‘closure, resolution and restoration of order’ are likely to be both circumscribed and contentious. In *Strike for a Kingdom*, careful negotiation and a cautious narrative voice were required by Gallie to situate a discourse that challenged such patriarchal norms as gender differentiation and hierarchical social organisation. For, as John Scaggs remarks of whodunnit readers: ‘it is the home-owning bourgeois reading public whose interest it is to see the dominant social order of which they are a part maintained, and their stake in it protected.’¹³

Acknowledging such constraints, *Strike for a Kingdom* constructs a sphere of activity where recognisable features of the whodunnit format

reassuringly appear for its readers. Cilhendre, a cocooned mining community, replaces the country house favoured by many crime novels, and maps instead a physical landscape viewed through the comforting lens of romantic fiction:

Cilhendre was a little huddle of pigeon-coloured houses following the curves of the River Tawe, which plaited its way among them, with the road and railway for company. The sun polished the walls of the houses. They were built of river stones, lavender grey, cloud grey, sea grey, pink and purple. One side of the valley faced the sun and was golden and pink in the warmth. The hills on the other side were in deep shadow, deeply blue. (p. 5)

Unlike the pit villages of much Welsh fiction, beset by social upheaval, coal dust and polluted rivers, in Cilhendre's harmonised topography nature and industry, river, road and rail keep each other company in good fellowship, and its tonal colouring functions as a metonym for its radical reframing of Welsh miners' traditional gendering.¹⁴ Vastly different from the country house in status, Cilhendre nonetheless offers a locus of closely interconnected characters in a relatively confined area. And while its working-class residents are positioned centrally in the narrative rather than cast as peripheral functionaries as often happens in whodunnits of the period, they offer no apparent political threat to Scagg's 'home-owning bourgeois reading public'. Indeed, Gallie emphasises this point early in the novel with the reassurance that Cilhendre miners 'were not Marxists out to destroy Capitalism' (p. 13). In Barthes's terms, it appears to promise a consolingly straightforward *lisible* narrative.

Gallie's strategy to present if not harmonise the novel's competing elements was to leaven seriousness with parodic humour, to construct harmless miners who offer no threat to the socio-political status quo, and to allow the strike to recede progressively into the textual undergrowth as the narrative progresses. By foregrounding the investigation over the strike in the second half, the narrative offers the prospect of cathartic closure when the crime is solved. And this is what apparently occurs. Cilhendre returns to its daily routines having 'accepted all that had happened' (p. 156). At the funeral of Gwen Evans, the mourners are collectively vitalised by hymn singing; and at home, the poet/miner D. J. Williams feels a poem 'bubbling within' (p. 160). Normality, it

seems, is restored through a healing kinetic and creative energy commensurate with what Dennis Porter calls the whodunnit's 'defence of the established societal order'.¹⁵

Yet the hybrid nature of the narrative contests any easy, univocal resolution. Closure is only provisionally satisfying, for the larger social transgression, the strike, lurks unresolved and unresolvable within the frame of the narrative. And as the novel progresses towards decoding the clue-puzzle, echoes of disruption are manoeuvred into the text to give a modernist sense of incompleteness, rather than what Plain describes as an expected 'mode of textuality designed to comfort and reassure'.¹⁶ In three sequential episodes, the text refuses to construct unambiguously satisfying closure. Returning from Gwen Evans's funeral, the uplifted mourners feel that an 'inner need was satisfied', but the narrative voice functions as both recorder of the event and commentator upon it to observe that, 'the opium of the poor was a powerful drug, and they left the chapel refreshed and belonging and reassured for the time' (p. 157). The indirect reference to Marx and the inference that their contentment is a temporary drug-induced detachment from reality 'for the time' insinuates not closure, but continuation of rupture into a temporal space reaching beyond 'the time' and therefore beyond the text. This episode is followed immediately by a form of curtain-lecture confrontation between the indolent Jack Look-Out and his wife in which she scolds him publicly and beats him over his head with her broom before she returns to the domestic space of the house, and he retires to the male haven of the pub. The comic trope of the bullied husband has a lineage reaching back to Chaucer and earlier, and can be read here as incarnating nothing more than an amusingly stereotypical reversal of gender power. Read more deeply into the semiotics of the text, however, the episode illustrates once again how it encodes critique through humour. The restoration of a pre-crime status quo, a prerequisite of the whodunnit, is referenced here not through reconciliation but through a cameo of continuing marital disharmony. Humour might deflect but does not erase the presentation of such marriage as mutual torment, but rather magnifies it and reflects it back. The marital unit, a fundamental principle of structural patriarchy, is exposed here, like the strike, as a source of continuing, unresolved attrition.

From domestic fissure, the text then moves to the contemplative haven of D. J. Williams's kitchen. Williams enjoys the uncritical approval of the narrative voice throughout the novel, and is

instrumental in solving the crime, and so it is here, if anywhere, that a sense of textual completion might be expected. Yet closure is ambiguous. Feeling 'released and relaxed' (p. 159), and poised at the moment of poetic creation, Williams reaches for his pen and paper, confident that the 'poem was coming' (p. 160). But the one line he inscribes, and on which the novel ends, 'Earthbound and slothful, barely venturing forth ...', constructs only images of hesitancy, torpor and confinement. And the ellipsis concluding the novel is semiotically paradoxical: while it hints at continuance rather than stasis, it also leaves D. J. Williams, like the figures on Keats's urn, trapped in an uncompleted moment, incapable of progression or resolution. Taken together, these three sequential though differing episodes encode an alternative closure. They map an environment where the future is uncertain, contentment is provisional and marital conflict is a micro-version of a contested patriarchal power system signified by continuing industrial strife.

In a comment that is particularly apposite to *Strike for a Kingdom*, the theorist Pierre Macherey writes that 'literary texts make a novel use of language and ideology ... by wresting them in a new direction and conscripting them into a project peculiar to them alone'.¹⁷ One of the extraordinary achievements of *Strike for a Kingdom* is to conscript a popular bourgeois sub-genre into representing a de-politicised Welsh mining masculinity, rendering it sympathetic and harmless, and using such devices to embed within the narrative a powerful gendered critique of externally generated power structures operating within a valleys context.

Dismantling structural patriarchy in *Strike for a Kingdom*

If Menna Gallie's residence in England helped clarify her attitude to a dominant anglicised Welsh stereotype of masculinity, it was in Northern Ireland that she began to inspect critically her own status as a Welsh woman. In 1954, she moved to Belfast where her husband had become a professor at Queen's University, and it was during this period that several currents in her life converged to propel her towards writing. Living just outside Belfast, she records how her nearest neighbour, Viscountess Bangor, 'took us up'.¹⁸ The attitude implied in the phrase, together with Gallie's pointed understatement that 'the gentry are not ideal informal friends', suggests that the relationship of patronage was

not congenial to her.¹⁹ Initially lonely and socially isolated, she records that her hours of solitude led her to writing *Strike for a Kingdom*.

Positioned thus in a subaltern role as the wife of an academic, she writes that 'it was then that the full force of women's lib struck me'.²⁰ The draft title of *Strike for a Kingdom*, 'Say the Pink Bells', taken from Poem XV of Idris Davies's *Gwalia Deserta*,²¹ indicates how Menna Gallie employed the colour connotations of pink and 'pinks' to endow her narrative with both a self-consciously gendered and political awareness. Its use of 'pink' – a colour coded as feminine – hints at a more allusive approach to 'women's lib' than the emerging second-wave feminism was to construct, but her literary practice certainly suggests a commitment to gender debate. Although she denied any allegiance to ideological feminism,²² *Strike for a Kingdom* ventures beyond the argument for gender equality to identify features of gender commonality mediated through a narrative voice that regards Welsh miners' structures of feeling as indistinguishable from women's or from children's.²³ And if Gallie was critical of aspects of second-wave feminism, it was not through gender timidity, but because she felt that it was ideologically hidebound.

In a talk given in the early 1970s, Gallie revealed her coolness towards what she regarded as the more insistent aspects of second-wave feminism: 'I'm not much of a one for the stridency of woman's lib', and added provocatively, 'Indeed, I find my bra the most comforting of my garments'.²⁴ And in her 1970 review of Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch*, she took uncompromising issue with Greer for what she felt was her Manichaean premise that 'Man is the enemy; so is the family and so is marriage'.²⁵ Yet if neither man as a genus nor the family was the enemy for Gallie, she was herself no uncritical advocate of the regulatory conventions of marriage, as she forcefully states in the same review: 'I'd like to suggest that what is wrong with marriage – as we know it – is the word adultery and the insistence on monogamy'.²⁶ Written into the narrative discourse of *Strike for a Kingdom* is the potential barrenness of conventional marriage that incorporates men as well as women into its victimhood. Trapped into marriage by a feigned pregnancy, Jack Look-Out observes his wife, and 'wondered at himself that he had ever been brought to marry her' (p. 9). Yet marriage ensnares women in particular. Jess Jeffries's adultery is treated sympathetically in the text. She sleeps with the colliery manager not only because 'The money was lovely for the children', but because, rather like

Polly Garter, she is generous-hearted, and 'it was a pity for the poor man and she liked to do a favour when she could' (pp. 11–12). Monogamy suppresses her sexual identity. Notwithstanding her motives, the repressive formalities of social convention generate her 'greatest terror' (p. 102), that the chapel deacons, those male custodians and enforcers of female respectability, will publicly ostracise her.

Even when adultery does not feature, the textual import is that conventional marriage is an arrangement that can position women into living with men they either despise, like Mrs Nixon (the widow of the dead colliery manager), or by whom they are cowed, like the police inspector's wife. Overhearing the normatively angry tones of her policeman husband in a telephone conversation in her 'milk-and-water kitchen', Mrs Evans shrank and 'grew smaller, out of sight' (p. 127). It is notable that both Mrs Nixon and Mrs Evans are married to prototypically dominant, domineering men, incarnations of patriarchal empowerment. By contrast, the text's two loving inter-gender relationships diverge significantly from these fractious patriarchal models: D. J. Williams's with his mother is framed within a loving mother/son perspective; and, daringly, the text does not condemn the consanguineous love of Gerwin and Gwen Evans, which it strongly implies but never fully explicates is physically incestuous.²⁷

Angela V. John, in her introduction to Honno's *Strike for a Kingdom*, observes that 'Men and women in Cilhendre appear to inhabit separate worlds.'²⁸ This is true, of course, for physical spaces have gendered associations, as Jack Look-Out and his wife's quarrel has already indicated. However, his haven of the pub and her return to her house also serve as correlatives in the novel that appear to imply the much larger cultural assumption that all men and women also inhabit subjectively 'separate worlds' determined, shaped and normalised by their different sexes. However, the novel will have none of such culturally extrinsic conditioning. Its discursive space repeatedly merges native Cilhendre miners with women and children into a triad that share similar behavioural patterns at odds with, but overlaid by, dominating power structures that define the 'natural' order.²⁹

The cultural anthropologist Gayle Rubin helps contextualise and clarify this aspect of gender representation as it appears in *Strike for a Kingdom*. Rubin comments that: 'The idea that men and women are more different from each other than they are from anything else must come from somewhere other than nature.'³⁰ The 'somewhere other than

nature' from where gender polarities are constructed in *Strike for a Kingdom* is a form of patriarchal capitalism, implicitly Anglocentric, through which the difference between men and women is naturalised as the *sine qua non* of social hierarchies and gender identity. Running counter to such culturally contrived differentiation, the novel inductively represents the natural similarities existing between Cilhendre men and women, and men and children, thereby implicitly challenging the boundaries, both gendered and generational, that industrial patriarchy establishes and regulates. Within this ethnographic context, the fictional representation of valleys masculinities is radically reformulated by being 'feminised' and 'infantilised'.

David Glover and Cora Kaplan suggest that among the problematics of defining femininity is the way 'feminine' behaviour in men 'varies from supposed excesses of feeling to passivity to a degree of nurturance thought inappropriate to Anglo-Saxon masculinity.'³¹ Glover and Kaplan's terms helpfully distinguish a dominant anglicised model of masculinity from a divergent model, which it 'others' by feminising it. In *Strike for a Kingdom*, the three characteristics Glover and Kaplan identify as 'supposed excesses' of inappropriate 'feminised' behaviour as defined by Anglo-Saxon masculinity – emotion, passivity and nurturance – are valorised and embodied in D. J. Williams and Gerwin Evans, both Welsh members of that incontestable 'masculine' occupation, coal-mining. The text therefore incorporates signifiers into its Welsh normative masculinities at variance with dominant Anglo-Saxon notions of gender transgression. The figures of D. J. Williams and Gerwin Evans are the two principal representatives of this divergent form – Williams's relationship with the emotionally distressed Gerwin Evans, the very loving brother of a very loving, dying sister, is nurturing throughout – but the text also reveals Welsh policemen displaying what Glover and Kaplan call 'supposed female virtues of social sympathy and nurturance.'³²

After the confrontation between police and striking miners on the common, for example, when they are freed from Inspector Evans's pathological love of violence, the police 'organised cups of tea for the men, *sorry* for the bruises and *feeling responsible*' (p. 64; my italics). The sergeant takes the bewildered Glanddylan Price 'on one side and *begged* him not to worry' (p. 64; my italics). A sentence resonating with significance states that away from the inspector, 'the policemen won back their manhood and their humanity' (p. 64). Contrary to the hegemonic

Anglocentric model that Glover and Kaplan identify, manhood here is signified by tolerance, compassion and commonality. The text's premise that the police recover not only their broader humanity but their very manhood implies that demonstrations of macho violence are a perversion of their own indigenous culture.

Susan Rowland notes that patriarchy valorises agency and heroism in men,³³ but in *Strike for a Kingdom* it is passivity and pusillanimity which govern most male felt behaviour individually and *en masse*. D. J. Williams, himself an uneasy hybrid of striking miner and establishment JP, is never far from experiencing fear of authority. Despite the front he puts on, 'inside [he] was afraid of the bobbies' (p. 18) and the centrally conferred power they embody. The protest march itself is constructed as an act of quiet despair, and confronted by the police on the common the miners are afraid of them (p. 58). The police, as a corpus, reciprocate, being 'themselves as frightened as women' and 'all of them [were] terrified of the Inspector' (p. 58). When they are ordered by their militaristic inspector to charge the miners, the nurturing instincts of the narrative voice are revealed: 'they, poor frightened things, did as they were told' (p. 58). In its extensive use of fear of discovery, fear of violence and fear of authority as discursive tropes through which miners' and police behaviour is represented, the text mobilises a serious critique of the social construction which promotes and activates fear, and the Anglo-Saxon hierarchical gender model which nominates 'excesses of feeling' as 'unmanly'.³⁴

Even when not focused on emotional similarities between the male and the female, the narrative often contextualises male behaviour within a proximate female discourse. The minor figure P. C. Wilkins, for example, 'picked his way like a girl in high heels up to the door of the cottage' (p. 73) of the town crier, and P. C. Thomas draws comfort from buttoning up his uniform 'as a woman does from her corset' (p. 127). For a brief moment, even the police inspector, loaded with flowers by an extra-generous villager, looked 'like a May Queen' (p. 96). For the most part, these figures are unproblematic rhetorical analogies that contribute progressively to diluting normative gender boundaries. However, there is a notable occasion when the narrative proposes a more semiotically layered representation of gender fluidity. At the Cilhendre carnival, parodic cross-dressing critiques gender dualism by hybridising the two traditionally differentiated genders in a comic visual format. Carnival cross-dressing

fashions a liberating opportunity to perform an alternative gendered identity, one where, as G. G. Bolich observes, ludic transgression may pass unquestioned:

Cross-dressing as *social* play – consequences shared with others – offers an important safety-valve opening by Carnival to relieve cultural pressure. But it may do more. Such play, by showing the fluidity and artificiality of things like gender role expectations, may make them easier to endure on re-entering the mundane world.³⁵

Bolich acknowledges that gendered performance is artificial and implies in his closing sentence that binary definitions of gender are unnatural and repressive. However, whereas Bolich sees carnival cross-dressing as a temporary Bakhtinian release from mundane gender formation, for Judith Butler physical semiotics inscribe a more abiding problematic. She closes an essay on gender construction with the comment that if gender is mistaken for a ‘natural or linguistic given’, the cultural field will be expanded bodily ‘through subversive performances of various kinds.’³⁶ Positioned within a community where patriarchally mandated gender difference formally applies, cross-dressing at the Cilhendre carnival functions as a semiotically disruptive performance. It is a distilled subversive example of which the entire narrative is a larger, carnivalesque inscription, modulated by prevailing temporal and cultural influences but resulting in a significant gender hybridising. In such a community, both Moc and the footballers take pains to confirm their male credentials within an industrially gendered schema. Moc, though wearing a ‘small raffia skirt’, a ‘pair of knickers, directoire style’ (p. 15) and a necklace of wooden bones, parades as an African chief who chases children with his wooden spear. And the footballers, ‘dressed like young ladies’ (p. 15), behave like roaring boys. Yet their appearance, albeit comically exaggerated, inevitably compromises the gender purity of their actions.

What emerges from the text’s feminising discourse is not only a re-writing of mining masculinity in the Welsh novel, but a narrative in which gender commonalities are suppressed by an industrial Anglocentric dominant model of hierarchical masculinity requiring the ‘othering’ of women. The economic and cultural power of such a practice interpellates the Cilhendre miners into the subject status

appropriate to its ideology but, as the feminised narrative voice implicitly insists, this is an alien model. As if to emphasise the extent to which the practices of Cilhendre masculinity deviate from the stereotype of 'Anglo-Saxon masculinity', where progression into work is heralded as a rite of passage from boyhood to manhood, the text aligns male behaviour not only with women but with boys. Notably, the lens through which the narrative juvenilises the miners is bi-focal. It penetrates but also embraces.

Stephen Knight remarks that many Welsh male writers in English deal 'with a boy'. He attributes this gendered feature principally to 'the isolation and powerlessness the authors feel', leading them to 'find an objective correlative in a character subject to forces beyond personal control'.³⁷ Among the 'forces beyond personal control' affecting such writers is the sense of being assigned a subaltern status in an imposed hierarchical model of social organisation and national identity. *Strike for a Kingdom* also deals with a boy, John Nixon, but as a Welsh female writer working in English, Menna Gallie appears more interested in the multivalent significations of the terms 'boy' and 'boys' in defining Cilhendre masculinity and class than in finding a correlative for her own social displacement. David S. Gutterman addressed the semantics of the term 'boy' when he wrote that:

it is useful to conceive words like *boy* not as nouns but rather as adjectives, that describe a subject. By doing so one can more easily and deeply appreciate the contingency of the meanings attached to the word *boy*. Being a boy is different in cultures/families/contexts and will mean different things to individuals as they grow older.³⁸

Some forty years before Gutterman's article, *Strike for a Kingdom* had already extended the word's cultural possibilities in a peculiarly Welsh context to show how the term can 'mean different things to individuals as they grow older'.

Within the demotic of the south Wales coalfield, 'boys' is not exclusively an age-specific term; rather, it is a figure of egalitarian familiarity commonly used by men of other men. However, its function in *Strike for a Kingdom* is more context-dependent, where it is appropriated by the narrative voice in three different ways: as a literal nominator – the young John Nixon is 'a good, superior boy' (p. 122); as a colloquial

nominator – the police sergeant who organises cups of tea for the miners is ‘a good boy’ (p. 64); and as a descriptor to signify the man-as-child – Elwyn Jeffries’s legs hang ‘like a boy’s’ over his bed (p. 60). These different significations are then conflated with the text’s frequent mimetic use of the term: D. J. Williams, for example, gently reprimands two plotting miners to ‘Stop it now, boys’ and ‘Don’t indeed, boys’ (p. 131), where the word signifies communality and a shared system of values.

Given that the novel was originally published in London for distribution to a largely anglophone readership, the term’s semantics differ on how the word is read. On one level, it conflates both class and colonial assumptions by presenting the striking miners as lacking the autonomy and agency of ‘adult’ masculinity, and thereby functions to reassure a socially conservative crime novel readership. On another level, it encodes a masculinity where to refer to fellow men as boys is not to insult them – as in the southern states of America³⁹ – but to liberate an age-related term and incorporate it into a signifier of age-unrelated sodality. The effect is not only to construct a divergent form of valleys masculinity from the anglicised, competitive, class-based paradigm, but to subvert the fundamental structural principle of the *Bildungsroman* that ‘men’ are different from ‘boys’.

Dispensing with male-generated notions of rites of passage, which Jonathan Rutherford calls ‘a cultural pathology’,⁴⁰ the text elaborates a continuity between boyhood and adulthood by easing the miners’ signifying positions along an unbroken temporal continuum from babyhood to boyhood, from infant dependency to schoolboy performativity, and thence to adulthood. Early in the narrative, two male characters, Moc Cow-and-Gate and Gerwin Evans, are discursively infantilised. Both are like babies: Moc resembles the Royal Baby used in a Cow-and-Gate promotion as ‘the food for royal babies’ (p. 15), and Gerwin Evans acts like one (p. 27).⁴¹ Later, a troubled D. J. Williams is ‘like a child feeling sick on the little horses in the fair’ (p. 57). Further still along the continuum, an anxious mine official is told by a colleague that the manager won’t eat him (p. 127), as though he is an ogre from a fairy tale. At work in the police station, P. C. Thomas ‘copied out in Best Writing a list of names’ (p. 71), as though obeying a teacher’s command. The imaginative landscape of two mischievous miners is defined by ‘the *Wizard*’ (p. 131), a boys’ comic, and colliery officials searching for dynamite stolen from the colliery are like boy

scouts who 'set off in couples to play detective' (p. 143). The effect of such a strategy is dramatic if understated. Adult masculinity in Cilhendre becomes part of an organic, egalitarian progression where the child, if not father to the man, may be seen in the man.

Whereas feminised tropes in *Strike for a Kingdom* are articulated through diegesis only, offering an omniscient corrective to a hegemonic model, juvenile tropes are more deeply integrated into the textual fabric, so that the female narrative voice appears merely to reflect the normalised discursive practices of the miners themselves. Pierre Macherey remarks that a novel 'cannot say everything at once; its scattered discourse is its only means of uniting and gathering what it has to say'.⁴² Distributed throughout *Strike for a Kingdom*, such scattered discourse unites in a consistent vision of gender and developmental fluidity oppressed by an alien model of structural masculinity. However, the novel goes further in anatomising the consequences of such a restrictive model through two seemingly different characters, D. J. Williams and the dead manager's young son, John Nixon.

Matriarchal harmony/patriarchal discord in *Strike for a Kingdom*

The gender theorist Todd W. Reeser suggests that central to the continuance of gender binaries promoted by patriarchal masculinity is the coming-of-age ritual, where a boy becomes a man as he passes through various symbolic and non-symbolic processes.⁴³ The 'natural' evolutionary development from boyhood to manhood implicit in this model, where a differentiated form of completed being emerges as though from a quiescent chrysalis, is everywhere treated as a myth in *Strike for a Kingdom*. Its rejection of a coming-of-age paradigm is generic as well as gendered. Generically, the crime novel's limited time frame where detection, rather than the *Bildungsroman*'s evolution of the protagonist into manhood, motivates and accelerates the plot allows *Strike for a Kingdom* to inspect, within a tightly regulated temporal schema, two male figures of differing ages who share common behavioural patterns. It conceives its critique of patriarchal binaries and boy/man distinction by aligning a patriarchal but dysfunctional family unit – John Nixon's – alongside a formally unbalanced but successfully functioning matriarchal unit – D. J. Williams's.

In a novel populated by several comically rendered characters, the text's discursive seriousness in constructing both Williams and John Nixon is a measure of its engagement with gender dynamics. Separated by age, associates, social position and experience they have no reason to come into contact with each other, nor do they. And while the thoughtful, considerate D. J. Williams is a narrative cynosure, John Nixon exists on its periphery. Indeed, in terms of narrative necessity, there is little reason for his presence at all. However, when the text is read through what Gill Plain calls an 'observation of gender', its typology changes, and, to maintain Gallie's generic distinction, what appears marginal in the plot of a whodunnit moves nearer its ideological centre as a novel.⁴⁴ John Nixon functions as a composite youth, sometimes seemingly in early adolescence, sometimes seemingly older – old enough at least to represent his family at Gwen Evans's funeral. However, as an exemplar of the structural gender model, he incarnates the problematic of the boy-as-embryonic-man, embodying opposing constituents of traditional gender identity – masculine and feminine – which puzzle and trouble him.⁴⁵ The challenges he faces in being male attract him, but conflict with his stereotypically feminised characteristics. These are revealed in several ways: temperamentally, in his artistic passivity; somatically, in his 'thin delicate neck like a flower on a stalk' (p. 40); and semiotically, in his habit of tossing his hair like a girl (p. 40). He therefore not only complements the man-as-boy, feminised construction implicit in the conception of D. J. Williams, but his presence helps secure the novel's hostility to what Gayle Rubin calls 'the straightjacket of gender'.⁴⁶

The correspondences and differences between Williams and Nixon, as in so much else in this text, are necessarily achieved by insinuations, implications and allusive connections. They are neither signposted by the narrative voice through dialogue, nor probed extensively through interior examination of the character's psychology. However, several significant features emerge, among the most defining being the relationship each has with his mother, for D. J. Williams is very much his mother's son. Although an adult, he remains 'afraid of plenty' (p. 131) and has experienced no rite of passage where he feels himself comfortably initiated into the approved status of 'manhood', and its accompanying normative displays.

Conspicuously, aside from the shadowy figure of Gerwin Evans's widowed mother, to whom the bachelor Gerwin himself is 'devoted' (p.

21), Ann Williams and Mrs Nixon are the only two women in the text with sons, and they are sons who lack the traditional markers of anglicised normative masculinity. In what Roland Barthes calls a 'significant absence', Williams senior never appears, and for the purposes of the narrative it is as though he has never existed.⁴⁷ Yet his absence speaks loudly, for this lacuna facilitates the text's construction of an adult male, D. J. Williams, untouched by domestic patriarchal example, emotionally dependent on and consequently feminised by a strong maternal influence, existing within a prevailing industrial and legislative ethos which is male engendered, male dominated and therefore alien to him.

Ann Williams's influence upon her unmarried son is implied throughout *Strike for a Kingdom*. It is in the domestic space of the home she has created that he feels secure: 'anchored to the dresser, the corner cupboard, the kitchen table with its red plush cloth and the settle by the fire with a red paisley cushion to match the stockings on the legs of the table' (p. 24). The power of the leading verb and the markedly feminised coding of the furniture, not least in the primness of stockings on the table legs, function as metonyms for his own feminised sensibility, and generate his feeling of a secure selfhood in this feminised space. By disposition, he is attracted towards home, and away from the world of public affairs. Subject to 'frenzied thoughts' at the scene of the manager's death, he knows that 'only one thing would deliver him – talking to his mother, hearing her sanity. He'd put it all behind him until he got home' (p. 22).

The text further demonstrates his desire to withdraw from a world of male agency by constructing him as a poet for whom poetry is what Frank Lentricchia calls a 'haven for an isolated aesthetic pleasure', an escape from contingent reality into what the narrative identifies as a 'sheltered poetry world' (p. 83).⁴⁸ It functions in the text as an intangible corollary to the material objects that anchor him to the home he shares with his mother, an imaginative space in which he feels settled. Notably, the novel explicates the feminising connection between his home, his poetry and his mother when, in the gender-coded space of a quiet kitchen and engaged in writing a poem, 'his mother's presence was for him part of the silence' (p. 160).

Spared the intrusive influence of a dominant father, and never growing away from his mother, D. J. Williams has not, in patriarchal terms, achieved masculine autonomy, and therefore has never fully entered the symbolic order of normative manhood that the text

criticises retrospectively in Nixon senior and mocks in the police inspector. The Freudian progression outlined by Michael Kimmel, which requires a boy's 'devaluing all things feminine – including girls, his mother, femininity, and, of course, all emotions associated with femininity' – has passed him by.⁴⁹ But through what Kimmel calls 'emotions associated with femininity', *Strike for a Kingdom* valorises in D. J. Williams a distinctive form of valleys masculinity. As if to emphasise its approval of Williams, the text manipulates its denouement to give him precedence over the police inspector. It is the reflective, poetic D. J. Williams, not the blustering, vain policeman, who solves the crime first. Williams's local knowledge, his intelligence and capacity for lateral thought connect clues that establish Gerwin Evans as the unlikely culprit.

In John Nixon, the text constructs a boy who is temperamentally close to D. J. Williams, but riven by the circumstances of his upbringing. As the confused product of a patriarchal paradigm, he seeks an identity which reconciles the competing impulses of his female-coded temperament and his male-coded libido. Whereas D. J. Williams seeks refuge from the world in his poetry, the young John Nixon wonders whether his own irritability can be 'attributed to his artistic temperament' (p. 40). Although he assumes 'a poetic unworldliness' (p. 40), he is not so much a poseur as a young individual suffering an existential crisis of identity in his attempt to align his temperamental disposition with his perceived gendered role as a male. At his father's funeral, for instance, he was 'the male lead and did not know his lines' (p. 136). Like D. J. Williams, he is devoted to his mother, but he is problematised by being 'his father's son, fretworked by his mother' (p. 41). Like D. J. Williams, too, his disposition leads him to interpret the world at a remove, through an artistic perspective, either painting, as when his interpretation of the assembled miners is refracted through Rembrandt's 'Night Watch' (p. 49), or when the weeping maids on the day of his father's funeral provoke in him a question from *Hamlet* (p. 137).

However, whereas Williams's feminine-coded masculinity is safely anchored in a home without a 'masculinised' presence, for John Nixon his father's philandering has offered an enticing model of dominance and pleasure outside the domestic sphere. Within the home, the patriarch's 'beastliness' (p. 41) that repels Mrs Nixon repels her devoted son also, but his father's hegemonic 'othering' and commodifying of women excites him too, as a model of 'true' manhood. For John Nixon,

sexuality and gender are not so much 'accomplished in the family' as Kimmel states, as problematised within it, for they bring him into confrontation with two conflicting modes of his own gender development.⁵⁰

Strike for a Kingdom aligns D. J. Williams and John Nixon, then, as two male figures who share temperamental affinities despite their differing ages, but who are the products of differing socially structured trajectories. D. J. Williams has escaped the myth of the *Bildung* hero's progression into normative masculinity. As for John Nixon, *Strike for a Kingdom* manipulates the compressed time-scheme of the crime novel to suggest that there will be no rite of passage into unproblematic manhood for him. The text leaves him as it leaves Williams, arrested in a moment of time, but whereas for Williams in his quiet kitchen there is at least the possibility that 'It would be alright' (p. 160), John Nixon is not so fortunate. After his attendance at Gwen Evans's funeral where, unlike the 'mumbo-jumbo for his father' he was 'moved almost beyond bearing' (p. 157), the text leaves him arrested in a temporal space, 'furious with his own illogicality' (p. 157), and granted no narrative path to resolution.

***Strike for a Kingdom* and bifocal reading: masculinity, power and Inspector Ernest Evans**

Inspector Ernest Evans differs in kind and function from the classical detective, the 'omniscient investigator' who, Gill Plain notes, 'enters an enclosed environment' and exposes the malefactor 'with surgical precision'.⁵¹ Instead, he seems set for comic deflation from his first appearance when, intent on consoling Mrs Nixon on her loss, he arrives clumsily, 'with a noise like falling biscuit tins' and, in a manner reminiscent of Dickens's Mr Bounderby, as 'full as a balloon of his own esteem' (p. 41).⁵² As an exaggerated construction of hyper-masculine presence, Evans is positioned in the comic sphere of the persistently self-promoting, self-ignorant subject teetering always on the brink of humiliating exposure. On a straightforward reading, Evans's function appears to rest on the humour to be extracted from how this 'bladder of lard' (p. 118) strives to solve the clue-puzzles and expose the culprit.

Strike for a Kingdom nurtures this impression by constructing him via an intertextual collage of vainglorious comic males, all of them

defined by their unmerited but unshakable egos. He is not only a solipsistic Bounderby, but he incorporates aspects of Kenneth Grahame's pompous, snobbish Mr Toad, too, in his devotion to his motor car. Like Toad, he is 'not very sure of the gears' (p. 50) and deafens pedestrians when 'playing tunes on the rubber ball of the horn' (p. 78). Later, on losing his dignity when a tree branch dislodges his helmet, he resembles a prickly Oliver Hardy against P. C. Thomas's hapless Stan Laurel, as he attempts 'to blame Thomas for the mishap' (p. 89) in 'Here's another nice mess you've gotten me into' vein. Later still, he is a self-congratulatory Dogberry to P. C. Thomas's inept Verges. Both Evans and Dogberry make claims regarding their singular prowess that are markedly at odds with their investigative practice, Dogberry that he benefits from the 'Gifts that God Gives', while for Evans the Nixon case 'is serious, but, thank God, I'm in charge' (p. 129).⁵³

However, as Gill Plain reminds us, crime novels are 'not quite as straightforward as they might initially appear', and the presence of an overweening senior policeman, 'a representative of the law' (p. 156), disposed to violence in a Welsh novel set during a miners' strike, illustrates the point.⁵⁴ The fixed, exaggerated characteristics that construct him as ripe for comic puncturing in one reading, position him also as a grotesquely recognisable agent of state-approved oppression in a valleys industrial context, where, in his view, all strikers are 'rioters' (p. 116). This, more '*scriptible*' reading, shifts the animating force behind Evans's construction away from a humorous whodunnit. Instead, Evans emerges as a totemic bully, at once ridiculous and dangerous, embodying Menna Gallie's gendered desire 'to smack down the ruggery type' and the position he claims in society.

M. Wynn Thomas writes of the Welsh novel that: 'One of the ways of re-introducing the nation to its own history is through providing it with conscientiously historical but compelling imaginative fictions.'⁵⁵ In this respect, what a mid-century, middle-class English consumer of crime novels in 1959 may read as an untroubling temporal and spatial distancing of transgressive events safely transported to a 1926 Welsh village become, in the context of valleys fiction, a text based on personal recollection investigating a troubled history of social disquiet and the politically mandated power systems that literally policed it.⁵⁶ It is present in Evans's insistence that the strike is 'a disgrace', engineered by men whose moral turpitude must be punished because they 'won't do their work properly' (p. 119). Read this way, his reductive orthodoxy

places him in the narrative continuum of coercive masculinity performed through institutionalised, hierarchical office that had already darkened characters like Gwyn Jones's Sir Hugh Thomas in *Times Like These* (1936), and Lewis Jones's Lord Cwmardy. It would reappear later in the century as a continuing element of the Welsh industrial experience in the deviant policeman Elliott Bowles in Roger Granelli's *Dark Edge* (1997), and later still as the silky machiavel Adam Smith-Tudor in Kit Habianic's *Until Our Blood is Dry* (2014).

Evans is an interloper into the Cilhendre community. Welsh by birth, he stands in the novel as a colonised agent, interpellated into English-British hierarchical identity through his loyalty to empire and his disdain for his native language, for although he speaks Welsh, he 'preferred not to let it be known that he suffered from this disability' (p. 85). This severance enables *Strike for a Kingdom* to mobilise a powerful critique of his narcissistic, authoritarian and alien assumptions. Understanding little of the community over which he has jurisdiction – he fails to see why Joe Everynight, the father of twelve children, is so called (pp. 117–118) – he enacts the divergent value systems, prejudices and practices of a dominant, class-based, colonising power bloc, removed from but persistently challenging indigenous value systems. His official role disguises his compulsion to dominate others by clothing itself in the mantle of a civilising economic and moral imperative: 'Think what this strike is costing the country, and *our Empire*' (p. 129; my italics). Appeals by authority figures for loyalty to an abstract higher cause echo throughout Welsh industrial fiction as a strategic mechanism to secure an existing power balance. Representation of Evans as a mordantly comic figure does not detract from his also being, within the tradition of valleys fiction, read as a willing agent of a formalised alien hierarchy, inimical to the collectivised traditions of south Wales.

Evans's obsessive belief that 'What we need is discipline' (p. 129) reveals how the power structures of patriarchal authority exploit his proto-fascistic disposition and reciprocate by legitimising his own narcissism. The term 'fascist' requires careful use, but it is a term Menna Gallie deliberately employs in her archive when she denotes the 'inherent fascism' of a particular kind of anglicised Welsh masculinity that is represented in Evans.⁵⁷ For R. W. Connell, fascism promotes debased forms of masculinity based on alterity, irrationality 'and the unrestrained violence of the frontline soldier.'⁵⁸ As the novel makes clear, suppression through violence is not incidental to Evans's

construction. It permeates his very discourse, leading to an extraordinary confusion of his public role and private sentiments. When the widowed Mrs Nixon, who is chilled by his adversarial impulses, advises him not to antagonise villagers in his investigation as, 'These are difficult times and some of the good people are almost desperate,' he replies apoplectically, 'Good people did you say? Damn strikers. We ought to shoot a few of them to show who's boss around here' (p. 47).

But Evans's inflammatory comment on shooting striking miners reverberates beyond the crime-puzzle confines of *Strike for a Kingdom* to engage with the larger narrative of industrial relations in Wales, and the violent suppression of dissent. As if for emphasis, the novel has Evans repeat his view later – 'We need the soldiers here to teach a few of them a lesson' (p. 129). Such remarks stir echoes, no matter how ill-founded on fact, of soldiers opening fire on striking Welsh miners in Tonypandy in 1910, and in modern readers anticipate the violent engagement between striking miners and militarised mounted policemen in the 1984/5 miners' strike, as extreme examples of 'othering' those who challenge a dominant orthodoxy. Writing of such a practice, John Horne argues that 'The positive attributes of national masculine ideals,' which Inspector Evans sees himself as embodying, are 'matched by the negative figures of the internal and external enemy – who might be pictured either as female or as a derided or feared type of masculinity'.⁵⁹ His reference to an internal enemy bleakly echoes the sentiments of a British prime minister regarding striking miners, and embraces Evans's own viewpoint that: 'This would be Russia if these colliers had half a chance' (p. 129).

Enclosed within the seemingly safe generic parameters of the whodunnit, Evans's outbursts cited above can be read as examples of his comically outrageous irascibility. Within the corpus of south Wales fiction, however, such a representation does not detract from his also being read as a willing agent of a formalised metropolitan hierarchy inimical to the social organisation of the valleys. *Strike for a Kingdom* deftly makes this point through the fate of a distraught Gerwin Evans, whose crime – the unintentional killing of David Nixon, given that he acted under provocation and a threat of blackmail – was manslaughter, not murder. In an extraordinarily direct paragraph in its closing chapter, *Strike for a Kingdom* passes its own judgement on Inspector Evans, and connects him unequivocally with abstract processes of law, compromised as they are between legality and power, common

humanity and class difference, justice and revenge. Only ‘half satisfied’ by Gerwin’s suicide:

[Evans] was muttering imprecations and meaningless clichés about cheating the hangman, defeating justice, breaking the law, as though he, representing the law, had more claim to Gerwin’s poor body than the man had himself. As though in some obscure, obscene way, a bloodless institution, a man-framed body of Government decrees, a tangle of codes and codicils, had become an entity with claims and a will of its own. (p. 156)

Gerwin Evans is accordingly found guilty of murder. In this way, *Strike for a Kingdom* offers its final manipulation of the sub-genre that carries its narrative. It connects the prejudices of an intemperate, vengeful police inspector to a ‘man-framed body of Government decrees, a tangle of codes and codicils’ (p. 156) to subvert a basic principle of the whodunnit: that ‘the detective in fiction embodies a promise of individual justice under the law’.⁶⁰

Stephen Knight refers to a *Times Literary Supplement* reviewer who found Gallie’s *Strike for a Kingdom* ‘Fresh and beguiling from the land of her fathers’. It would, the reviewer rhapsodised, ‘delight all those ... who kindle to the elfland music of *bach* and *bachgen i*?’⁶¹ Examined through a less patronising lens, *Strike for a Kingdom* kindles more than ‘elfland music’. Menna Gallie’s Cilhendre is a site where the binary gender definitions, class distinctions and power structures insisted upon by anglophone patriarchy dissolve into a conspectus of indigenous local masculinity founded on gender commonality and social equivalence. Because such commonality embraces children also, the traditionally conceived rite of passage from boyhood to manhood essential to Anglocentric patriarchy is nullified in the figure of D. J. Williams and contested in the figure of John Nixon. The most settled domestic arrangement in the novel is that of a mother and her unmarried son. Where a patriarchal model is presented retrospectively in the Nixons, the feral masculinity of the father has collided with the bourgeois femininity of the mother resulting in their son’s gender confusion. And, impressively, the novel’s dissection of Anglocolonial infiltration into Wales runs like a subterranean stream through the narrative to surface perhaps most memorably in the words of mild-mannered D. J. Williams:

Some think we are all desperate violent men in the pits, like black savages from Africa ... When I was in Ruskin College I sometimes felt people treating me with interested kindness and looking at me like a specimen from strange lands, brought over for their scientific curiosity. Made me feel like a thing in a Wild Beast show. (p. 114)

Posing as a harmless whodunnit, *Strike for Kingdom* ingeniously sabotages the bourgeois literary form it employs in order to construct another form of narrative. It is one in which indigenous identities are over-laid and disempowered by the cultural, industrial and legal practices of a dominating class-based, colonising bloc. Read this way, the novel kindles not Anglocentric delight in 'elfland' Welsh whimsy, but a Welsh bonfire of Anglocolonial presumptions. If one asks, 'Whodunnit?', the answer is simply, 'Menna Gallie dunnit'.

Notes

- ¹ *Strike for a Kingdom* [1959] (Dinas Powys: Honno Welsh Women's Classics, 2003, repr. 2011). Page references in this essay are to the Honno 2011 edition. Gallie's works other than *Strike for a Kingdom* are: *Man's Desiring* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1960); *The Small Mine* (London: Gollancz, 1962, repr. Honno Press, 2000); *Travels with a Duchess* (London: Gollancz, 1966, repr. Honno Press, 2011); *You're Welcome to Ulster* (London: Gollancz, 1970, repr. Honno Press, 2010); *In These Promiscuous Parts* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1986). In 1973, her translation of Caradog Pritchard's *Un Nos Ola Leuad* (1961) was published by Hodder and Stoughton under the title *Full Moon*.
- ² Gill Plain, *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction: Gender, Sexuality and the Body* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001), p. 8.
- ³ From a *Sunday Times* review, 1959; cited in the frontispiece of Gallie's *Man's Desiring*.
- ⁴ In his *Marxism and Literature*, Raymond Williams included an essay on his coinage 'structures of feeling' in which he confesses that: 'The term is difficult, but "feeling" is chosen to emphasise a distinction from the more formal concepts of "world-view" or "ideology". It is not only that we must go beyond formally held and systematic beliefs, though of course we have always to include them. It is that we are concerned with meanings and values as they are actively lived and felt ...' *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, repr. 2009), p. 132. Writing of 'structures of feeling' in the Welsh industrial novel, Williams argued that 'The abstracted categories of "social" and "personal" are here, in these specific human conditions ... interfused and inextricable though not always indistinguishable.' 'The Welsh Industrial Novel', in *Who Speaks for Wales? Nation, Culture, Identity*, ed. Daniel Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), p. 103.
- ⁵ Menna Gallie states that, at Keele, 'I lifted Wales off my shoulders': Menna Gallie Archive, undated talk to Swansea Writers' Group, L1/16.
- ⁶ Menna Gallie Archive, undated talk to Swansea Writers' Group, National Library of Wales, L1/16.

- ⁷ *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, vol. II, 3rd edn, p. 1860.
- ⁸ Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975), p. 12.
- ⁹ Plain, *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction*, p. 90.
- ¹⁰ Menna Gallie Archive, undated talk to Swansea Writers' Group, L1/16.
- ¹¹ Sophie Hannah, 'It's no mystery that crime is the biggest-selling genre in books', *The Guardian*, 12 April 2018, www.theguardian.com (accessed 12 April 2018).
- ¹² Plain, *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction*, p. 89.
- ¹³ John Scaggs, *Crime Fiction* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 45.
- ¹⁴ How radically different are Gallie's from depictions of heroic, hypertrophic miners can be seen by contrasting their portrayal with George Orwell's miners, whose masculinity resides in their bodies like 'hammered iron statues' and 'arms and belly muscles of steel'. George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier* [1937] (London: Penguin, 1986), pp. 18–31 (pp. 18, 31).
- ¹⁵ Dennis Porter, *The Pursuit of Crime: Art and Ideology in Detective Fiction* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 125.
- ¹⁶ Plain, *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction*, p. 247.
- ¹⁷ Pierre Macherey, *A Theory of Literary Production* [1966], trans. Geoffrey Wall (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 52.
- ¹⁸ Menna Gallie Archive, talk to Swansea Writers' Group, L1/16.
- ¹⁹ Menna Gallie Archive, talk to Swansea Writers' Group, L1/16.
- ²⁰ Menna Gallie Archive, talk to Swansea Writers' Group, L1/16.
- ²¹ See Idris Davies, 'Gwalia Deserta XV', *The Collected Poems of Idris Davies*, ed. Islwyn Jenkins (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1990), pp. 34–5.
- ²² Angela V. John remarks that Menna Gallie 'always carefully denied that she was a feminist': 'Introduction', *Strike for a Kingdom*, p. x.
- ²³ Angela Fish in her essay on Menna Gallie identified Gallie's representation of men as gendered 'men' in 'Flight-deck of experience', in *New Welsh Review*, 18 (1992), 60–4.
- ²⁴ Menna Gallie Archive, talk to Swansea Women Graduates, undated but probably given in the early 1970s, L1/16.
- ²⁵ Menna Gallie, 'For God's sake hold your tongue and let me love', *Cambridge Review*, 92 2199 (1970), 49–50 (p. 50).
- ²⁶ 'For God's sake hold your tongue and let me love', 50.
- ²⁷ See also Stephen Knight 'Welsh Industrial Fiction by Women', in H. Gustav Klaus and Stephen Knight (eds), *British Industrial Fictions* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), pp. 163–80 (p. 169); and Virgilia Peterson's review, in *Herald Tribune*, 7 February 1960 – Gerwin, 'her too-loving brother': Menna Gallie Archive, L4/1.
- ²⁸ John, 'Introduction', *Strike for a Kingdom*, p. xii.
- ²⁹ John Beynon, for example, notes how 'British (and in particular "English") masculinity was generally held to be superior to other "races"'. *Masculinities and Culture* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2002), p. 29.
- ³⁰ Gayle Rubin, 'The Traffic in Women: Notes on the "Political Economy" of Sex', in Rayna R. Reiter (ed.), *Toward an Anthropology of Women* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press 1975), pp. 157–210 (pp. 179–80).
- ³¹ David Glover and Cora Kaplan, *Genders* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 3.
- ³² Glover and Kaplan, *Genders*, p. 5.
- ³³ Susan Rowland, *From Agatha Christie to Ruth Rendell* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 16.
- ³⁴ See Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), pp. 144–6.
- ³⁵ G. G. Bolich, *Cross-dressing in Context*, vol. 4 (Raleigh, NC: Psyche's Press, 2008), p. 117.

- ³⁶ Judith Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory', in Sue-Ellen Chase (ed.), *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), pp. 270–82 (p. 282).
- ³⁷ Stephen Knight, *A Hundred Years of Fiction* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004), p. 28. Leslie A. Fielder has noted the way 'the "boyish" theme recurs with especial regularity in American fiction', although he associates it, as in James Fenimore Cooper's *Leatherstocking Tales*, with escape and adventure: *Love and Death in the American Novel*, 2nd edn (London: Penguin, 1984), pp. 181–2.
- ³⁸ David S. Gutterman, 'Postmodernism and the Interrogation of Masculinity', in Stephen M. Whitehead and Frank J. Barrett (eds), *The Masculinities Reader* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006), pp. 56–71 (p. 59).
- ³⁹ For a discussion of the ethnic/racial problematics of the term in an American fictional context see Gill Plain, *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction*, pp. 109–17.
- ⁴⁰ Jonathan Rutherford, *Forever England: Reflections on Masculinity and Empire* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1997), p. 21.
- ⁴¹ *Strike for a Kingdom* is anticipating events here for the Cow-and-Gate royal baby slogan that did not appear until 1930.
- ⁴² Macherey, *A Theory of Literary Production*, p. 99.
- ⁴³ Todd W. Reeser, *Masculinities in Theory: An Introduction* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), p. 13.
- ⁴⁴ Plain, *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction*, p. 90.
- ⁴⁵ Katie Gramich has an interesting paragraph on the interstitial gendering of boyhood in Rhys Davies's short stories where "the boy" may represent that third gender possibility which has continually fascinated writers as diverse as Théophile Gautier and Jeanette Winterson. 'The Masquerade of Gender in the Stories of Rhys Davies', in *Decoding the Hare*, ed. Meic Stephens (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001), pp. 204–15 (p. 209).
- ⁴⁶ Rubin, 'The Traffic in Women', p. 200.
- ⁴⁷ Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*, trans. Annette Lavers and Colin Smith (New York: Hill and Wang, 1986), p. 77.
- ⁴⁸ Frank Lentricchia, *Criticism and Social Change* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 25.
- ⁴⁹ Michael S. Kimmel, *The Gendered Society* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 76.
- ⁵⁰ Kimmel, *The Gendered Society*, p. 69.
- ⁵¹ Plain, *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction*, p. 4.
- ⁵² Bounderby is, 'A man with a pervading appearance on him of being inflated like a balloon and ready to start': Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* [1854], ed. Kate Flint (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 20.
- ⁵³ *Much Ado About Nothing*, in *The Arden Shakespeare*, ed. A. R. Humphreys (London: Methuen, 1981), III.v.41.
- ⁵⁴ Plain, *Twentieth-Century Crime Fiction*, p. 90.
- ⁵⁵ M. Wynn Thomas, 'Afterword' to Emyr Humphreys's *A Toy Epic* [1958] (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press, 1989), p. 144.
- ⁵⁶ Though young herself during the 1926 strike, Gallie records that it 'seared' her. Prevented from joining the communal school meal for children of striking miners because her father was not a miner, she states that in *Strike for a Kingdom* she was 'trying to rid my conscience of both my father's guiltless guilt and my own': Menna Gallie Archive, address to Swansea Writers' Group, L1/16.
- ⁵⁷ A feature ascribed by Gallie to a 'rugger type' form of demonstrative masculinity, Menna Gallie Archive, address to Swansea Writers' Group, L1/16.

- ⁵⁸ R. W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), p. 193.
- ⁵⁹ John Horne, 'The Age of Nation States and World Wars', in Stefan Dudink, Karen Hornemann and John Tosh (eds), *Masculinities in Politics and War: Gendering Modern History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 22–39 (p. 29).
- ⁶⁰ Rowland, *From Agatha Christie to Ruth Rendell*, p. 46.
- ⁶¹ Cited by Stephen Knight, 'A New Enormous Music: Industrial Fiction in Wales', in M. Wynn Thomas (ed.), *A Guide to Welsh Literature: Vol. VII, Welsh Writing in English* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), pp. 47–90 (p. 75).