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Scotland, Living Dualities – historical development of identity construction

Abstract: *The text explores historical development of Scottish national identity. The issue is analysed from different angles which basically reflect different types of individual identities. The development of Scottishness is first assessed in terms of Anglo-Scottish relations, using the dual perspective of coloniser/colonised. The following phenomena reflect Scottish regional identity and the historical development of regional relationships, social identity and the historical development of gender representation within the notion of Scottishness.*

Keywords: *Scottish national identity – Scottish history – Scottish dualities – Anglo-Scottish relations – identity construction*

To explore the features of any country's culture offers interesting results. But to explore the culture of a country that is undergoing a major change in defining itself, promises to be especially revealing. Scotland and its culture can certainly serve this purpose very well, as the newly sought position of the Scottish people as a nation directs the rethinking of not only the national, but also all the other cultural identities of such human entity.

It can be argued that the strong awareness of national identity in Scotland has its roots somewhere in the depths of the nation's history and it is by no means a modern phenomenon. However, the atmosphere of change seems to be omnipresent in many fields of contemporary Scottish culture, literature being one of them. Cultural identities are presented in the works of many contemporary Scottish writers: James Kelman, Alasdair Gray, Iain Banks, Janice Galloway, Ali Smith and many others. James Kelman, for example, is not only regarded as one of the recognised Scottish writers, but at the same time represents Glasgow, the strong literary tradition of which offers space for comparison with the new tendencies in Kelman's supposedly experimental literary works. Apart from his identification with Glasgow, Kelman also represents the working class identity in contemporary Scottish fiction. Alasdair Gray, on the other hand, stands for rather different literary voice: the intellectual artistic expression with very strong experimental features. Iain Banks is one of the young authors who reflect the current Scottish cultural reality in his novels full of unexpected turn-outs. Janice Galloway represents one of the female voices in the predominantly masculine presentation of Scottish culture, and has been joined by many

other female voices nowadays. Willy Maley takes the high involvement of modern Scottish voices for granted and refers to Scotland as the seedbed for storytelling of the highest order.¹ All these authors show the real state of the analysed features of a modern Scottish society as seen and interpreted by local and thus, involved writers. They also serve as examples of various obstacles on the Scottish journey towards successful identity construction. Some of these have strong historical roots, which shall be further analysed in this text.

If we assess the environment of contemporary Scotland, we can once again refer to Willy Maley and his short phrase: “*Small country, big conversation*”.² On the other hand, the search for national identity in Scotland has greatly overpowered the importance of other identities: gender, regional, religious, ethnic etc. Yet, it is extremely obvious that the label “Scottish” does not effectively describe most of Scotland’s population. Scotland’s struggle for the position and identification within a larger political unit has been even historically rather long and is marked by countless disillusionments of the public opinion. An example of such historical event, marked by a “*yawning gap between the politicians and the people*”³ can be nothing less than the Act of Union of 1707.

Identity construction in contemporary Scotland is burdened with many difficulties. If one were to use a single expression to characterise the process of formulating Scottishness, the most obvious would be “negotiation”, which characterises the many dualities Scotland has to resolve. Christopher Harvie looks into the history of Scotland and gives evidence of the existence of competing identities long before the Scots lost their political independence as he claims that “*though Scotland’s community of the realm was an early example of popular nationalism, the country was driven with complex divisions between Lowland and Highland, Gaelic and Scots, urban and rural, seaboard and landward*”⁴. This text aims at developing the analysis of the dualities identified by Cristie March in her article *Bella and the Beast* as the tensions between the colonial and colonised, region and nation, Scotland and Britain, Highland and Lowland, as well as masculine and feminine.⁵ These are further reflected by the entangled linguistic situation marked by the uneasy relationship between Gaelic, Scots, Scottish dialect and Standard English. On the other hand, as Douglas Gifford claims, the clash between “*new internationalism*” and tradition-

1 Willy MALEY, *Literature and diversity – border crossing: new Scottish writing*, in: Marc Lambert (ed.), *Discovering Scottish Literature: A Contemporary Overview*, Edinburgh 2007, pp. 13–22, here p. 14.

2 Ibidem.

3 Tom M. DEVINE, *The Scottish Nation 1700–2000*, London 2000, p. 9.

4 Christopher HARVIE, *Ballads of a Nation*, *History Today* 49/9, 1999, p. 12.

5 Cristie MARCH, *Bella and the Beast (and a Few Dragons, Too): Alasdair Gray and the Social Resistance of the Grotesque*, *Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 43/4, 2002, p. 324.

al urban regionalism signifies a “retreat to home territory to reassess identity”.⁶ The desire to re-define itself mainly stems from the collapse of the above described dichotomised framework of definition and aims at breaking away from the traditional myths and icons and arriving at new understanding of contemporary Scotland, perhaps not locked in itself, but related to the global community and it is clearly not only the Scottish history and mythology, which inspires the authors, as they quite often use icons from other cultures. Yet, to be completely just, there are academics, who see the Scottish bipolarity as a driving force of identity construction, rather than its hindrance, and who point out the historical value of such bipolarity, clearly referring to G. G. Smith and his *Caledonian Antisyzygy*. Gerard Carruthers, for example, stresses the idea of “*tradition defined by its internal oppositions*” and to visualise the core of *Caledonian Antisyzygy*, he cites Smith’s very powerful metaphor of Scotland “*as the gargoyle grinning at the elbow of a kneeling saint*”.⁷

To address in brief the first of the Scottish “internal oppositions”, i.e. that between the colonial and the colonised, one has to note the fact that Scotland indeed became a part of Great Britain through the Act of Union in 1707, which was to a great extent economically motivated and enabled the Scots to share in the imperial trade. According to Richard J. Finlay: “*The Scots regarded themselves as the “mother nation” of the Empire and the Union was portrayed as an imperial partnership with England.*”⁸ On the other hand, the signs of subordination of Scotland to England within the Union cannot be overlooked. With yet another reference to the Act of Union of 1707, the motivation of the English to indeed colonize and, thus seize the decision-making of the Scots, is clear. As the Scottish alliance with France or the Jacobite activities so typical for the Scottish Highlands were perceived as a threat to the official policies of England, the parliamentary union with Scotland was seen as an essential condition of the future stability of the country. The Anglo-Scottish Union, carried despite the popular hostility, became a good example of the carrot-and-stick policy so often used in Britain’s colonial past: the freedom and statehood (if only partial) was sacrificed for advantages which the time proved to be completely inadequate. Devine suggests some of the rewards the Scots gained from their consent to the Union of 1707: apart from granting the freedom of trade, these were mainly the secured historical rights and privileges of the Kirk, the Scottish Presbyterian Church, secured

6 Douglas GIFFORD, *Imagining Scotlands: The Return to Mythology in Modern Scottish Fiction*, in: Susanne Hagemann (ed.), *Studies in Scottish Fiction: 1945 to the Present*, Frankfurt am Main 1996, pp. 17–49, here p. 24.

7 Gerard CARRUTHERS – David GOLDIE – Alasdair RENFREW, *Beyond Scotland: New Contexts for Twentieth-Century Scottish Literature*, Amsterdam – New York 2004, p. 11.

8 Richard J. FINLAY, *A Partnership for Good: Scottish Politics and the Union since 1880*, Edinburgh 1997, p. 15.

rights of the Court Party, the main supporter of the Union in Scotland, and also the secured interests of the most powerful Scottish noblemen (Queensberry, Argyll etc.).⁹ The Act of Union and the motivation of the Scottish Parliament to pass such document, by which this body actually repealed itself, remains, quite understandably, one of the most fervently discussed themes of Scottish cultural and political history. The gains were so negligible in comparison with the incredibly far-reaching consequences of such decision and, furthermore, it has made a permanent mark on the consciousness of the “untamed nation”, which is the message, the Scots project through their national symbols (thus, producing yet another opposition).

The main dispute over the motivation of the decision concerning the Act of Union is fuelled by two opinions, both once again reflecting the tension between the colonial and colonised. According to many scholars, the main motivation can be seen in the need to gain access to the colonial markets (as expressed above with reference to Cristie March). Tom M. Devine provides rather meticulous historical and economic account of the pre-union situation in Scottish economy and stresses the significance of the failed Darien project, an expedition through which Scotland wanted to establish a colony in Central America, reaching to the Pacific and Atlantic simultaneously, thus aiming at becoming a significant colonial power.¹⁰ Financial compensation of the Scottish loss in the Darien project was a part of the Union deal. The opposing academics however claim that it was Scotland’s own public money, with which the decision-makers were bribed.¹¹ Furthermore, prior to the Union, Scotland enjoyed flourishing trade relations not only with England itself, but mainly with Ireland: Devine in fact refers to Ulster as to the Scottish colony appropriated through migration and trade.¹² After the Act of Union, Scottish trade benefited from English protection and Scotland, mainly later during the rule of Queen Victoria played an important role within the Empire, mainly in the East India Company, and the growing Scottish diaspora helped to forge trade connections abroad.¹³ Paul Henderson Scott, representing the group of academics who do not agree with the economic motivation of the Union, challenges the Scottish urgency to participate in the English trade and gives the evidence of Wales, the poor situation of which should have served as an example of the devastating effects of tax imposition which was to follow the union (for proof referring to Daniel Defoe, who acted in the Union negotiations as an English spy and

9 T. M. DEVINE, *The Scottish Nation*, p. 5, 16.

10 T. M. DEVINE, *The Scottish Nation*, p. 5.

11 Paul HENDERSON SCOTT, *An English Invasion Would Have Been Worse: Why the Scottish Parliament Accepted the Union*, *Scottish Studies Review* 4/2, 2003, p. 12.

12 T. M. DEVINE, *The Scottish Nation*, p. 52.

13 *Ibidem*, p. 61, 58.

stressed the economic benefits for Scotland, yet twenty years later admitted the poverty of the country).¹⁴ Instead, Henderson Scott suggests two different reasons for the hasty acceptance of the union proposal despite the public opposition: bribery and fear of the English invasion of Scotland. To prove the former, he cites Robert Burns: “*We’re bought and sold for English gold - / Such parcel of rogues in a nation*”¹⁵ and suggests the treachery of the Duke of Hamilton, the leader of the Union adversaries in the Scottish Parliament.¹⁶ The latter, i.e. the threat of English invasion, is in Henderson Scott’s view proved by the military actions taken by the English military units during the Union negotiations, as well as by many contemporary accounts of the events. Scott cites, for example, Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, who claims his “*moral certainty that England would never allow us to grow rich and powerful in a separate state*” and assures that the alternative to the Union would have Scotland “*fall under the Dominion of England by right of conquest*”.¹⁷ The above outline of the academic debate of the rather distant, even though historically significant, event clearly reflects the deep-rooted tension between the colonial and the colonised: as the first argument clearly establishes Scotland’s ambition to colonise, the second perceives the Act of Union as a national failure determining and determined by the position of the colonised.

The second example related to the issue of colonisation, is the English appropriation of the traditional Scottish symbols and embracing the romanticised image of Scotland. The term relevant for this particular creation of false identity has been coined by Michael Hechter as “*internal colonisation*”.¹⁸ The deformed identity created in this way, according to David McCrone, causes that historical events and development are treasured to such extent that the actual culture of a country is beginning to deform accordingly and the validity of such culture is disputable. In case of Scotland, the two main deforming tendencies have been identified as tartantry and Kailyardism: “*The dominant analysis of Scottish culture remains a pessimistic and negative one based on the thesis that Scotland’s culture is deformed and debased by sub-cultural formations such as tartantry and Kailyardism.*”¹⁹

The fact that the Highlands, the home of tartan, have been accepted as the basis of the Scottish culture and are the home of most of the images and icons used to represent Scotland nowadays has several dimensions. First of all, it is understandable, as the Highlands

14 P. HENDERSON SCOTT, *An English Invasion*, pp. 12–13.

15 Ibidem, p. 12.

16 Ibidem, p. 11.

17 Ibidem, p. 14.

18 Willy MALEY, *Cultural Devolution? Representing Scotland in the 1970’s*, in: Bart Moore-Gilbert (ed.), *The Arts in the 1970’s: Cultural Closure*, London 1994, p. 82.

19 David McCRONE, *Understanding Scotland: The Sociology of a Stateless Nation*, London 1994, pp. 12–13.

have always symbolised an enclosed self-contained society marked by a strong resistance to any interference from “outside” and therefore, could be interpreted as a kind of desired status for the whole of Scotland. Secondly, according to McCrone, due to the late 19th century industrialisation, the Scottish Lowlands became very much the same as any other industrial area and thus, accepting the symbolism and iconography of the Highlands provided a powerful means of distinction.²⁰ On the other hand, the fact that it is the most backward and barbarous part of the country is also rather interesting, and perhaps could be seen as somehow contributing to “*the Scot’s feeling of inferiority*”.²¹ Caroline McCracken-Fletcher suggests that for many generations, this “*sartorial Scottishness has come to signify national delimitation, a kind of northern blackface through which Scots cringingly and resentfully present themselves for English consumption*”.²² The negative approach of the Scots themselves to such cultural representation of Scotland is clear from Tom Nairn’s view of tartantry as degrading: “*Sporranry, alcoholism ... the ludicrous appropriation of the remains of Scotland’s Celtic fringe as a national symbol ... [and] a sickening militarism, the relic of Scotland’s special role in the building up of British imperialism*” circulated alongside the “*national consciousness of the intelligentsia ... a sort of ethereal tartantry*”.²³

Much of the blame for the advent of tartantry is put with Walter Scott, whose search for the culture of Scotland resulted in creating a rather limiting view of the clan and kilt society originally relevant only to the Scottish Highlands. Furthermore, his love of history and tendency to present contemporary Scots as the re-creations of old Scottish heroes result in denying the dynamics of identity creation, indeed, make culture stable if not stagnant and museum-like. Such blame would, however, be rather short-sighted. Indeed, there are voices standing up to defend Walter Scott. The fact that Scott mainly made the rest of the world aware of the existence of Scotland within Great Britain has been recognised, what seems to be a rather innovative view of Scott’s achievement is McCracken-Fletcher’s claim that he has assembled “*a fascinating complex of signs*” with the aim to signify Scottish difference and separateness, yet still within the Union.²⁴ The problems apparently do not stem from Scott’s construction of Scotland, but from the readiness with which such construction was embraced by the English. Tartantry has penetrated the English society through its very sovereigns and they also show its persistence: George IV, for whom Scott’s parade of the Highland culture was designed, showed much enthusiasm in

20 Ibidem, p. 17.

21 Ibidem, p. 186.

22 Caroline McCracken-Fletcher, *A Tartan Politics? Couture and National Creativity in the New Scottish Parliament*, *Scottish Studies Review* 3/1, 2002, p. 110.

23 Ibidem, p. 110.

24 Ibidem, p. 111.

accepting this “exotic” face of Britain; Queen Victoria, through her sentimental love of the Scottish Highlands, later added her own “sub-genre” of tartanry referred to as Balmorality (which Christopher Harvie in fact sees as a mere exploitation of the power-vacuum in Scotland of the 1840’s)²⁵; and, last but not least, Elizabeth II who attended the 1999 celebrations of the opening of Scottish Parliament clad in the colour-scheme of a thistle. Indeed, the fact that “discovering” Scottish roots became almost a must for any upper class Englishman, only shows the effectiveness of the so called “internal colonisation”, thus presenting the falsified image of Scotland, processed through the English mind, not only to others, but also to Scotland itself.²⁶ The one, most often blamed for the initiation of tartanry, Walter Scott, himself realised that the English have added their own interpretation and thus, changed or violated and deformed the Scottish body that, as Scott expresses in *Malachi Malagrowther Letters*, manages to be distinct, yet undistinguished and thus subject to inscriptions of a dominant power.²⁷ As it was the case of the Act of Union, however, there are voices that challenge the seemingly unanimous condemnation of tartanry. As was already suggested, tartanry is viewed by many as a limitation to the ability to construct alternative meaningful discourses within which to construct native land and own identity.²⁸ One would be clearly able to state that no other sign could as obviously show the state of country’s colonial subordination than the fact that its history, culture and cultural geography has been stolen and violated by the superior power. Caroline McCracken-Flasher, however, challenges this understanding of tartanry by referring to its rather subversive and inspiring role Scottish identity construction. At first, she suggests the creativity related to overcoming the tartanry myth. For the English, the ready and hasty acceptance of the romanticised Scot signifies the urgency to construct otherness that would be familiar and suitable. Tartanry is, however, equally important for the construction of Scottish nationality. McCracken-Flesher claims: “*At the same time, for Scotland, the myth of tartanry has worked to maintain the notion of the nation while energizing its difference. The very delimitation of kilt-ification has required Scots to self-identify through and against the fashion of the nation thus enacting multiplicity as the formative phenomenon of a unified Scottishness. Tartan is the site of the contention that is Scotland.*”²⁹

Secondly, she presents tartanry as the means of subverting the monolith of Britishness, indeed Englishness. The tartan myth, however distorting or simplifying, helped to maintain the notion of Scottish difference. Furthermore, the “encompassing myth of tartanry”

25 Ch. HARVIE, *Ballads of a Nation*, p. 13.

26 C. MCCRACKEN-FLESHER, *A Tartan Politics*, p. 110, 111.

27 Ibidem, p. 112.

28 Ibidem.

29 Ibidem, p. 113.

has created a power of a new nationalism that McCracken-Flesher identifies as not limited by ethnicity, but playful, expansive and inclusive.³⁰

Another possible view of Scotland as “the colonised” is based on the country’s linguistic situation. As was already mentioned, Scotland poses a multilingual environment, where, however, Standard English is marked as the language of institutions and, therefore, power. The power of the Scottish institutions has been historically questioned anyway; as Henderson Scott claims that the Union of 1707 was already forged by Scottish politicians, who were used to act on instruction from London.³¹ The imposition of English as the language of power only enhances the lack of Scottish institutional potency. Through the imposition of a non-native language onto the institution of national importance, the power is rather effectively removed. By linking the situation in Scotland to other countries, in which English was imposed as the official language, such as India or the Caribbean, one establishes a tradition of oppression for Scotland.³² Indeed, the lack of a national language is lamented also in connection with national literature. Edwin Muir in his book *Scott and Scotland* distinguishes between the tradition of literature written in Scots, which he considers rather homogenous, and the later “confusion of tongues” brought about by the Scottish authors of English prose (e.g. Knox) and the English translation of the Bible.³³ He states that a “prerequisite of an autonomous literature is a homogeneous language” and although he does not question the genius of the authors traditionally seen as Scottish literary doyens, such as e.g. Robert Burns, Muir simply states that their works fall into the period in which Scottish literature is dead and they do not have a language in which to express themselves.³⁴ The problem with Scottish language, according to Muir, is that it is not homogeneous, that it is merely represented by varied Scottish dialects giving literature the air of provincialism: “*language still exists, in forms of varying debasement, on our numerous Scottish dialects; but these cannot utter the full mind of a people on all the levels of discourse*”.³⁵ Thus, in his time, Muir envisaged the future of Scottish national literature as that written in English. Muir’s analysis represents an example of how the linguistic situation in Scotland influences not only the institutions of power, but also cultural institutions. However, the Scottish vernacular speech, which Muir saw as dead, has been rediscovered and used in literary works of Irvine Welsh, Tom Leonard or James Kelman. Cairns Craig cites Robert Crawford’s claim that “*mutual awareness of cultural differences (primarily between various*

30 Ibidem, p. 110.

31 P. HENDERSON SCOTT, *An English Invasion*, p. 11.

32 C. MARCH, *Bella and the Beast*, p. 325.

33 Edwin MUIR, *Scott and Scotland*, London 1936, p. 17.

34 Ibidem, p. 19, 57.

35 Ibidem, p. 178.

native tongues is quite different in Scotland or in Wales from the overall awareness in Britain”.³⁶ Realising and accepting one’s mixed linguistic and even cultural history thus, once again, represents a means of standing out in the British context. Furthermore, Craig claims that this process is combined with “*shaping a strategy that aligned Scottish writing with those ‘postcolonial’ cultures which were producing some of the most theoretically inspiring contemporary writing*”.³⁷ Thus, when referring back to the fact that the imposition of English established the tradition of oppression in Scotland, the country’s current tendency to determine itself resonates with its postcolonial condition.

The above presented sources of some of the tendencies deforming Scottish identity creation have already hinted upon the tension between two fundamental regional identities of Scotland, i.e. Highland and Lowland. This tension can be seen as another pair of competing Scottish images. One of the problematic features of the image of Scotland that Walter Scott has created is its limited validity. The colourful representation that is tartan, kilt and bag-pipe culture is the result of a gross generalisation which completely erases the distinctive features of other regions than that of Scottish Highlands. “*Sir Walter Scott has ridiculously made us appear to be a nation of Highlanders, and the bagpipe and the tartan are the order of the day*”, exclaims a Scott’s contemporary unaware of the fact that this image of the Scottish nation was to prevail over long years.³⁸ It was also suggested above that the Highlands did not have altogether positive reputation. Indeed, for many years they were perceived as political menace, enclosed and removed island-like community. Their Jacobite inclinations made them stand out even more. Later, in 1746, the defeat at the battle of Culloden, reduced the status of the Highlands to a mere manpower resource.³⁹ Nevertheless, the acceptance of tartan, kilt and other Highland symbols are seen by some, such as Henderson Scott or McCracken-Flesher, in a positive light – as the symbols of the reconciliation of the Lowlands and the Highlands. “*...they give the impression of a unitary, delimited, dealable Scotland while expressing the difference that is Scottish citizenship in its fullest sense – a difference that includes highland and lowland, immigrant and exile, foreigner and native in the clashing weave of Scottish culture*”.⁴⁰

As McCrone suggests, however, there is a very strong exploitation of the created national heritage by the Scots themselves. According to Ian A. Bell, the cheap representations of Scots are now designed mainly for *internal consumption* and they should mainly

36 G. CARRUTHERS – D. GOLDIE – A. RENFREW, *Beyond Scotland*, p. 235.

37 *Ibidem*.

38 C. MCCRACKEN-FLESHER, *A Tartan Politics*, p. 112.

39 Ch. HARVIE, *Ballads of a Nation*, p. 12.

40 C. MCCRACKEN-FLESHER, *A Tartan Politics*, p. 115.

mobilise the national pride.⁴¹ Such references make it clear that the imagery of the Highlands has been widely accepted by the Scottish public – and witnessing basically any public event such as a graduation ceremony or a football match only proves this. It is more than interesting to explore the roots of the change of approach to the Highland culture as well as rise of the “new” national heritage which almost completely overlooks the features of the Lowlands. Tom M. Devine summarizes this process as “*the urban society adopting a rural face*” and creating “*a national image in which the Lowlands have no part*”.⁴² Yet, even though the country keeps being presented as the land of mountains, in reality, by the late nineteenth century, Scotland had already become an industrial pioneer with most of its inhabitants living in the central Lowlands and the rural life of the country had become a matter of the past. Indeed, the attitudes to the Highlands in history were rather negative within Scotland itself (as has been suggested above – politically as well as religiously). According to Devine’s history, the Highlands as a term have appeared in the Middle Ages, when they became increasingly distinguishable from the rest of the country not only socially and culturally, but – as a Gaelic speaking community, mostly linguistically.⁴³ Together with its political instability and the already mentioned religious difference, they were a matter of scorn on a popular level, a spot of desired assimilation on the level of politics. The previously mentioned “political menace” and Jacobean threat were attitudes by no means reserved only for the English: for the otherwise predominantly Presbyterian Scotland represented an equal worry. Devine claims that “*for Lowland Presbyterians, the highland Jacobites posed a dreadful threat because of their association with popery*”.⁴⁴ Thus, the repressions which followed the unsuccessful Jacobite rebellion of 1745, mainly the Disarming Act (which in terms of cultural politics is an incredible example of colonial assimilation policy), did not meet much large-scale opposition on the national basis.⁴⁵ Furthermore, it seems to be a common knowledge that a significant role in another feature adding to the demise of the traditional Highlands – the Clearances, was played by the clan chiefs themselves, as their role has basically transformed into that of landlords. Interestingly enough, according to Devine, the roots of Highlandism reach particularly into this period. He stresses the increasing popularity of Highland accessories, including the forbidden tartan, with the growing Scottish middle class and not only was the tartan imprinting itself on the mind of the English as a traditional Scottish dress,

41 Ian A. BELL, *Imagine Living There: From and Ideology in Contemporary Scottish Fiction*, in: S. Hagemann (ed.), *Studies in Scottish Fiction*, pp. 223–224.

42 T. M. DEVINE, *The Scottish Nation*, p. 231, 235.

43 *Ibidem*, p. 231.

44 *Ibidem*, p. 233.

45 David ROSS, *Scotland: A History of a Nation*, Glasgow 1999, pp. 237–238.

it was embraced as such by the Scots themselves.⁴⁶ One of the reasons for that was already suggested in the above presented discussion of tartanry – the need to distinguish Scottish identity within the uniformity of the Union. The second reason can clearly be connected with the events of contemporary Europe, where nationalisms of different degrees were fuelled by the Napoleonic wars and thus, initiated the appreciation of national traditions. In case of Scotland and its relation to the Highlands, the Napoleonic wars highlighted mainly the military achievements of the Highland regiments, thus, adding yet another face to the symbolism of tartan and kilt: that of martial skill. Devine illustrates with a historical example: “By 1881, indeed, the connection between militarism and Highlandism was so strong that the War Office ordered all Lowland regiments to wear tartan trews and Highland-style doublets, a directive that applied equally to those who had won the battle honours fighting against Highlanders. The victory of Highlandism was complete.”⁴⁷

The influence of Europe on the acceptance of the Highlands as the main source of Scottish symbolism was not limited to the historical events of the time. It was the interest of the thinkers of the Enlightenment in the study of human social evolution, i.e. “*progress from rude to civilised manners*”.⁴⁸ The Highlander seemed to fit the late-eighteenth-century notion of the civilised “rude savage” as perfectly as the early nineteenth century “noble savage” stressed in the “Balmorality” vision of the Highlands so popular during the reign of Queen Victoria. Charles Withers argues that “*to the urbane philosophers of the late eighteenth century the Highlander was a contemporary ancestor, the Highlands the Scottish past on the doorstep*”.⁴⁹ Similarly, the highland countryside, which is one of the Scottish most boasted riches today, has not always been embraced with such admiration and owes the discovery of its beauty to the advent of Romanticism, “*The Highlander also inhabited a physical world of desolation, barrenness and ugliness; and to the Lowland mind, before the revolution in aesthetic taste of the later eighteenth century, the north of Scotland was both inhospitable and threatening. ... Heather-covered bens were neither romantic nor attractive (as they were later to become) but merely ugly and sinister*”.⁵⁰

Combined with the world-wide impact of James McPherson’s *Fingal*, there were two main contributions to the change of attitude to the Highland landscape: the development of the idea of the sublime and the idea of the picturesque. To define the contemporary notion of the sublime, Devine refers mainly to Edmund Burke’s *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, in which he stipulates that “*the sub-*

46 T. M. DEVINE, *The Scottish Nation*, pp. 233–234.

47 Ibidem, p. 241.

48 Ibidem.

49 Ibidem.

50 Ibidem, p. 232.

lime is found to be rooted in the terrific, inspiring a fear which fills the mind with great ideas and stirs the soul".⁵¹ The notion of the picturesque is referred to in connection with William Gilpin, who stresses the need of careful "discriminating" observation in determining a picturesque landscape in order to be able to admire the composition of the varied, indeed, "diverse" elements.⁵² At the time, the Highlands were not only discovered artistically, but also literally due to the developing transport. This only added to the full incorporation of the Highlands into the Scottish geography.

Thus, the alienation of the Highlands has been erased and indeed, the competing images of the Highlands and Lowlands seemingly reconciled in this created heritage. Yet, it does fulfil the function of identification and signifying difference, hence its wide popularity even in Scotland itself.

The tension between nation and region is of no lower importance even though a part of the problem could perhaps be, as David McCrone suggests, the different understanding of national identity in modernist and post-modernist sense. While the modernist view considers the nation to provide a clear and indisputable identity, national identity in the post-modernist terms appears often rather limited and contradictory and furthermore, other competing identities are offered.⁵³ When approaching Scotland through its nationalism, once again the problem of validity is encountered. Many theoreticians claim that a nation must have its functioning political institutions, which support and convey nationhood. That, of course, is a problem in Scottish environment, where the Scottish Parliament has only relatively recently been re-established. Christopher Whyte addresses the problem in his following suggestion: "*one could call them small cultures, minority cultures, nations without a state. My own preference would be to speak of national groupings which have extremely limited political control over the internal organisation and external relations of the territory they inhabit. It is a constantly shifting category.*"⁵⁴

The loss of statehood, however, does not have to coincide only with the loss of functional national institutions. As was already mentioned above, the decision-making even prior to the parliamentary union had been greatly determined by English politics. According to Paul Henderson Scott, Scotland officially ceased to exist much before the fatal Union. He places the loss of Scottish statehood together with the removal of James IV to London, by which Scotland effectively lost not only its foreign policy but also its interna-

51 Ibidem, p. 242.

52 Ibidem, p. 243.

53 D. McCrone, *Understanding Scotland*, pp. 12–13.

54 Christopher Whyte, *Gendering the Nation: Studies in Modern Scottish Literature*, Edinburgh 1995, pp. ix–xx.

tional identity.⁵⁵ In some way, the situation of Scotland in this period is even more obscure than after the union. Seemingly, the country was still enjoying its parliamentary freedom and during the very first years of the eighteenth century, the Scottish Parliament actually passed some rather daring legislation aiming at greater independence on the English Monarch. Internationally, however, the country was represented by the English policy and thus, effectively ceased to exist. As Christopher Harvie suggests, the 1707 union gave rise to the “*rough-and-ready co-existence between the national cultures with semi-independent Scots institutions*” and “*the debate continued over the future of the nation and the means of maintaining its identity*”.⁵⁶ In comparison with the hazy position of Scotland within the Regal Union of 1603, however, the situation was at least clarified as the loss of Scottish statehood was complete. In the periods to follow, Scotland repetitively experienced waves of agitating the national feelings often alternated by periods in which at least Scottish intellectuals looked across the borders of Europe for more cosmopolitan identities. When dealing with the cosmopolitanism of the mid-nineteenth century, Harvie stresses the importance of national funding, which Scotland lacked. Those national investments, which typically marked the European statehood of the time, e.g. courts or railways, were in Scotland financed from imperial, municipal or private funds. The resulting cosmopolitanism greatly influenced Scottish culture, yet resulted in the departure of domestic intellectual elite, which instead began to constitute governing elites outside Europe.⁵⁷ The change of attitude towards a more nationalist agitation was brought by the historical events of the early twentieth century. The two main events fuelling the sudden shift from the cultural nationalism to the political one were undoubtedly the Irish Easter Rising of 1916 and the Treaty of Versailles of 1919. Harvie suggests that not only was the Easter Rising a case in which “*poets had apparently changed a nation*”, but the impact on Scotland had also other sources: “*...to younger Scottish socialists like MacDiarmid, politicised by the war and the industrial struggles of the ‘Red Clyde’, Connolly became a hero. An ethnic nation, of the sort which proliferated after Versailles in 1919, was the new goal.*”⁵⁸ Indeed, the Europe, which was created by the Treaty of Versailles and referred to as “*Europe of Nations*”⁵⁹, once again did not include Scotland. The national status of Scotland was thus once again denied and the country was placed on the level of a mere British region. Equal treatment was applied to Scotland within Britain itself. When considering the signification of political representation within the British Parliament, Scotland was for

55 P. HENDERSON SCOTT, *An English Invasion*, p. 9.

56 Ch. HARVIE, *Ballads of a Nation*, p. 12.

57 *Ibidem*, p. 13.

58 *Ibidem*, p. 14.

59 G. CARRUTHERS – D. GOLDIE – A. RENFREW, *Beyond Scotland*, p. 11.

decades represented on the level of a region, as the number of its MPs was linked to the country's population and not to its national status of a Union partner.⁶⁰ The unsatisfactory situation of Scotland caused by the duality of its status resulted in the country's constant attempts at developing its own distinct cultural identity or perhaps autonomous national culture. The varied level of success of such movements can be attributed, as Willy Maley suggests, precisely to the fact that the country's cultural institutions had rather ambiguous status and served both regional and national purposes.⁶¹ To some extent, by re-establishing the national Parliament in 1999, Scotland was seen as resuming its national status and many voices called for the effective exploitation of the Scottish experience. Christopher Harvie, for example, suggests the importance of creating the context of the new Scottish policies by referring to national history: "*in commentaries about Scottish recent past, history ought to take centre stage, due to the need to 'place' the policy of Scottish infant state*".⁶² The high hopes of independent Scottish policies, however, were somewhat dimmed not only by some of the acts and scandals connected with the new Parliament⁶³ but also by the dwindling importance of the nation as such and the re-structuring of the general social organisation. In the period of the late 1990's, as Erik J. Hobsbawm claims, nationalisms, although inescapable, do not any longer represent a driving force as they did from the French Revolution until the post-World War II imperialist colonialism.⁶⁴ In fact, the notion of region comes once again into play, this time as a status desired by Scotland itself, only in relation to a structure beyond Great Britain: "*It may also be argued that 'regions' constitute more rational sub-units of large economic entities like the European Community [sic] than the historic states that are its official members. ... West European separatist nationalisms like the Scottish, Welsh, Basque or Catalan are today in favour of bypassing their national governments by appealing directly to Brussels as 'regions'*".⁶⁵

The fact that the nationalist movements are in fact seeking to become a part of a higher economic and/or political unit, according to Hobsbawm, signifies their departure from the original aim of establishing an independent nation-state and even though they still may aim at total separation from the states of which they are part, they doubt the question of actual state independence.⁶⁶ Thus, it can be seen that the question of Scotland be-

60 W. MALEY, *Cultural Devolution?*, p. 84.

61 *Ibidem*, p. 85.

62 Christopher HARVIE, *The Folly of Our Fable: Getting Scottish History Wrong*, *Scottish Studies Review* 1/1, 2000, p. 100.

63 Neal ASCHERSON, *Stone Voices, The Search for Scotland*, London 2003, p. 296.

64 Erik J. HOBBSAWM, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780. Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge 1999, p. 169.

65 *Ibidem*, p. 185.

66 *Ibidem*, p. 188.

ing a nation or region is a matter dependent rather on global conditions and that Scotland has actually ran the full circle from attempting to re-gain its lost statehood, an aim, which was later replaced by the tendency to become a part of another, further-reaching structure as a region.

Much of the dispute of the bipolarity of Scotland as nation/region is closely connected to the competing image of Scottishness and Britishness, as Willy Maley, for example, refers to regionalising Scotland as “Britishing”.⁶⁷ This issue is not only limited to Scottish self-definition, but concerns also perception of Scotland from outside. Cristie March suggests that the cultural difference between England and Scotland is generally being ignored; the interconnectedness of the two cultural regions is mistakenly seen as sameness and, thus, leads to overlooking Scottish cultural autonomy. Scotland and its national identity are, therefore, subjected to double pressure – internal as well as external.⁶⁸ The issue is further complicated by the hazy and uncertain meaning of Britishness as such. Maley firstly suggests that Britain is not a nation, but a state and therefore, its culture is not national but state culture, then he adds that Britishness is not a recognisable whole: “*Britishness and the separate national identities that both feed into and are swallowed by it, makes a complex and heterogeneous phenomenon which cannot be reduced to a recognizable whole. Local storyline tends to get lost in the grand storyline...When Scotland is incorporated into histories of the development of British culture, the specificity of the Scottish experience is, if not entirely obliterated, then at least mediated through an English lens.*”⁶⁹

On the other hand, it is true that one of the internal pressures in history was to accept the British “storyline” as the post-Union Anglicisation of the Scottish society became a strong phenomenon resulting in actual denial of the Scottish national tradition. It was already suggested above that the situation of Scotland after the 1707 Union was that of semi-independence in which the country was trying to assert its national identity. These attempts of self-identification were greatly dependent on the individual layers of the contemporary Scottish society. The nobility was apparently taking a strongly pro-English course, which Tom M. Devine puts down to growing career opportunities for the upper-class Scots, which were generated by England and the English empire.⁷⁰ The economic benefits, however, were not the sole driving force of the post-Union “Britishing”. The period of the eighteenth century gradually began to see Scottish history in rather negative terms and many Scottish historians of the time strove to re-invent national with com-

67 W. MALEY, *Cultural Devolution?*, p. 86.

68 C. MARCH, *Bella and the Beast*, p. 326.

69 W. MALEY, *Cultural Devolution?*, p. 79.

70 T. M. DEVINE, *The Scottish Nation*, p. 25.

pletely new, rather striking, connections. Devine suggests that the Scottish past was approached as “*a dark story of anarchy, barbarism and religious fanaticism*” and that there were rather systematic attempts to deny the “*Gaelic-Irish heritage of Scotland and the complex racial origins of the Scottish people*” and link the Scots rather to Britons by claiming their Saxon linguistic past (by which they actually aided the final union, linguistic and cultural).⁷¹ The process of Scottish incorporation of British identity including its varied motivation stands very much in line with the contemporary philosophy of large- and small-scale nationalities and nation-states. Indeed, the fact that the small nationalities were to assimilate after being embraced by a large nation-state was unquestionable. Hobsbawm presents the contemporary belief that it was in fact to the benefit of a small (especially if considered backward) nationality to merge into a greater nation as they could “*make their contribution to the humanity through these*”.⁷² The attitude of the small nations to this philosophy was, according to Hobsbawm rather similar: “*...small nationalities, or even nation-states which accepted their integration into the larger nation as something positive – or, if one prefers, which accepted the laws of progress – did not recognise any irreconcilable difference between micro-culture and macro-culture either, or were even reconciled to the loss of what could not be adapted to the modern age. It was the Scots and not the English who invented the concept of the ‘North Briton’ after the Union of 1707.*”⁷³

With the changing perception of the role of national culture, especially with the growth of the Romantic nationalism of the nineteenth century, which was already analysed in relation to the production of deformed images of Scotland, it became more and more obvious that the Scottish self-construction is limited by the British context. The ways of reconstruction of the Scottish selfhood and its validity were already discussed, which only shows how closely connected, indeed entwined, the various bipolarities of Scottish identity construction are. Yet, another significant impulse comes with the period of late 1990’s, in which the era of Britishness seems to be ending on a larger scale. In Scotland, as Harvie suggests, the idea of Britishness was challenged, among other factors, by the traditional commitment of the intelligentsia to local loyalties on one hand, to global ideals on the other.⁷⁴ The importance of “dual identity”, proclaimed by John Major as “*two sources of pride – being British, but also being Scottish, or English or Welsh*”⁷⁵, is basically dwindling because of the general shift of points of identification. Furthermore, Britishness as

71 Ibidem, p. 29.

72 E. J. HOBSBAWM, *Nations and Nationalism*, p. 34.

73 Ibidem, p. 35.

74 Ch. HARVIE, *Ballads of a Nation*, p. 11.

75 Willy MALEY, *Britannia Major: writing and unionist identity*, in: Tracey Hill – William Hughes (eds.), *Contemporary Writing and National Identity*, Bath 1995, p. 49.

such, became burdened with rather negative connotations. In her discussion of the connection of national and European identity, Aleida Assman refers to the decline of Britishness due to its heavy historical baggage and connection with “*dominance and political exploitation*”⁷⁶ Although she focuses on the identification with Englishness, rather than Britishness, she mentions the inclusiveness of Britishness, which is a feature not preferred even on a European scale for being “*supranational and encompassing*”.⁷⁷ Yet, although the decline of Britishness gives the possibility to celebrate and affirm the local on one hand, on the other hand the newly offered points of identification, such as Englishness or Scottishness, are exclusive to other identities, which is claimed not only by Assman in her above-quoted discussion of European identity, but also by Willy Maley when addressing the Scottish struggle for self-definition and independence in the 1970’s: “... *composite cultural formation works in the same ways as the individual discourses which constitute it – homogenising, simplifying, unifying, making one voice out of many. It is not only in times of revolutionary turmoil that differences are sunk. Periods of intense reaction are marked by the politics of one-nation or of classlessness. ... These are powerful discourses that threaten to overwhelm other differences, other identities.*”⁷⁸

Thus, the danger of overhearing distinct voices due to one-sided identity formation represents one of the contemporary “internal” pressures related to the bipolarity of British/Scottish, the “external” pressure being the tendency to enter a union of nations which calls particularly for such clear-cut national formations. It is certain, however, that the “identity struggle” in Scotland has been focused predominantly on national identity and the other sections of the identity mosaic have been if not neglected, than at least grossly simplified.

The last area, which poses tensions for modern Scotland and at the same time, can serve as an illustration of the above discussed issue of overlooking certain identities for the sake of reconstructing national identity, is that of gender representation. The problem in this area is the indisputably masculine nature of Scottish cultural representations and icons from William Wallace, Bonnie Prince Charlie to the stereotypical Glaswegian working-class male hero. This however does not reflect reality in which the traditional gender roles have undergone more than significant changes. Yet, the fact that Scotland traditionally was a strongly patriarchal society is evident and to some extent remained unaltered throughout history. The fact that women were in the Scottish society historically regarded

76 Aleida ASSMAN, *Imagining Europe – Myths, Visions, Identities, Memories*, in: Martin Procházka – Ondřej Pilný (eds.), *Time Refigured. Myths, Foundation Texts and Imagined Communities*, Prague 2005, p. 155.

77 Ibidem.

78 W. MALEY, *Cultural Devolution?*, p. 82.

as second class citizens is confirmed for example by Arthur McIvor, who claims that in 1900, Scotland was still an intensely patriarchal society, in which the property-holding and voting rights of women were severely prescribed; till today it is generally true that there is a limited economic activity of women in Scotland.⁷⁹ The stereotype of a man as the breadwinner is probably not so common in the working class environment, as both spouses usually had to contribute financially in order to achieve decent living standards. Although the objection may be that the presented assumptions concern more the history, there is rather contemporary evidence of the male reluctance to see a woman as economically equal or even superior. The clichés violating gender relations in the Scottish society have a rather long tradition. One of the numerous cultural phenomena conveying false images of Scottish masculinity and femininity is certainly represented by the Kailyard literary tradition. Other gender clichés embedded in the rather recent history of Scottish culture are closely connected e.g. with class identity: the urban macho-type working-class man stereotypically represented by Alexander McArthur's and John Kingsley Long's disturbing novel *No Mean City*. Sylvia Bryce-Wunder maps the on-going dispute regarding the novel and splits the arguments basically into two opinion-groups: one discarding it as producing negative literary tradition and adding to the distorted vision of Scotland, the other, including, e.g. Edwin Morgan, trying for a more balanced view acknowledging the novel's paradigmatic value as well as its importance as a point of reference in later Scottish urban novels.⁸⁰ Both of these literary traditions and many other factors have established certain ways of perceiving gender as personal identity in Scotland.

The years of concentration on formulating Scottishness as a unified and unifying characteristic of national features are being replaced by tendencies to address diversity. Personal identities are beginning to matter in the ever more individualist society and, thus, the question of cultural diversity is becoming even more current. Ian A. Bell comments on the literary techniques reflecting the aim at addressing differences in contemporary Scottish fiction: "*Even the diversity of narrative and representational techniques on display in these novels, it might be argued, can be seen as part of a collective Scottish project, the differences being attributed to a desire shared by these writers to imagine and disseminate as many different 'Scotlands' as possible, releasing them to operate in opposition to the more conventional, more constraining and more heavily supported images of Scottish life.*"⁸¹

Nevertheless, the necessity to address the new reality of Scottish cultural existence should coincide with reassessing the country's past. Christopher Harvie suggests that

79 Tom M. DEVINE – Richard J. FINLAY, *Scotland in the 20th Century*, Edinburgh 1997, pp. 188–189.

80 Silvia BRYCE-WUNDER, *Of Hard Men and Hairies: No Mean City and Moder Scottish Urban Fiction*, *Scottish Studies Review* 4/1, 2003, pp. 112–125.

81 I. A. BELL, *Imagine Living There*, p. 221.

“a struggling movement – a class or nation – must interrogate its failures or defeats, using this to rationalise, throw overboard old beliefs, reorganise”.⁸² Thus, even images violating and distorting the contemporary Scottish reality add to the new national creativity producing more valid and more encompassing cultural picture of Scotland, which can serve as a point of identification for much larger number of people, because it does take into account also personal identities.

Resumé

Historický vývoj konstrukce skotské identity

Charakteristickým rysem Skotska je silné národní uvědomění, jehož kořeny sahají poměrně hluboko do národní historie a jež tak rozhodně nepředstavuje žádný nový či moderní fenomén. Přesto je většina oblastí současné skotské kultury, např. skotská literatura, prodchnuta všudypřítomnou atmosférou změny. Tento text zkoumá řadu proměn, jimiž prošlo chápání «národa» či «národní kultury» v různých souvislostech skotské historie. Celá tato kulturně-historická analýza je založena na zkoumání tradičních skotských dualit či rozporů. Nejdůležitějším z nich se jeví rozpor mezi *kolonizátorem* a *kolonizovaným*. Rozbor této duality je založen na zkoumání historických faktů týkajících se události, která na dlouhá století změnila skotskou kulturní a politickou realitu a zároveň dala vzniknout mnoha dalším rozporům: je to dohoda o unii z roku 1707. Je zajímavé, že do dnešní doby trvají spory skotských historiků a sociologů, kteří se nemohou shodnout na jednoznačném hodnocení průběhu a dopadů této události. Pro některé je synonymem národního selhání, jiní v ní vidí důležitý zdroj inspirace pro skotskou národní identitu. Dalším analyzovaným rozparem je napětí mezi *Highland* a *Lowland*, tj. regionálními identitami, které vychází z rozdílných historií těchto regionů a rozdílných přístupů k národní kultuře. Analýza se věnuje především historii různých přístupů ke skotské vysočině a především vzniku romantické tradice obyč-

le označované jako *tartanový mýtus*, tj. rozšíření symboliky kultury typické pro skotskou vysočinu na celé Skotsko. Tato dualita dává vzniknout kulturním reprezentacím, které jsou matoucí i limitující. Dualita mezi *národem* a *regionem* vnáší do diskuse řadu politických aspektů spojených se skotskou existencí v rámci Velké Británie, proto je toto téma úzce spojeno s rozparem mezi skotstvím a britstvím. Text i zde uvádí řadu historických událostí spojených především s měnícími se přístupy k nacionalismu a národnímu cítění, jako i k definicím národní kultury. V neposlední řadě jsou zde důležité i různé názory na anglicizaci Skotska a lehkost, s jakou byly vlivy anglické kultury akceptovány v některých skotských regionech. Závěrem je diskutován rozpor mezi mužskými a ženskými kulturními reprezentacemi. Genderový aspekt skotské kultury je velmi závažný, především kvůli převládající mužské povaze. Text zmiňuje některé literární tradice, které přispěly k umlčování či přehlížení ženského hlasu (např. literární tradice *Kailyard* přinášející idealizovaný pohled na skotský venkov, či *Clydeside* představující drsnou dělnickou literaturu Glasgowa třicátých let 20. století). Závěrem je zdůrazněna nutnost hledání nových pohledů na historii, protože při hledání nových formulací a definic národní kultury jsou často zdrojem inspirace a nečekaně kreativních možností.

82 Ch. HARVIE, *The Folly of Our Fable*, p. 99.