

**FROM HIGHLANDER TO HARD MAN:  
REPRESENTATIONS OF SCOTTISH MASCULINITY IN 1990's CINEMA**

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partial fulfilment of the requirements  
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by

Catherine Marie Munroe

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## Abstract

In the decade leading up to the devolution of the Scottish parliament, the film and television industry in Scotland has been more active than at any other time in the past century. More and more, Scotland is being used as a filming location, not only by Hollywood blockbusters like Braveheart (Mel Gibson, 1996), but by domestic filmmakers as well. In the introduction and first chapter, this thesis discusses the current state of filmmaking in Scotland, including an overview of common Scottish discourses and reactions to Scottish film and literature at the turn of the twenty-first century. The thesis then focuses on representations of Scottish masculinity in a wide range of films, from Hollywood epics to low-budget social realist films.

The second chapter investigates the dichotomy set up in Braveheart and Rob Roy (Michael Caton-Jones, 1995) between English and Scottish masculinities. The Scots, or specifically Highland, heroes of these epic films are depicted as heterosexual, virtuous, and honourable, in contrast with the English protagonists who are generally shown to be somehow sexually “other”, either by means of homosexual stereotypes or by advocating violent sexual acts such as rape. The use of such a dichotomy of masculinities is a common tool in romantic epics, but here it is used to reinforce national prejudices at a time when nationalism was on the rise again in Scotland.

The third chapter broaches a little discussed subject: the representation of Scotland in recent domestically produced films. Films discussed include Trainspotting (Danny Boyle 1996), Small Faces (Gillies Mackinnon, 1995), Orphans

(Peter Mullan, 1997), My Name is Joe (Ken Loach, 1998), and the television mini-series, Looking After JoJo (Paul McGuigan, 1998). This chapter explores the hard man stereotype using Sean Connery's star persona as a frame of reference. Each of the films features male characters who are struggling with issues of identity and loss: a struggle to become real hard men. The direction of their lives is determined by their inability to break free from the limitations of their community, in particular, from the control of their local hard man / gang leader. This interplay between power and powerlessness reflects the current state of the nation, at a time when Scotland, after almost 300 years of union with the English parliament, tries to assert a greater control over her own governance.

## Introduction

It is an elusive task to define a national cinema. No national identity can never be strictly defined because national and cultural identities are constantly in flux, and within any one nation one finds a diversity of cultures and identities. Despite this fact, it seems to be human nature for us to try to arrange ourselves and the world around us into recognisable categories and patterns, thus creating national and cultural stereotypes. Often, this process involves a blend of fact and fiction. In terms of national identities, Benedict Anderson wrote that a nation “is an imagined political community. . . . *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”<sup>1</sup>

For centuries, Scotland has had an easily recognisable identity in the public imagination. One thinks of misty, heather-laden mountains, kilts and bagpipes, eccentric and witty townsfolk, feisty women, and proudly brave men. Any kind of analysis of the iconography of Scotland is complicated by the fact that their national identity has been created by myth-making abroad as well as at home. Just as the Canadian media is inundated with American images, music, and language, Scotland struggles to maintain its unique cultural identity amidst a deluge of American and English cultural products. Just as the image of Canada that is recognised by the rest of the world is coloured by old Hollywood myths that continue to flourish, so too the image of Scotland has been

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<sup>1</sup> Anderson, Benedict. Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. London: Verso, 1983. 15.

transformed and promoted by Hollywood. This is mainly due to the fact that feature filmmaking was slow to take off in Scotland. As David Bruce elaborates,

One of the great barriers to [Scotland's film] ambitions had surely been psychological – the failure to believe that we had any entitlement to use the medium as a means for our own cultural expression. . . . cinema was almost exclusively something to be imported and enjoyed, rarely if ever made here. Most of the world might, like us, be grateful consumers of the products of the American film industry but few countries. . . . would not have at least some domestic film production. To this day we are probably more familiar with the accents and landscapes of America than of much of our own country.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, up until recent decades, most films made set in Scotland have been made either by Hollywood or by studios in London, England. In his book, Hollywood's Canada: The Americanization of Our National Image, Pierre Burton examined hundreds of Hollywood films from the silent era up until the 1970s and discovered that many stereotypes associated with Canada had been nurtured in these American films including noble Mounties, evil toque-wearing French Canadians and half-breeds, Native Canadians, and of course romanticised landscapes such as the Rocky Mountains<sup>3</sup>. In researching the representation of Scotland by Hollywood, a similar trend reveals itself. One can easily make comparisons between the heroic Mountie and the noble Highlander. Hollywood representations of Canada and Scotland produce similar romanticisations of landscape, and not to mention similar patterns of othering.

One of the most frequently cited examples of the Hollywoodisation of the Scottish national image is Vincente Minnelli's 1954 musical, Brigadoon. Yet, even earlier in film

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<sup>2</sup> Bruce, David. Scotland the Movie. Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Berton, Pierre. Hollywood's Canada: The Americanization of our National Image. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Ltd., 1975.

history, in the silent period, well over a hundred films romanticising Scotland were produced. A cursory glance at the feature filmography of films set in Scotland compiled by Janet McBain reveals films with titles like: The Hills are Calling (1914), On the Banks of Allan Water (1916), The Call of the Pipes (1917), Hear the Pipers Calling (1918), and Ye Banks and Braes (1919)<sup>4</sup>. From the titles alone one can deduce that the main influences of these early silent films are the renowned works of Scottish literature by the likes of Robert Burns, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Sir Walter Scott.

In general, images of national identity are inextricably bound up with Hollywood myth. Therefore, in analysing the construction of the Scots image, it remains necessary to take into account the various discourses on this subject by critics such as Andrew Higson, Thomas Elsaesser, and Stephen Crofts. For example, in his article “Chronicle of a Death retold: Hyper, Retro or Counter-Cinema”, Elsaesser explains that “Hollywood can hardly be conceived. . . as totally other since so much of any nation's discourse is implicitly ‘Hollywood’”<sup>5</sup>.

Of course, one cannot wholly place the blame for the stereotyped image of Scotland on Hollywood. The Scottish people themselves have throughout history contributed to their nation's cultural stereotypes from James Macpherson's Ossianic poetry to Sir Walter Scott and the revival of Tartanry in the nineteenth century. This leaves modern Scotland with a crisis of identity: how to reconcile the tartanry of the past with contemporary cultural concern.

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<sup>4</sup> McBain, Janet. “Scotland in Feature Film: A filmography.” From Limelight to Satellite. Edinburgh: Scottish Film Council and BFI, 1990.



There is a genuine problem for a culture with an identity as conspicuous as ours. Too much of it for comfort is susceptible to caricature. For all that our image is of a mostly harmless people (quaint, nostalgic with much energy devoted to colourful dressing and loud music), we would rather that the world had a more serious appreciation of our nation. We are also not averse to a degree of hypocrisy in these matters. The fact that [Brigadoon] cannot be defined by any means as being ours, indeed it is completely an external production, makes it easier to feel superior about it, but the truth is that it was we ourselves, mainly per Walter Scott. . . who invented the myth in the first place and we are not above exploiting it for our own purposes when it suits us.<sup>6</sup>

For the most part, the discourses of Tartanry and Kailyard that dominate the tourist industry have been a source of consternation and even antipathy to scholars of Scottish Studies. Only a few scholars and historians, such as Barbara and Murray Grigor, give merit to these discourses, which the majority feel are regressive in nature. In 1981, they compiled a collection of souvenirs and photographs that showcased the extent of the Tartanry and Kailyard discourses in Scotland – images common to any Scottish tartanry shop from Edinburgh's Royal Mile to Canadian tourist towns like Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario. The Grigors mounted an exhibition of their collection in St. Andrews and in Edinburgh. Colin McArthur described the event as “a massive exposure and deconstruction of the Tartanry and Kailyard as manifested in postcards, whisky bottle labels, shortbread tins, tea cloths, and music-hall songs” which McArthur felt “can truly be said to be the impulse, an interrogation of Scottish popular culture from which the present volume has grown.”<sup>7</sup> The images associated with Scotland's tourist industry have been further deconstructed in a recent publication by David McCrone, Angela

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<sup>5</sup> Elsaesser, Thomas. “Chronicle of a Death Retold: Hyper, Retro or Counter-Cinema.” Monthly Film Bulletin. 54.641 (June 1987), 166.

<sup>6</sup> Bruce, 39.

Morris, and Richard Kiely entitled Scotland the Brand.<sup>8</sup> In the book, McCrone and colleagues examine the development and exploitation of Scottish Heritage as a cultural discourse.

At the Edinburgh Film Festival in 1982 an event was set up to discuss Scottish film culture. It was called 'Scotch Reels', and a book of essays written by various participants was put together by Colin MacArthur soon after the event. The event, and the book, attempted to examine the ways in which Scotland had been represented in films and to formulate a vision of the future courses that should be taken in the domestic production of Scottish film and television. As John Caughie was to later point out in From Limelight to Satellite, 'Scotch Reels' failed to realise the kind of impact Channel 4 would have on regional British television in its creation of a new infrastructure for the production of film and television programming. It also failed to take into account the importance of independent filmmakers like Bill Douglas<sup>9</sup>. Most importantly, however, 'Scotch Reels' had a huge influence on the future of analysing representations of Scotland. In Caughie's own words:

At simplest, and most readily appropriable level, 'Scotch Reels' identifies a set of relatively consistent discourses which informed the representation of Scottishness, defining the images of Scotland which could slip comfortably into the national imaginary as familiar identities, and into the national and international image markets as tradeable symbolic goods. These representations reproduced and, in cinema particularly, often refreshed the identities by which we are invited to recognise our difference and our status as a great wee nation. Unfortunately in the case of Scotland, it was argued, they were almost entirely regressive, launching

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<sup>7</sup> MacArthur, Colin. "Introduction." Scotch Reels: Scotland in Cinema and Television. Ed. Colin MacArthur. London: BFI, 1982.

<sup>8</sup> McCrone, David, et al. Scotland the Brand. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1995.

<sup>9</sup> Caughie, John. "Representing Scotland: New Questions for Scottish Cinema." From Limelight to Satellite. Ed. Eddie Dick. Edinburgh: Scottish Film Council and BFI, 1990. 19.

their appeal from a vanished or vanishing past. It is perhaps a measure of their simplicity, but also of their seductive power, that the governing discourses can be identified quite schematically: 'tartanry', 'kailyard', 'Clydeside'.<sup>10</sup>

Although the process of identifying these three main discourses often leads to a general pattern of reductiveness, they have nonetheless become necessary touchstones in the study of Scottish culture and history. Thus, I will briefly describe the three main discourses in Scottish Studies as I will be referring to the concepts of Highlandism, Kailyard, and Clydesidism throughout this paper. The concept of Tartanry, which is also referred to as Highlandism, can be seen to have started with Culloden. It is tied to the quixotic notion of Scottish history romanticised in the novels of Sir Walter Scott and films like Brigadoon. In Scotch Reels, Murray Grigor assembled dozens of photographs tracing the history of Tartanry, from paintings and tapestries of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, to images from twentieth century cinema. These include photographs of David Niven in Bonnie Prince Charlie (1948), Laurel and Hardy in Bonnie Scotland (1935), Brigadoon (1954), and the Walt Disney version of Rob Roy entitled: Rob Roy: The Highland Rogue (1953). There are also example of how Scotland has taken these Hollywood images of Scotland and redressed them for tourist promotion. Next to a promotional photograph of Shirley Temple in Wee Willie Winkie (1939), for example, there is a shortbread tin-style tourist drawing of a young girl who resembles Shirley Temple.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Caughie, 14-5.

<sup>11</sup> Grigor, Murray. "From Scott-land to Disneyland." Scotch Reels: Scotland in Cinema and Television. Ed. Colin McArthur. London: BFI, 1982. 17-39.

Apart from Tartanry, two other discourses common to Scottish studies are Kailyard and Clydesidism. Like Tartanry, the Kailyard discourse comes out of Scottish literature. Whereas Tartanry grew out of the Ossianic poetry and the writings of Sir Walter Scott, Kailyard comes from a very different school of writing. John Caughie wrote that each discourse comes out of a privileged moment in Scottish history. For Tartanry, he says that the moment was the Battle of Culloden: “a moment recast as an epic of tragic loss and triumphal defeat, which is able to forget, with mythic amnesia, the actual historical tensions involved in the replacement of an absolutist, historically anachronistic and economically unproductive feudal system with a relatively productive free range agrarian system.”<sup>12</sup>

Kailyard mythology is much younger, with its roots most likely being the Great Disruption of the Church of Scotland of 1843. It was an event that caused widespread religious and social disruption whose affects could be felt in small communities well into the twentieth century in areas such as local democracy, moral authority, and social welfare.<sup>13</sup> Kailyard (a Scots word that means ‘cabbage-patch’) as a literary discourse made its debut with J.M. Barrie’s publication of Auld Licht Idylls in 1888, in which Barrie looks nostalgically back two generations, “not on the Scotland of romantic glamour, but a Scotland of parochial insularity, of poor, humble, puritanical folk living out dour lives lightened only by a dark and forbidding religious dogmatism.”<sup>14</sup> Although the Kailyard mythology takes on its fullest form in the works of late nineteenth century

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<sup>12</sup> Caughie, 15.

<sup>13</sup> Caughie, 15.

Kailyard writers such as J.M. Barrie, Ian MacLaren, and S.R. Crockett, in which the “humour is based almost entirely on convincing the reader that he/she and the author share a sophisticated sense of the world, and that the characters whose lives they look down upon are backward, parochial, narrow-minded and utterly incapable of becoming conscious of the values by which they are being found comic.”<sup>15</sup> The influence of this discourse has haunted twentieth century Scottish writers and filmmakers “because its phenomenal international success established an image of Scotland that as parochial and narrow-minded from which its has been hard to escape.”<sup>16</sup>

In film, however, the popularity of the Kailyard myth has waned. The most recent film to employ such gross stereotypes of small-town Scots as petty and narrow-minded was the Hollywood film Loch Ness (John Henderson, 1995) starring Ted Danson. The film employed such extreme stereotypes and flat, often petty, dialogue in its representation of Highland Scots that it was no surprise that the film failed miserably at the box office. In films like Alexander Mackendrick’s popular Ealing comedy Whiskey Galore! (also known as Tight Little Island, 1949) and even recently in the BBC Scotland television mystery series Hamish MacBeth, the influence of Kailyard mythology is present in trace amounts. Films like Whiskey Galore! and programmes like Hamish Macbeth do employ parochial stereotypes of small-town Scots but the characters are more well-developed than the typical Kailyard discourse of the late eighteenth century.

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<sup>14</sup> Craig, Cairns. “Myths Against History: Tartanry and Kailyard in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Scottish Literature.” Scotch Reels: Scotland in Cinema and Television. Ed. Colin McArthur. London: BFI, 1982. 7.

<sup>15</sup> Craig, 8.

<sup>16</sup> Craig, 11.

Furthermore, in the case of Hamish MacBeth the characters are self-aware of the stereotypes they are engaging with.

Arguably, the more dominant discourse in late twentieth century literature and film has been that of Clydesideism. Taking its name from the Firth of Clyde, the river that was responsible for the transformation of Glasgow into a centre for international shipping during the age of industrialisation, Clydesideism is associated with gritty realism and urban working class life.

‘Clydesideism’ is the mythology of the Scottish twentieth century, the discourse which seems currently the most potent, and not yet universally acknowledged as mythology. The gritty hardness of urban life parades itself as an antidote in the real world of today to all those legends of tartanry and couthy tales of kailyard.. It turns out, nevertheless, in most of its available forms, to be just another mythology: a modernised myth of male industrial labour, with its appurtenances of labour, pub and football field alive and in place, surfacing, for example, in the celebration of a ‘real Glasgow’ beneath the yuppie surface of shopping malls and Garden Festival and City of Culture.<sup>17</sup>

Although John Caughie laments these Scottish discourses or ‘discursive positions’<sup>18</sup> and accuses the analysis of mythologies of national identity of being “caught up in a self-validating cycle”<sup>19</sup>, it is difficult to ignore the pervasive nature of these discourses. It would certainly be ideal to be able to give up, as Caughie wishes, “the prescriptive certainties of a reductive political culture” by demanding more complex ways of thinking about the representation of Scottish identity.<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, even at the dawn of a new century, the Scottish identities portrayed in film and television find

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<sup>17</sup> Caughie, 16.

<sup>18</sup> Colin McArthur briefly popularised this term, and used it in lectures such as his paper entitled “The Scottish Discursive Unconscious” [find source, ed. Adrienne Scullion]

<sup>19</sup> Caughie, 27.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

themselves still caught up in such a self-validating cycle. The few television programmes like Tutti Frutti starring Robby Coltrane and more recently Hamish MacBeth starring Robert Carlyle, that have taken on issues of popular culture and cultural stereotypes and gender relationships have not been received as well abroad as they have been domestically and thus have not lasted for more than a couple of seasons.

Nations, like narratives, lose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realise their horizons in the mind's eye. Such an image of the nation – or narration – might seem impossibly romantic and excessively metaphorical, but it is from those traditions of political thought and literary language that the nation emerges as a powerful historical idea in the west. An idea whose cultural compulsion lies in the impossible unity of the nation as a symbolic force.<sup>21</sup>

At the turn of the twenty-first century, Scotland as a nation finds herself at a new beginning, with a new parliament under construction in Edinburgh. In this thesis I will examine films set in Scotland in the years leading up to the devolution. In particular, I am interested in turning a critical eye to representations of Scottish masculinity in film. In the first chapter, I will situate my analysis in my experiences and observations of Scotland in the late 1990s. As part of this discussion I address current issues in Scottish Studies from the cultural discourse of Highlandism to new movements in Scottish literature and the arts. In the second chapter, I will move into an examination of two Hollywood blockbusters, Braveheart (Mel Gibson, 1995) and Rob Roy (Michael Caton-Jones, 1995) as contemporary examples of Highlandism and examine how this myth has been transformed into a conscious othering of the English in order to glorify the myth of Scottish masculinity.

In the third chapter I will broach a little discussed subject: the representation of Scottish masculinity in recent domestically-produced films. Films as varied as Trainspotting (Danny Boyle, 1996), Small Faces (Gillies MacKinnon, 1996), Ken Loach's My Name is Joe (1998), Peter Mullan's low-budget directorial debut, Orphans, and John McKenzie's television miniseries starring Robert Carlyle, Looking After JoJo (1998) demonstrate many of the themes and stereotypes of Clydesideism – even when the setting is Leith. As in Highlandism, the role of the male hero is central to the understanding of Clydesidism – yet the male protagonists in these films are struggling with questions of identity and loss.

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<sup>21</sup> Bhabha, Homi K. "Introduction: narrating the nation". Nation and Narration. Ed. Homi K. Bhabha. London: Routledge, 1990.



## **Chapter I**

### **Observations on Pre-Devolution Scotland**

In order to situate my readings of the representation of Scotland in film, I will begin by explaining my own relationship to Scotland and the Scots. In my observations of Scotland in the years leading up to the devolution of the Scottish Parliament, I hope to reveal the complex and often ambiguous responses that Scots have to their own culture – from traditional Scottish Tartanry to contemporary film, art, and literature.

In the spring of 1995, I won a Robert T. Jones, Jr. scholarship (better known as Bobby Jones to golf aficionados and St. Andreans) to study at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland for my third year of university. Boarding the aeroplane that September, I thought I had a pretty good idea what to expect to see in Scotland. My head was filled with those images of misty, heather-laden mountains, kilts and bagpipes, eccentric and witty townsfolk, etc., that I spoke of in the introduction. Such images of Scotland as a rural, Highland country have been firmly ingrained in the imaginations of people around the world. In his recent book, The Scottish Nation 1700-2000, Tom Devine of the Research Institute of Irish and Scottish Studies at King's College, University of Aberdeen dedicates an entire chapter to an examination of the development of Highlandism and its influence on Scottish national identity, both domestically and internationally.

To the rest of the world in the late twentieth century Scotland seems a Highland country. The 'land of the mountain and the flood' adorns countless tourist posters and those familiar and distinctive symbols of Scottish identity, the kilt, the tartan, and the bagpipes, are all of Highland origin. Yet this curious image is bizarre and puzzling at several levels.

For one thing it hardly reflects the modern pattern of life in Scotland as one of the most urbanised societies in the world. . . .<sup>22</sup>

Devine goes on to describe the irony of the fact that the most underdeveloped and poorest region of Scotland should provide “the main emblems of cultural identity for the rest of the country. An urban society had adopted a rural face.”<sup>23</sup> Indeed, when I speak to people unfamiliar with modern Scotland, the image of the Highlander almost always becomes a topic of conversation due to the popularity of films like Braveheart and Rob Roy, not to mention the patriotic passion of Scottish descendants living in Canada, Australia, and the United States who continue to promote Highland culture through annual Highland Games.

Coming from a young, multicultural country that struggles to create some semblance of a unified national identity for itself, I was excited at the prospect of living in a country whose identity, with its long established history, was easily recognisable. Instead, I discovered a country that had more in common with my own than I had realised. As I mentioned in the introduction, just as Canadian media struggles to be heard in the overwhelming din of American images, music, and language, Scotland struggles to maintain a unique cultural identity amidst a deluge of not only American, but also English and European cultural products. Although I did take a course in Scottish Studies during my stay, I know that I learned more about Scotland outside of the classroom than I did within. Perhaps it is because Canada was heavily influenced by Scots immigrants, particularly in areas of government and regulation, that I noted many similarities in

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<sup>22</sup> Devine, T.M. The Scottish Nation: 1700-2000. Toronto: Penguin, 1999. 231.

<sup>23</sup> Devine, 231.

temperament between Canadians and Scots. In particular, we seem to share the same mix of pride and embarrassment in our attitudes towards success. The Scots tend to admire and take pride in their own celebrities and success stories, but become uncomfortable with too much success or adulation. One of the best examples, that I will be discussing in a later chapter, is the mix of pride and disgust with Sean Connery that has surfaced in the Scottish media over the past few years. When Scottish friends at St. Andrews spoke of Connery, they would mention his working-class Scots background proudly, only to remark cynically in the next breath that Connery doesn't live in Scotland anymore. It reminded me of the love-hate relationship Canadians have with their own celebrities: many consider the band The Tragically Hip to be truly Canadian because their success has been a domestic one, unlike bands like The Barenaked Ladies who find success in the United States and suffer the reputation back home of having "sold out".

The University of St. Andrews itself is a study in contrasts: a modern university in a town that has retained its medieval city centre. It has a long and varied history dating back to the turn of the fifteenth century. St. Andrews is chiefly renowned for two reasons many would consider very Scottish: religion and golf. In the middle ages, St. Andrews was the centre of Catholicism in northern Europe, and the town endured a great deal of upheaval and violence during the Protestant Uprisings of the seventeenth century. As for golf, the locals claim the sport was invented in St. Andrews on the West Sands (though other Scottish towns have been known to claim the same honour) and the Royal & Ancient golf course is considered the oldest in the world.

Although the university is very modern, it still maintains many of the classical areas of study which have been taught there for centuries. Since the university and the town developed together, the university buildings are an integral part of the town core. The student population represents of a cross-section of students from across the United Kingdom, and there are many exchange students, mainly from continental Europe and North America. As in many university towns, a love-hate relationship exists between the students and the locals. On one hand, the university and the tourism generated by the Royal & Ancient golf course bring money and jobs to the townsfolk, while on the other hand, the noise and revelling of the students and tourists creates bitterness among many locals. When I arrived in Scotland in September of 1996, the situation seemed to be exaggerated by the recent release of Mel Gibson's blockbuster Highland epic, Braveheart. During my first week at St. Andrews, a traditional week of student parties, there were many incidents in which local youths, shouting war cries from Braveheart, ganged up on English and American students. One close English friend of mine, a tall but gentle fellow, was surrounded by a group of teenaged boys and beaten up because of his "posh" accent. The student newspaper referred to it as the "Braveheart Syndrome". The police cracked down on the problem and the incidents of such violence became less frequent, but not unusual<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> Incidents appeared in newspapers even long after the release of the film, see article "Braveheart fan attacked boy, 15" by Richard Savill in the Electronic Telegraph, Tuesday 19 August 1997, <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk:80/et?ac=00303...&atmo+99999999&pg=/et/97/8/19/nbra19.html>>. In 1998, Savill also reported the fears of police of increased violence during the campaign for devolution as well as a reports that there had been an increase in violence after the vote on devolution.

Savill, Richard. "Ex-police chief fears devolution violence", Tuesday 29 September 1998, <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk:80/et?ac=00303...&atmo+99999999&pg=/et/98/9/29/ndev29.html>>.

Savill, Richard. "Devolution 'increasing hatred of the English'", Friday 6 November 1998,

Not being a fan of epic films, and turned off by the patriotic fervour surrounding Braveheart, I held out on seeing the film for many months until curiosity got the best of me the following Easter holiday. I was backpacking around Ireland with a friend of mine from Harare, Holly, and we decided to see the film one night in Belfast. Although the film had been out for many months by this point, it was still extremely popular due to its successful sweep at the Academy Awards earlier that year and the Belfast cinema was packed. Not having anticipated such a crowd, Holly and I were only able to wrangle seats at the very front of the theatre. Almost as soon as the film began, the Northern Irish audience became active participants in the experience. They jeered at the effeminate and cowardly Prince Edward, and swore at the evil deeds of the English king, Longshanks. I had never before witnessed such a powerful reaction to the film. The audience was first captivated by Wallace's impassioned speech before his triumph in the Battle of Stirling Bridge, in which he declares: "I am William Wallace and I see a whole army of my countrymen here in defiance of tyranny. You've come to fight as free men and freemen you are. . . tell our enemies, that they may take our lives, but they'll never take our FREEDOM!" The emotions of the excited Belfast crowd peaked during the Battle of Falkirk. Longshanks sends the Irish troops in to attack the Scots, led by the ever-defiant Wallace. He tells his head of command: "Not the archers. . . use up the Irish – the dead cost nothing." Like the Scottish, the Irish are a shabby lot, with unkempt hair, torn shirts and kilts. The Irish and the Scots yell out bellowing cries and race towards each other, the suspense of the moment intensified by the dramatic musical score and rapid editing,

until the advancing lines near each other and slow. The music stops as the men let out friendly growls and embrace each other as kinsmen. At this point, the Belfast audience were practically out of their seats, punching their hands to the sky and cheering the camaraderie between the Celtic forces in the face of English oppressors. The nationalistic fervour of the crowd was so intense that Holly and I, having encountered anti-English and anti-American sentiment before<sup>25</sup>, did not venture to speak until we were a great distance from the cinema.

That Braveheart could rouse such passion in its audiences – not just in Scotland and Ireland but around the world, as countless Braveheart fan sites on the world wide web can attest – prompted me to question why this was so. The film almost completely eclipsed a domestically produced film about the Scottish Wars of Independence, Chasing the Deer (Graham Holloway, 1995) – a film that is unfortunately impossible to find on video – presumably because Chasing the Deer attempted to use a measure of realism in its portrayal of Scottish history while Braveheart and Rob Roy, a film not as popular as Braveheart but similar in plot structure, were epic narratives. The heroic story-lines of Braveheart and Rob Roy are familiar to audiences weaned on Hollywood genre films. The connection audiences have with William Wallace in Braveheart, are similar to the example given by Robert Fulford in his 1999 Massey Lectures entitled The Triumph of Narrative: Storytelling in the Age of Mass Culture. In his final lecture, “Nostalgia, Knighthood, and the Circle of Dreams,” Fulford writes,

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<sup>25</sup> Having grown up in Zimbabwe, Holly’s accent is easily mistaken as English, and my Canadian accent is difficult to distinguish from American accents.

When Leonardo DiCaprio stands at the prow of the Titanic and shouts ecstatically into the wind, “I’m the king of the world!” he’s already won the audience’s collective hearts by playing a role that’s been familiar to most of us since childhood. . . . Note that before he stands on that prow, Jack Dawson has already acted out a key element in romance: his physical beauty, his eloquence, and the nobility of his spirit have won the heart of a well-born lady who would normally be forbidden to him. . . .<sup>26</sup>

These same words could be used to describe Mel Gibson playing the role of Wallace. The heroes of Braveheart and Rob Roy represent more than just Scotland – they represent an unattainable ideal of masculinity. It is no wonder that for all the patriotism inspired by these films, they produce an equal share of cynicism. This ambiguity of sentiment is evocatively displayed in Ken Loach’s 1998 film My Name is Joe. The middle-aged protagonist, Joe Kavanagh, has stopped at a roadside chip stand on his way up north. As he eats his chips, he observes a lone kilted man with bagpipes performing for a small gathering of Japanese tourists armed with cameras. The piper plays terribly, and Joe and the woman working in the chip stand stare glumly at the scene. The woman tells Joe that the piper knows only three songs, and with no trouble at all Joe guesses that the songs are ‘Scotland the Brave’, ‘The Skye Boat Song’, and ‘Flower of Scotland’. He then sighs and says “Bonnie Scotland, eh?” She responds, her voice weary with sarcasm, “Aye, Bonnie Scotland right enough.” To me, this simple evoked the cynicism I often heard voiced by Scottish acquaintances for these such out-dated and regressive stereotypes of Scotland. I believe David Bruce put it best in his review of Brigadoon in his book, Scotland the Movie, when he spoke of the apparent difficulty Scots have dealing with a cultural identity as conspicuous as that of the Scots: “Too

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<sup>26</sup> Fulford, 123.

much of it for comfort is susceptible to caricature. . . . we would rather that the world had a more serious appreciation of our nation. We are not averse to a degree of hypocrisy in these matters. . . . and we are not above exploiting [our own caricature] for our own purposes when it suits us.<sup>27</sup>

In fact, Scots have been exploiting their own stereotypes for centuries as I discovered in a course I took on the Scottish Enlightenment with Dr. C.J.M. MacLan and Professor (and poet) Robert Crawford. The class was held in Castle House, an old white building overlooking the castle ruins and looking out over the North Sea. St. Andrews' castle was destroyed in the Protestant Uprisings, and it seemed an apt place to be discussing a century in which Scotland experienced such extreme defeats (Culloden) and successes (the rise of the literati in Edinburgh: Adam Ferguson, David Hume, et al.).

This sense of being at cross-purposes is also reflected in modern Scottish literature and film. Apart from Braveheart, the other big cinematic event during my year in Scotland was the release of Danny Boyle's adaptation of Irvine Welsh's novel, Trainspotting. I became familiar with Irvine Welsh soon after my arrival in St. Andrews as his books were a favourite among many Scottish university students. Trainspotting, in particular, seemed to especially strike a chord with young Scottish men. The appeal of Welsh's novels seemed to lie in a sense of identification with the characters, settings, and language of the stories. The typical Welsh novel or short story takes place in 1980s Leith. Leith is an Edinburgh community located north of the city centre bordering on the shores of the Firth of Forth. Over the decades, Leith has acquired an image as a rough

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<sup>27</sup> Bruce, 39.



part of town, as it is far removed from the dark beauty of the tourist-infested Royal Mile or the pristine beauty of the Georgian architecture and geometric street design of the carefully constructed New Town. Leith is home to the working classes and the underprivileged, and the dominant form of housing is council estates and tenements. In the 1980s, Leith was predominantly known in Edinburgh for its problems with poverty, crime, and drugs.

Leith is also easily identified by its unique vernacular. I have spoken with a number of Edinburgh and area friends who say that the most remarkable thing about Trainspotting was that for the first time they were seeing people that they knew and could identify with in a major motion picture. Not only could they place people they knew into the roles of Mark Renton and his mates, but they knew the language being used. The use of vernacular in film and literature has always been an important factor in Scottish, and by extension British culture. The boom of new writing out of Scotland over the past twenty or so years has seen a rise in the use of Scots vernacular. As Kravitz points out:

Whereas [James] Kelman looked to America and Europe for a literary tradition, [Duncan] McLean, together with Gordon Legge, Alan Warner and Irvine Welsh – and to a lesser extent Janice Galloway and A.L. Kennedy – have been influenced by Kelman and [Alasdair] Gray, in part for their tenacity and in part for their use of language. McLean says, ‘When [Kelman’s] The Busconductor Hines came out in 1984 it just blew my mind. It was the voice. For the first time I was reading a book about the world I lived in. I didn’t know literature could do that.’<sup>28</sup>

Many Scottish writers, such as William McIlvanney, use the vernacular mainly in the dialogue of their characters whereas Irvine Welsh’s bold use of the Leith vernacular renders his novels a challenge for many English native-speakers to read. The use of the

Scots vernacular is often associated with ideas of nationalism. In his introduction to The Picador Book of Contemporary Scottish Fiction, Peter Kravitz notes that “public acceptance or censorship of vernacular Scots has always been a symptom of political feeling in the country” and he cites examples dating back to the Union of pro- and anti-vernacular movements. In his brief overview of the subject, he notes that “[one] exception was Robert Burns, whose writing was applauded in the 1780s by the same people who had set about removing Scottish words from their vocabulary.”<sup>29</sup>

For others, language is a more ambiguous concern. The novels of A.L. Kennedy are usually set in Scotland and employ Scottish protagonists. In The Picador Book of Contemporary Scottish Fiction, Kravitz reveals that “A.L. Kennedy has said that people like John Byrne, Tom Leonard and James Kelman ‘made my generation of writers possible. . . gave us permission to speak. . . made us more ourselves – gave us the reality, life and dignity that art can at a time when anything other than standard English and standard address was frowned upon.’”<sup>30</sup> Kennedy’s writing is economical yet evocative, and she uses Scottish-isms sparingly. While Kennedy admits to having been influenced by her predecessors, in an interview with The Guardian about her book Everything You Need, Kennedy denied being a part of a “Scottish movement”. Rather, she claimed that her style was just a natural extension of who she is:

I don’t feel any more or less Scottish than I ever was. It never came up that much in my other work, it’s just that people took exception to stories being set in Scotland and having Scottish characters, like it was this big statement and it’s not, it’s just where I live – what else am I going to write

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<sup>28</sup> Kravitz, xxiii.

<sup>29</sup> Kravitz, xiii.

<sup>30</sup> Kravitz, xxiii.

about? [. . .] I use the language that I use, which has Scottish-isms, Scottish rhythms in it, but that's not me making a point, that's where I come from. that's the frustrating things – people down here will say: 'What's it like being a Scottish writer?' and I'll say 'I don't know, I've never been anything else.' I'm not being awkward, but it's a question you don't get asked if you're from London.<sup>31</sup>

The use of the vernacular in British filmmaking and television programming has become much more widespread in recent decades. In contrast with American television fiction which, as Edward Buscombe has noted, has “little regional specificity” due to its commercialistic drive to appeal to the widest possible market<sup>32</sup>, British television programming contains a diversity of accents and locales. Although Buscombe notes that much of the BBC's regional structuring “may just be window-dressing”, he also notes that a significant amount of their production has become decentralised. This push to decentralisation was largely due to the establishment of Channel Four in 1982 and has resulted in some of Britain's finest television programming. BBC Scotland, for example, even has a number of good Gaelic children's programmes. Unfortunately, high quality programming does not always result in widespread appeal. This can be attributed to many factors: a lack of comprehension when the accent is thick, a lack of cultural identification, an aversion to the coarseness of the language (many regionally specific dialects such as Glaswegian, Leith, Geordie and Scouse are rife with profanity), or just plain apathy. Though many soap operas specialising in regional dialects, such as the Cockney East Enders, are very popular, it is not uncommon for television programmes

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<sup>31</sup> Merritt, Stephanie. “Books Interview.” Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 1999.

<<http://www.guardianunlimited.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,3867783,00.html>>

<sup>32</sup> Buscombe, Edward. “Nationhood, Culture and Media Boundaries: Britain.” Quarterly Review of Film and Video. 14.3 (1993), 25. [pp25-34]

with regional appeal to last for only a few of seasons. For example, Buscombe notes that “[t]hough critics were almost unanimous in their praise of Tutti Frutti, and though it starred the charismatic and wildly popular Robby Coltrane, its viewing figures in England were modest. Its popularity beyond the borders of Scotland was severely curtailed by the refusal to compromise with the strong Scottish accents of its characters.”<sup>33</sup>

The use of the vernacular has a long history in Scottish literature. Robert Burns’ enduring appeal as a Scottish hero is largely attributed to his use of the vernacular and his focus, in his verse, on the life of the common Scotsman. The novels of Sir Walter Scott also used the vernacular. For example, in Scott’s 1818 novel The Heart of Midlothian, his Scots characters, such as the main protagonist Jeanie Deans, spoke in Scots dialect.

In his introduction to The Picador Book of Contemporary Scottish Fiction, Peter Kravitz links the popularity or censorship of the use of vernacular in literature to the political climate:

In reaction to the Act of Union with England in 1707, there was a renewal of interest in the vernacular, followed by a reaction in Edinburgh around the middle of the eighteenth century when a guide book on how to excise Scotticisms from speech became popular amongst the literati. Its stated aim was ‘to put young writers and speakers on their guard against Scotch idioms’ and its influence is still obvious among many generations later in the properly enunciated speech of Miss Jean Brodie. One exception was Robert Burns, whose writing was applauded in the 1780s by the same people who had set about removing Scottish words from their vocabulary.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Buscombe, 27.

<sup>34</sup> Kravitz, Peter, ed. The Picador Book of Contemporary Scottish Fiction. London: Picador, 1997. xiii.

The use of the vernacular in film and other cultural products is important because it is a signifier of place and of identity. A person's accent reveals not only their national identity, or at the nationality of the country they were raised in, but it also locates them within a specific community within that nation-state. When a film like Peter Mullan's Orphans employs local actors who speak in their native Glaswegian accents, it locates the film within a specific context that is recognisable to residents of that community. The setting becomes contextualised as not just any British city but a particular city with its own unique local identity. The use of the vernacular also allows community members to recognise a film as a representation of themselves – to locate their own individual identity within the context of the community.

In contemporary Scotland, the use of vernacular in films and literature has returned to a popular status, a fact which can be linked to the push to Scottish devolution. Indeed, the enthusiasm for Trainspotting was unlike any I had ever seen for a film. Certainly this was due in part to the clever advertising campaign that preceded the film's U.K. release. The image of Robert Carlyle as Begbie sneered provocatively from posters on bus shelters, his fingers saluting passers-by with a "V", one of the rudest hand-gestures possible in the U.K. The queue for the opening night of Trainspotting in St. Andrews went halfway down North Street. As it was the only cinema in town, it was always packed with university students. Sitting in the Circle<sup>35</sup>, looking over a full house of fellow students, the response to the film was remarkable. The dynamic, fast-paced editing and tracking shots of opening sequence overlaid with the throbbing beat of Iggy

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<sup>35</sup> The balcony seats.

Pop's Lust for Life, combined with the recognition of the familiar Princes Street caused a swell of adrenaline and excitement in the crowd that rose and fell through the horror and hilarity of the ensuing film. The audience moaned in disgust as Renton fished about in the worst toilet in Scotland for his laxatives, and laughed together when the Archie Gimmel footage comes on the telly in the middle of the sex montage. For me, and others I've spoken to about the film, the scene that sums up the ambivalent attitude Scots have towards their national identity is when Tommy takes his mates out to the Highlands by train. As Tommy glories in the fresh air and the mountain scenery, his mates lag behind like children waiting in the hall outside a dentist's office. Tommy cries out, "Doesn't it make you proud to be Scottish?" At which Renton makes one of his infamous rants:

I hate being Scottish. We're the lowest of the fucking low, the scum of the earth, the most wretched, servile, miserable, pathetic trash that was ever shat into civilisation. Some people hate the English, but I don't. They're just wankers. We, on the other hand, are colonised by wankers. We can't even pick a decent culture to be colonised by. We are ruled by effete arseholes. It's a shite state of affairs and all the fresh air in the world will not make any difference."

For me, Tommy and Renton's difference of opinion voice the conflicting attitudes that Scots have of their own identity. In the following chapters, I seek to explore these conflicting images of Scotland: the glory and the gutter, the heroes and the failures, the myths and the reality.

## Chapter II

### The Noble Savage: The Construction of Masculinity in Braveheart and Rob Roy

When Mel Gibson stands there holding the Best Picture and Best Director Oscars as an honorary Scotsman, something startling is happening in world culture. We're acclaiming the moment when Aussie americanus went to the Highlands to paint his face blue, declare war on Limeyland, and bequeath the ultimate footnote to movie martyrology. Where Brando in One-Eyed Jacks, Douglas in Spartacus, and Penn in Dead Man Walking were content merely to be flogged, crucified, or injected, Gibson's William Wallace was hanged and drawn and quartered – buy one death, get two free – right there in front of the popcorn-chewing populace.<sup>36</sup>

The year 1995 saw the release of two popular films set in the medieval Highlands: Braveheart and Rob Roy. The few attempts made to analyse these two films have tended to focus on questions of authenticity. Historians like Elizabeth Ewan have focused on the countless historical liberties, particularly in the case of Braveheart but less so in Rob Roy, taken by the filmmakers.<sup>37</sup> In his dissertation examining cultural identity in Scottish film and television, Christopher Purdie takes this notion further by analysing the cultural authenticity of the films<sup>38</sup>. In his attempt to measure the “Scottishness” of the films, Purdie fails to take into account the diversity inherent within Scottish culture, as it is within all cultures and nations around the world. Who is to judge what it means to be Scottish when the Scotland experienced by someone growing up on the Orkney Islands will be vastly different from that of someone growing up in Edinburgh's New Town, and vastly different yet from someone living in the council estates of Glasgow? Also, it has

<sup>36</sup> Kennedy, Harlan. “Kiltspotting: Highland Reels.” Film Comment. 32.4 (July-August 1996), 29.

<sup>37</sup> Ewan, Elizabeth. “Film Review of Rob Roy and Braveheart.” American Historical Review. 100 (October 1995). 1219-21.

long been accepted that the idea of nation is a construct, an invention of a collective imagination. As Ernst Renan so famously said in the 1880s, “Getting history wrong is part of being a nation.”<sup>39</sup>

Despite the fact that they are Hollywood productions, by their very settings and subject matter, Braveheart and Rob Roy can be considered Scottish. The intent of this paper is not to establish a system with which to measure a film’s “Scottishness”. Rather, I would argue that critical analysis of the way that these two films function is crucial to understanding how the films were received by audiences in Scotland and around the world. I propose to do this by deconstructing the representation of masculinity in these two films.

In examining Braveheart and Rob Roy together, it becomes apparent that the films are setting up a similar dichotomy in which the English are set up as the inferior “other”. Thus, Scottish identity in these two films becomes both an identification with the Scottish hero as well as a process of subjectification of the English as oppressors of the freedom of the common Scottish people. In his analysis of the construction of colonial discourse, Homi K. Bhabha stresses that “the exercise of colonial power through discourse, demands an articulation of forms of difference – racial and sexual.”<sup>40</sup> Braveheart and Rob Roy use these tools of discourse, these “modes of representation of otherness”, to turn the tables on the colonising force of the English. Both films set up dichotomies between the colonised and the coloniser in terms of national, moral, and

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<sup>38</sup> Purdie, Christopher Robert. “Cultural Identity in Exported Scottish Film and Television Programming.”

<sup>39</sup> Hobsbawm, E.J. Nations and Nationalism Since 1780. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990, 12.



sexual differences. By establishing the Scottish hero and Highland community as morally and ethically superior to the English and the ruling classes, and furthermore, by making the essence of Highland life that of the romantic ideal of heterosexualism and the nuclear family, audiences are encouraged to side with the Scottish hero against the oppressive forces that threaten to colonise the Scots.

This dichotomy of the Scots (represented here by Highlanders) and the English develops on several levels. Before examining these issues, however, it is important to note that the dichotomy is not a straightforward one. While there is a divide between the Scots and the English in Braveheart, there is a further class divide between the common people, whom Wallace claims to represent, and the Scottish nobility who chose to side where their bread is buttered; namely, with the English monarchy. Many of the Scottish nobles demonstrate that they are all too willing to betray Wallace to his English enemies in order to gain titles, land, and wealth. For example, Robert the Bruce is torn between obeying his father's wishes and siding with the English king in order to gain title, status, and wealth, and following the more noble and patriotic cause of Wallace and the common Scotsmen.

Furthermore, another "other" also exists within Braveheart: the Irish. In many respects, the Irish are othered in similar ways as the Highlander – often as Noble Savages. The character of the Irishman, Stephen, is the repository of many Irish stereotypes. He is slightly mad, he frequently speaks out loud, and often rhetorically, to

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<sup>40</sup> Bhabha, Homi K. "The Other Question. . . The Stereotype and Colonial Discourse." Screen 24.6 (1983), 19.

God, he is unkempt, and of course, unswervingly loyal to Wallace's anti-English cause. The English bias against the Irish is made clear at the Battle of Stirling Bridge when King Edward the Longshanks commands his army not to use the archers first. "Use up the Irish," he says, "the dead cost nothing." The ensuing scene demonstrates a strong alliance between the Scots and the Irish. Like the Highlanders, the Irish troops are a wretched bunch. Their clothes and hair are unkempt, and they too are wearing kilts. The Irish and the Scots frontlines charge at each other, only to stop a few feet away from collision to embrace as allies. Historically, the relationship between the Scots and the Irish is much more complex, and often acrimonious, but for the sake of the narrative, Braveheart sides the Irish with the Scots in a reductive dichotomy against the English.

The dichotomy in Rob Roy is also not defined in terms of black and white. In the film, Michael Caton-Jones sets up a opposition between two Scottish nobles and landowners: the Duke of Argyll and the Marquis of Montrose. There is a palpable antipathy between the two men which is structured as another example of Scots versus the English. Argyll is shown to be the more Scottish of the two men in that he is more sympathetic to the concerns of the Scots people we see him interact with throughout the film. In contrast, Montrose, with his affected English accent, is shown to favour the English court and has taken on the young Englishman, Cunningham, as his protégé. Further complicating matters is the character of Kilhearn, who is also in Montrose's service. Though a Scotsman, Kilhearn is not a Highlander, and presents himself as being of a superior social stature to the MacGregors. Like the nobles in Braveheart, Kilhearn thinks first of filling his pockets with wealth before considering the well-being of his

fellow Scots. In the end, what separates William Wallace and his compatriots from the nobles and the English, and what separates Rob Roy MacGregor and his kin and clan from Montrose, Cunningham, and Kilhearn is a sense of community.

### **Community**

A recurrent theme in Scottish literature is that of the community defending itself against outside forces. This theme has surfaced in films set in Scotland since their inception. The premise in Brigadoon, for example, is that of an eighteenth century Highland village that appears out of the mists every hundred years and never changes. That is, it never changes until American Gene Kelly dances his way into the hearts and minds of the village's inhabitants. Another popular example of a representation of an isolated Scots community is the 1973 cult film The Wickerman. In this unusual film, director Robin Hardy plays up, to great comic effect, the stereotype of the isolated Western island community. In this film, the entire population of the island community of Summerisle is revealed to be in collusion in order to trap an unwary mainlander.

In recent years, this stereotype of the inward-thinking Highland community has been parodied in domestic Scottish television productions such as the popular Hamish Macbeth, which ran for three series in the mid-1990s. The series, based on the mystery novels of M.C. Beaton, takes place in a remote Highland town filled with eccentric characters who carefully guard with pride their town's autonomy. In an episode entitled, The Lochdubh Assassin, directed by Nicholas Renton and written by Trainspotting director, Danny Boyle, the theme of community versus outsiders is played up to the full. Four gang members from Glasgow come to Lochdubh bent on retrieving money from a

young boy named Frankie, on pain of death and the community rallies around to protect and hide the boy and his aunt. In the process, the eccentric townspeople play up to great comedic effect many Highland myths including the stereotype of Highlanders being inbred. The Glaswegians, as outsiders to the community and Highland landscape, find themselves unable to succeed in their mission.

The central theme in both Braveheart and Rob Roy is that of the rural Highland community whose prosperity and survival is threatened by the richer, more powerful forces of the English. In Braveheart the stakes are high in that freedom of an entire nation is in jeopardy whereas in Rob Roy it is the lands of the MacGregors and their kinsfolk that are at risk. However, in essence, the films work in similar ways to set up the central protagonist as a national hero and to side the spectator's sympathies with the Scottish against the English.

In Braveheart and Rob Roy the Highland community and the values associated with that community are key to defining the central protagonists. At the heart of the Highland community is the family unit. In fact, the community itself, or clan, can be seen as an extension of the family unit. In Braveheart, the main protagonist is orphaned quite early on. At the beginning of the film, the precocious young Wallace is motherless but he has a father and older brother who look out for him. In particular, Wallace's father serves as his role model, instilling in Wallace the values of honour and freedom that define his character from thence on. With the death of his father, Wallace's uncle immediately steps in to take on the role of Wallace's guardian and educator. Via his

wealthy uncle, Wallace receives a continental education that heightens his knowledge of nation and honour.

One of the main tenets of this sense of honour, essential to the sustainability of the community, is the honour of women. In the example of Braveheart, William Wallace is set up as a romantic hero through his courtship and secret marriage to Murran, his childhood sweetheart. At the funeral of Wallace's father, the young Murran picks a purple thistle, the national flower of Scotland, and gives it to the child Wallace. As an adult, he gives the pressed thistle, which he has kept all those years, back to Murran as a symbol of their love. The thistle pressed in a cloth is later picked up by Robert the Bruce. Thus the sacred nature of the love of Wallace for his wife is inextricably tied to the notion of Wallace's patriotic love of his country.

The Scottish versus English dichotomy set up by the film further emphasises the moral and ethical nobility of the Scottish community, and by extension, the nation as a whole. The English see the Scottish as savages and early on in the film, King Edward Longshanks institutes *prima nocte* in an attempt to take over Scottish lands by breeding the Scots out. Under *prima nocte* the nobles or landholders are given by law "sexual rights" with the new brides of all of the commoners inhabiting their lands. Braveheart romanticises this through the use of music and slow-motion as the act of the virgin bride sacrificing herself for the sake of the life of her husband and the safety of the community.

Whereas for the Highlanders, family and marriage are institutions that advocate loving relationships and strong and loyal communities, such institutions among the English protagonists, represented mainly by the English king, Longshanks, and his family

serve merely as a ways of ensuring the continuation of the bloodline. Furthermore, the Prince Regent is typecast from the outset as a homosexual, thus unable to satisfy the needs of his bride, the French princess, Isabella. More importantly in terms of the plot, he is unable to produce the desired heir to the English throne. The narrator, Robert the Bruce, comments that “it was widely whispered that for the princess to conceive, Longshanks would have to do the honours himself. That may have been what he had intended all along.”

In Rob Roy, a similar pattern unfolds. Although Mary MacGregor does tell the Duke of Argyll that her husband puts his honour above his clan and kin, it is evident in the film that central to Rob Roy MacGregor’s sense of honour is his family. Great care is taken at the beginning of the film to establish the great love Rob Roy has for his wife and children. Rob Roy tells his sons: “Women are the heart of honour and we are cherished and protected in them.” The love Rob Roy bears his wife is tested in the film when Mary is violated by the Englishman, Archibald Cunningham. Rob Roy accepts his wife and her unborn child despite the fact that she has been violated and that there’s a chance that the child could be Cunningham’s bastard. Cunningham himself was a bastard, but one who never knew who his father was. Furthermore, among the English and nobility there are no examples of marriage. Instead we are presented with a man who sleeps with servant girls but does not care for their well being.

### **Sexuality and Masculinity**

There has long been a tradition in classical Hollywood cinema of setting up a dichotomy between a hero and his enemy as differences in sexuality or masculinity. In

the western film genre, it is common for the hero to be marked as a robust, heterosexual man, fighting for the rights of the community. In contrast, the “bad guy” is often a scoundrel who abuses and mistreats women. Moreover, in both the western and the Highland epic, there is often a homoerotic tension established in the portrayal of male groups.

Braveheart and Rob Roy function much like a classical Hollywood western in their representations of heroes and villains. By setting up a dichotomy familiar to Western audiences, the films are continuing a trend that has become a staple of Hollywood films. As James R. Keller explains in his analysis of masculinity in Braveheart and Rob Roy:

Most public discussions of homosexuality are accompanied by alternatives and often openly antagonistic perspectives. The American public has been conditioned to conceptualise the gay lifestyle as the inferior half of sociosexual binarism – heterosexual/homosexual. This polarity, in the public consciousness, duplicates and encompasses still more basic binary and hierarchical assumptions shared by much of our culture: natural/unnatural, normal/abnormal, health/sickness, and masculine/feminine. However, it is the last of these polarities that appears to be the current preoccupation within debates over the “place” of gays in U.S. society. In the popular mind, gay men and lesbians breach the neatly defined and strictly policed gender divisions within our culture. Recent scholars within the field of men’s studies have defined gay men as the ‘symbolic repository of all that is excluded from hegemonic masculinity’.<sup>41</sup>

In Braveheart, the English are consistently branded as being somehow sexually other in contrast to the heterosexual Highlander. In particular, the depiction of the Prince Regent as a homosexual led to protests in the United States by the Gay and Lesbian

Alliance against Defamation (GLADD)<sup>42</sup>. As mentioned earlier, the Prince Regent, Edward, is first introduced on his wedding day, at which time the voice-over informs us that in order for the French princess to bear Longshanks a grandson as heir, he would have to perform the honours himself. The accompanying images show the prince as he makes eye contact, in the middle of his wedding ceremony, with a young man whom we assume is his partner. Prince Edward is consistently coded in Braveheart as a homosexual. “Seldom in recent films,” Kellar points out, “has there been a more stereotypical and negative portrayal than that offered in Braveheart. Edward (Peter Hanley) is a throwback to the characters of earlier decades. He is constructed as vain, frivolous, and effeminate.”<sup>43</sup>

In his actions, Prince Edward is further coded as something other than the norm. He takes no interest in his beautiful wife and furthermore, he does not take more than a passing interest in the affairs of the state. While his father is out defending the interests of his country, Edward seems to spend his days preening himself in front of the mirror. Any suggestion he gives his father is met with condescension and often violence. For example, when Longshanks asks his son what he would do about Wallace, Edward replies that he would deal with him “like any common thief. Have the local magistrate arrest him and deal with him accordingly.” Longshanks responds to his son’s ignorance by punching him and informing him that Wallace has already killed the magistrate and taken over the town, thus rendering Edward’s scheme useless. The most striking

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<sup>41</sup> Keller, James R. “Masculinity and Marginality in Rob Roy and Braveheart.” Journal of Popular Film & Television. 24.4 (Winter 1997). 147. The quote cited by Keller is from: Connell, R.W. Masculinities. Los Angeles: U of California P, 1995, 78.



example of a negative depiction of gays comes when Longshanks pushes his son's lover out of the window after he suggests a course of action for the king to take in Scotland.

In the most damaging scene of [Braveheart], Edward's lover attempts to discuss the appropriate military strategy to put down the rebellion and is tossed out of a window by the king to the laughter and occasional applause of the movie-going audience. . . . The implicit message here is that gays have no place in the serious affairs of men. Edward's lover is killed because he presumed to knowledge about war, because he presumed to participate in the decision-making process of the state.<sup>44</sup>

There is a startling contrast of masculinities constructed in the development of the characters of Prince Edward and William Wallace. In opposition to the relationship between Prince Edward and his lover, which seems to involve frolicking about the castle with their entourage, William Wallace and his childhood friend, Hamish, indulge in physical, and often violent games that they refer to as "tests of manhood." In their first such game as reunited adults they try to crush each other by throwing rocks. Hamish proves that he is the stronger of the two in physical strength and size, but Wallace wins the match by using his wits.

The only real common ground between Prince Edward and William Wallace is that they are both married. In the case of Edward, the marriage is a political one. By marrying Edward to Isabelle, Longshanks has temporarily created an alliance with rival France, a country that throughout history sided with Scotland in what came to be known as the Auld Alliance. In addition, Longshanks has hopes of future grandchildren in order

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<sup>42</sup> "Braveheart" The Advocate, 11 July 1995. 69-70.

<sup>43</sup> Kellar, 149.

<sup>44</sup> Kellar, 150.

to continue his family's succession to the English throne. Wallace, on the other hand, marries for love.

The othering of many of the other English characters in Braveheart does not come in the guise of homosexuality. Instead, there are frequent allusions to the sexual inferiority of the English in general or to the practice of immoral sex acts. In one scene, Princess Isabelle's lady in waiting Nicolette says that she hopes that the king will send Prince Edward to Scotland to be killed by Wallace so that Isabelle can be a widow. The insinuation here is that thus Isabelle would be free to marry a man who can satisfy her as a husband. Later, Nicolette tells the princess the gossip she's heard about William Wallace from a member of the War Council who shared her bed the night before. When Isabelle expresses disbelief that a member of the War Council would share state secrets in bed, Nicolette replies: "Englishmen don't know what a tongue is for." The scene continues as Nicolette tells the romantic tale of how Wallace defied the dangerous traps set by the local magistrate to carry the body of his dead wife to a secret hiding place. Princess Isabelle practically swoons at the romance of the tale and laments that she has not known such a love.

Wallace's marriage an important point of divergence between the two representations of masculinity. . . the traditional man could never patiently brook his wife's violation, because the crime is as much against his honour as against her body. It is the structural device of the two wives in the film (Wallace's and Edward's) that produces some of the most important issues in the film. William Wallace is "evened" with them, "wife for wife." However, he does not kill the English princess (Sophie Marceau), since such an action would undermine his own masculine honour and remove his motivation for righteous indignation. He falls in love with her, meets her in secret, as he did his wife, with the implications that the English cannot satisfy their women – a compromising of their masculinity. It is here that the link between Edward's and Wallace's

manhood becomes most plain. What entitles a man to be a leader of men is his willingness and capacity to satisfy a woman.<sup>45</sup>

The romantic ideals that Wallace stands for, namely, protecting the sanctity of marriage and the purity of women are not just associated with him as Braveheart, the hero. They are also demonstrated to be ideals shared by the Highland community. Wallace's first act against the English is to take revenge for the death of Murran by killing the lord who executed her. The second act of revenge in the name of Highland honour is the scene in which the young man whose bride was taken by a nobleman exerting his noble right of *prima nocte* on their first night of marriage is given the opportunity, with Wallace's assistance, to confront the nobleman in question. When the nobleman protests that he was only acting upon his right as lord of these lands, the young man claims what he calls "the right of a Highlander" and proceeds, without music or fanfare, to smash his head in. Wallace then tells the soldiers to return to England and to tell them: "Scotland's and daughters and sons are yours no more. Tell them Scotland is free."

The act of *prima nocte* in Braveheart can be read as another form of English oppression of the Scots. Not only do the English assume rights over Scottish land but even the king's common soldiers presume sexual rights over the Scottish women. Smythe's lust for Murran is made ugly because before attacking her, he tells her that she reminds him of his daughter back home. Then, with the help of his fellow soldiers, Smythe attempts to rape her. The violence perpetrated against Murran by the English

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<sup>45</sup> Kellar, 150.

soldiers, and the murder of her by the English lord in order to set an example of her in front of the community comes to symbolise the pillaging and theft of Scottish land by the English. “An assault on the king’s men is an assault on the king himself,” the English lord proclaims, “Now, let this scrapper [Wallace] come to me.”

In his dissertation on Scottish culture in film and television, Christopher Purdie argues that Rob Roy is somehow more Scottish than Braveheart, and that they differ greatly despite the fact that they investigate similar subjects and pose similar problems of representation. “Rob Roy,” claims Purdie, “despite problematic elements, does try to engage with the complexity of the characters’ lives and times, while Braveheart, on the other hand, does not even try. This difference may in part be due to the greater Scottish involvement in the making of Rob Roy.”<sup>46</sup> There is much evidence to support the argument that Rob Roy gives a much more historically accurate representation of Jacobite eighteenth century Scotland than Braveheart does of the thirteenth and fourteenth century’s Scottish wars of independence; nevertheless, I would not agree with Purdie that this makes Rob Roy less “prone to the pitfalls evident in Braveheart.”<sup>47</sup> Purdie uses historian Elizabeth Ewan to support this claim as she says that:

It is not easy to tell the story of individuals whose lives have taken on legendary proportions. But even if historical accuracy is sacrificed, surely one owes it to them to recreate the complexity of their lives and times and not make them cardboard characters. Rob Roy does attempt to do this. Braveheart does not.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Purdie, 100.

<sup>47</sup> Purdie, 119.

<sup>48</sup> Ewan, 1221.

While my personal opinions on the representation of historical figures do concur with those of Purdie and Ewan, in terms of the use of epic storylines and characters, I do not feel that Rob Roy functions in a very dissimilar way to Braveheart. Both films employ reductive plot structures in that they simplify/modify historical events and people in order to support the heroic epic narrative. One of the main narrative methods used by both films, and common to epic narratives, is the establishment of a dichotomy of good and evil. As in Braveheart, this dichotomy is evoked through a contrast in masculinity between the upper-class English, represented by Archibald (Archie) Cunningham, and the noble Highlander, represented by Rob Roy MacGregor.

The first contrast between English and Scottish masculinities is set up in the scene when we are first introduced to the rivalry between the Duke of Argyll and the Marquis of Montrose. The Duke of Argyll is sympathetic to the cause of the Highlanders, whereas the Duke of Montrose's sympathies lie with the English. In this scene, two nobles are shown striking a wager on a duel. Both men are dressed in their finery for the occasion, complete with wigs and frills. Argyll is resplendent in his red tam-like hat, a stately grey wig and fine red kilt - a slight anachronism for kilts were not usual worn by the upper classes until towards the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>49</sup> In contrast, Montrose is attired all in black, in the apparel of an eighteenth century English nobleman complete with the black tricorn hat oft associated with colonial England.

The wager, with its accompanying taunts and gibes, is shot in a very interesting manner that sets up the contrast between the Scots and English stereotypes. It is a series

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<sup>49</sup> Hobsbawm and Ranger, 28-9.

of shot-reverse-shots consisting of medium close-ups, over the shoulder shots, and two-shots. On one side stands Montrose, in a two-shot with his new protégé, Archibald Cunningham. Archie is dressed all in white, in the stereotypical attire of an eighteenth century English fop. In the mid-ground, between these two men, stands Montrose's small black servant boy wearing a red turban, a subtle yet distinct reminder throughout the scene that Montrose and Cunningham are associated with colonial rule.

In opposition to Montrose and Cunningham, Argyll shares a two-shot with Guthrie, who has just won a friendly duel. Behind Argyll and Guthrie stand other noblemen clad in formal Highland costume. Like Archie Cunningham, Guthrie has been typecast but in a different manner. He typifies the stereotype of the brutish masculinity oft associated in the early eighteenth century with the Highlander. His teeth are rotten, his manners crude, and he looks as though he has neither shaved nor bathed in months. The contrast could not be greater with the powdered, preened, and pampered Archie. Guthrie's character provides further interest because he, like the character of Kilhearn, complicates the simple dichotomy of Scottish versus English. Guthrie, like Rob Roy, is a Highlander but he, Tam Sibald, and their followers do not share the noble qualities of Rob and his clan. They demonstrate the stereotype of the Scottish Highlander typical of the sentiments of the English and Scots Lowlanders of the time of the Jacobite uprisings.

In the banter over a wager on the duel between Archie and Guthrie, differences in the men's sexual preferences also becomes an issue. Argyll suggests that Archie may be a "buggerer of boys", to which Archie defends himself by admitting that it has been many years since he has "buggered a boy" but that he "thought him a girl at the moment of

entry.” This leads Argyll to taunt him further by scoffing at the fact that this dandy of a man cannot tell his “arse from quim.” The difference in masculinities is further emphasised by the different tools of war the men prefer. When Argyll asks Archie what he thinks of Guthrie’s skill as a swordsman, Archie replies, “He’s a fair hand with a cleaver it must be said.” To this Argyll suggests that Archie appears not to appreciate their “Highland tools”. This discussion of the tools of war takes on a phallic meaning when the joust begins. Archie first puts on a show of courtliness prancing about in front of his raucous and enthusiastic audience until Guthrie strikes the first blow. Archie’s face assumes an air of smugness and insolence, and he holds his rapier with a limp wrist, an action that invites the associations of effeminacy that being “limp-wristed” entails.

Archie’s mannerisms do not at all correspond with the gender codes of twentieth century America. Even when he defeats the duke’s champion in a sword fight, he does so with dainty swordsmanship. Indeed, the contrast between Guthrie’s broadsword and Archie’s rapier forms a symbolic contrast between competing masculinities. Guthrie wields his sword with powerful and awkward strokes while Archie sweeps his lighter sword nimbly and artfully. The “gentler party is the surest winner,” to the watching characters’ surprise.<sup>50</sup>

Although we see inklings of a devious temperament on his face, it is not until later in the film that Michael Caton-Jones reveals Archie Cunningham’s insidiously cruel and violent nature. This is soon demonstrated in the following sequence of scenes that cut between scenes depicting Rob Roy MacGregor’s relationship with his wife and family and scenes of Archie Cunningham’s debauched relationship with the servant girl Betty, and his dealings with the corrupt Kilhearn. However, it is important to note that this stereotype does not entirely fit into the reductive Tartanry, Kailyard and Clydeside

approaches to grouping representations of Scotland that have become quite popular in literature on the subject in books such as Forsyth Hardy's Scotland in Film, Colin McArthur's Scotch Reels, and Eddie Dick's From Limelight to Satellite. While the portrayal of Archie Cunningham is certainly by no means a complimentary representation of an Englishman, the performance given by Tim Roth transforms the character into more of a comic type than a representation of nationality. As well-known Scottish writer Liz Lochhead points out, aside from the fact that the character of Archie Cunningham is negative and disagreeable in so many ways, Archie is at the same time very compelling:

. . . a cabbage-patch reductiveness is one thing you cannot justly accuse Rob Roy of. Rather, there is a grandiosity, a swagger, an unconscious blokishness that you might deplore but cannot but enjoy watching, truth be told. The homophobic relish with which the crude clansmen taunt the foppish Cunningham. . . is itself portrayed with a homophobic relish just about justified by the fact that they are patently wrong on both counts. Cunningham is *extremely* dangerous both in sex and war, and provides Tim Roth with a role to steal the movie from under the noses of the stars. Everybody, surely, would rather watch Roth be a hiss-the-villain (and it's a performance of subtlety and dark vulnerability as well as enormous bravura) than watch Neeson and Lange in their sentimental idealised married love.<sup>51</sup>

As discussed earlier, the masculinity of Rob Roy MacGregor is firmly established from the outset of the film, when he is shown walking with his men at a rapid and steady pace through the misty Highlands tracking thieves who have stolen Montrose's cattle. When they finally catch up with the tinkers, Rob demonstrates his skill in enforcing the laws of the land, even if it means killing Tam Sibald, a man he used to play with as a lad. In contrast to the uncouth Guthrie, it is important to note that Rob Roy does not resort

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<sup>50</sup> Kellar, 147.

<sup>51</sup> Lochhead, Liz. "The Shadow." Sight and Sound. 5.6 (June 1995), 18.



first to violence. Instead, he approaches the tinkers alone after a night's rest nearby and attempts a civilised negotiation with Tam Sibald. Rob Roy only wields his sword when it becomes apparent that negotiation will not be possible.

Scenes like this one and the one in which he refuses to slander Argyll in order to clear his debts with Montrose demonstrate that Rob Roy does not only preach about acting honourable but that he lives by his word. It is this word that Rob Roy teaches to his sons. All of the scenes that show Rob Roy with his wife and sons take place in the Highlands, either in their idyllic cottage by the banks of a loch, or in the hills near their home. In the scene in which Rob lectures about honour to his sons, the family have gone walking into the hills for a picnic. After playing with his sons for a while, one of the boys asks if the MacGregors will ever be kings again. To this Rob replies that "all men with honour are kings but not all kings have honour." He then further explains that "Honour is what no man can give you and that none can take away. Honour is a man's gift to himself. . . never worry in the getting of it. It grows in you and speaks to you. All you need do is listen." The scene unfolds like an episode of Father Knows Best or The Cosby Show complete with a lesson in the end about morals.

[Rob Roy]'s narrative is less about early-eighteenth-century Scotland than about American family values and traditional masculinity. Robert Roy MacGregor (Liam Neeson), his wife Mary (Jessica Lange), and their two children are an anachronism, an American, bourgeois family living in the pre-industrial Scottish Highlands. Their peace is disturbed by an effeminate British fop and swordsman Archibald Cunningham (Tim Roth). . . [who] hounds Rob Roy virtually to death, and his removal becomes vital to the maintenance of the family and the MacGregor clan. . . Archibald Cunningham's behaviour sets him up as the antithesis of the

MacGregor clan and its values of honour, fidelity, and fraternity; but mostly Cunningham is contrasted with the brutish masculinity of Rob.<sup>52</sup>

Although Tim Roth acts the role of Archie Cunningham with affectations associated with negative gay stereotypes, all of Archie's sexual escapades in the film are heterosexual. In fact, his heterosexual relationship with Betty, one of Montrose's servants, further exaggerates the contrast between Archie and Rob Roy. Rob Roy's wife, Mary, is structured as a strong, honourable woman as opposed to Betty, who is weak and allows herself to be used and shamed by men in positions authority; namely, Archie and Kilhearn.

Mary is first introduced asleep in bed as Rob Roy returns from his mission to track down Montrose's stolen cattle. After bathing himself in the loch in a scene that further romanticises his size, strength, and rugged masculinity, he slips into bed with his wife. As they make love she speaks of having dreamed about a *silkie*, a creature of Celtic legend that is part human and part seal. These tales of *silkies*, also known as *roans* or *roanes* in Ireland and Scotland, usually involve humans falling in love with the beautiful creatures of the sea, as demonstrated in John Sayles' lyrical 1993 film set in Ireland, The Secret of Roan Inish<sup>53</sup>. Rob Roy's response to his wife's idyllic dream of being ravished by a silkie, is to ask: "How do you know you're awake, wife?" , as he himself has just emerged from the water of the loch. This exchange functions to put their relationship on the level of a romantic dream or myth.

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<sup>52</sup> Kellar, 147.

<sup>53</sup> "Roan Inish" means "Island of the Seals".

This love-making scene sets up a stark contrast with the following scene in which Betty is first introduced. Betty is shown dressing herself in the mirror with the sleeping Archibald Cunningham on the bed behind her. As she leaves the room, she encounters Kilhearn who proceeds to make unwanted advances on her. In Kilhearn's treatment of Betty, it becomes apparent that there is a pattern in the Montrose household of people abusing their authority. As the film progresses, it is clear that Cunningham has been using Betty for sex and has no compassionate regard for her whatsoever. He also seems to have little regard for himself. In a revealing scene in bed with Betty, Cunningham discloses, in a rare moment of contemplation on his part, that his mother did not know for certain who his father was and had narrowed down the candidates to three men. Archie says to Betty: "You think me a gentlemen because I have linen and can manage a *lithp*? I am but a bastard abroad seeking my fortune and the favours of great men. As big a whore as my mother ever was." His voice is laced with disgust, and he seems really to be ruminating out loud to himself, barely aware of Betty's presence. When Betty reveals to him that she is pregnant, he looks on her with a disinterested gaze and smiles insidiously: "Well, when it asks for it's father's name, at least you'll have it to give." Archie's disinterest leads to Betty's dismissal from her position in Montrose's household and her ultimate suicide out of shame and despair.

Archie is further structured as the opposite to Rob with the many associations made between Archie with bodily functions. While an entire sequence of the film is dedicated to showing Rob Roy as he carefully bathes himself in the loch before entering the bed of his wife, in contrast, Archie casually relieves himself in front of Kilhearn.

Such moments stressing physical uncleanness emphasise the theme of moral impurity associated with Archie. This includes Archie's racking up of financial debts, his cold-hearted treatment of Betty, his murdering of Alan MacDonald, and of course, his raping of Mary.

These actions are all in stark contrast with those of Rob Roy, who has faith in Alan MacDonald despite the fact that he has disappeared with Rob's money, and who cherishes his wife above all others: "Women are the heart of honour," he tells his sons, "and we're cherished and protected in them. You must never mistreat a woman nor malign a man. Nor stand by and see another do so." Despite fine speeches like these about treating women with respect, the depiction of Mary is but a male fantasy. From the scene in which they make love on the standing stones to Mary's attempt to save Rob's life by keeping quiet about her rape, the portrayal of Mary rings false. She is stereotyped as the archetypal Scottish woman: loyal, yet feisty; independent yet ready to put "her man's" well-being above her own. Liz Lochhead voices her dissatisfaction with Mary's lack of resentment over Rob Roy choosing his pride over the concerns of his wife:

I can't help feeling the writer and the director probably thought all the love stuff would make it a woman's picture too. But what they reveal is a deep male yearning for an ideal: the woman is impossibly wise (she told him so!) and forbearing (she doesn't remind him that she told him so!) as well as self-sacrificing, natural, full of unlikely mother-love, which seems to well up in any circumstances. . . . Couldn't she have resented, just a little, being left alone to be to be raped? Couldn't she have hated the fruit of the rape, just until it was born? Couldn't he, however unreasonably, have reacted with immediate human revulsion which he'd have to fight against in himself? No, it was a big movie, brave enough to be black and white. . . .<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Lochhead, 18.

In the end, the final showdown between Rob Roy and Archie Cunningham is a black versus white dichotomy: good versus evil. The sword fight parallels the earlier joust between Archie and Guthrie. Again, Montrose and Argyll make a wager but this time the stakes are much higher. This is a fight about honour and freedom. It is also about Scottish versus English – about the noble Highland values fighting against the encroachment of upper-class English corruption. Archie removes his wig for the fight as he has no more need of hiding beneath frippery. Both the audience and Rob Roy know exactly what he is and what he stands for: English oppression and corruption. Archie's smaller stature is exaggerated by Rob's larger stature. The fight is a desperate one, but in the end, this being a Hollywood film, good triumphs over evil and justice is served, leaving Rob Roy to triumphantly return home to his wife and family.

An element of both Rob Roy and Braveheart that does not receive much attention due to the heroic emphasis of the plots is the shared failings and guilt of the two men. Each of these two heroic men failed in one greatly important aspect of the noble hero: to protect their wives. Wallace's failure to save Murran from attack and death is demonstrated to be directly related to his mission to fight for the freedom of all Scots people, just as Rob Roy's failure to save Mary from attack and rape leads to his final showdown with Archie Cunningham. At the end of Rob Roy, the status quo is returned, but that is not the case in Braveheart. To be certain, Braveheart ends with Robert the Bruce picking up William Wallace's struggle, but in the end Wallace is just a martyred hero for the cause. Although he had some success in battle, he also suffered heavy losses.

There is a prevailing theme in Scottish masculine culture of a failure to succeed. In sports such as football and rugby, for example, it has been a long standing joke that Scotland's national team will battle on impressively for the first half of the game, raising the hopes of Scottish fans of a victory at long last, but that the match will almost always end in a noble and glorious defeat. The same scenario plays itself out every time a World Cup or Six Nations event comes along. To quote Bill Bryden:

So you end up a typical Scotsman. Prejudiced, Christian (when it suits you), well-educated, nostalgic, willing to travel, pro-Irish (they're in the same boat), aggressive, proud, single-minded, occasionally pissed, occasionally singing, not mean (as a nation we are rather generous you'll find), willing to accept second place too often, expecting to lose, easily embarrassed, passionate and football daft, standing there, thousands of us, in Wembley Stadium at the game. England 5 Scotland 1. A nation mourns - member at.<sup>55</sup>

This pattern of defeatism will become apparent in the next two chapters, as I investigate how contemporary Scottish men are characterised in recent films.

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<sup>55</sup> Kravitz, i.

### Chapter III

#### From Highlander to “Hard Man”

Whether because of Calvinism or Catholicism, Scotland has had hang-ups in abundance - especially around sex and drink. Then there is anger. Then there is guilt about this anger. Then the depression that follows when anger is internalised. Nowhere is this clearer than in the rage of Scottish men. A good deal of contemporary Scottish fiction shows the pressure on Scots men to be real hard men.<sup>56</sup>

The contemporary idea of the “hard man” or “big man”<sup>57</sup> has many similarities with the depiction of the Highlander, as explored in the previous chapter. Both types are determined by the harshness of their community and environment, urban in the case of the hard man and rural in the case of the Highlander. Their masculinity is defined by their displays of power, whether physically or sexually, and both types are prone to violence. The gang violence in Small Faces pales in comparison to the vicious battle scenes in Braveheart, yet the motivations of the gangs seem petty in contrast to the patriotic fervour of Wallace’s followers. Each violent act in Small Faces has little or no motivation, whereas the motivations of the male characters in Braveheart are clearly defined. The themes associated with these violent acts, not only in Small Faces, but in other recent successful domestic Scottish films, point to a crisis of masculinity.

The term “masculinity in crisis” has become a real buzz word in the media over the past few years. Recently, it has even become a major theme in Hollywood films such as American Beauty and Magnolia. In her examination of masculinity in film, Yvonne

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<sup>56</sup> Kravitz, Peter. “Introduction.” The Picador Book of Contemporary Scottish Fiction. London: Picador, 1997. xx.

<sup>57</sup> Popular Scottishism for tough guy. The term is usually associated with violence. One well known example is William McIlvanney’s novel The Big Man, about a man who loses his job in his native Ayrshire and has to rely upon bare-knuckle fighting to make a living. The novel was made into a film in 1990 directed by David Leland and starring Billy Connolly and Liam Neeson.

Tasker writes of an on-going preoccupation with “the construction of the male body as spectacle, together with an awareness of masculinity as performance. Also evident in these films is the continuation and amplification of an established tradition of the Hollywood cinema – play upon images of power and powerlessness at the centre of which is the male hero”<sup>58</sup>.

The interplay between power and powerlessness is central to the characterisation of male protagonists in contemporary Scottish films, embodied in the ideal of the “hard man”. In this chapter, I will look at the idea of the “hard man”, using Sean Connery’s star persona as an example of the archetypal hard man. I will then examine how hard men are used to define Scottish communities in recent Scottish films. Films like Trainspotting, Looking After JoJo, Small Faces, and My Name is Joe reveal a complex relationship between the main male protagonists and the local hard man of their community. The attitude of these young men towards the hard man is generally a conflicting mix of admiration and disgust, not to mention an increasing impatience with their inability to move away from the power and influence of the hard man in their community.

### **Big Tam**

Sean Connery is the biggest Hollywood star to come out of Scotland. In both his on-screen roles and in his public persona, Connery typifies the ‘hard man’ stereotype. Connery’s leap to fame came when he was cast as James Bond in 1962. In the Bond

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<sup>58</sup> Tasker, Yvonne. “Dumb Movies for Dumb People: Masculinity, the body, and the voice in contemporary action cinema.” Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema. Eds. Steven Cohan and Ina Rae Hark. New York: Routledge, 1993. 230 [essay length: 230-244.]



films, with which Connery's name has become synonymous, Sean Connery embodied Hollywood masculinity. As Bond, Connery displayed physical elegance, he exuded sex appeal, he had women falling over each other to get into bed with him, and he could cut down his enemy with a few punches or a glib remark. In From Limelight to Satellite, John Millar suggests that the Bond publicity got it right when they used the slogan: "Sean Connery *is* James Bond." Millar explains: "No one sipped a vodka martini, embraced the heroine or blasted the villains better than Connery. He was also in a class of his own when it came to delivering those famous one-line quips, which added a dash of humour to his Bond outings."<sup>59</sup>

Thus the masculine appeal of Sean Connery, solidified by his portrayals of James Bond, lies in the myth of his physical prowess. This physical prowess is demonstrated sexually in Bond's effortless seduction and abuse of women. Furthermore, his heterosexual dominance demonstrates itself in his ability to outwit his enemies both mentally and through physical violence. Often the violence Bond demonstrates is excessive, and he's not above violence against women if they stand in the way of his performing his duty to Her Majesty's Service.

Part of Sean Connery's appeal to Scots, particularly in Edinburgh where he is still known as 'Big Tam', is his working class roots. His ascent from humble working class beginnings to international stardom is the stuff of legends. His father was a lorry driver and his mother worked as a charlady. As a lad he played street football and worked various odd jobs in order to help out his family. He dropped out of school at age thirteen

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<sup>59</sup> Millar, John. "Sean Connery." From Limelight to Satellite. Ed. Eddie Dick. Edinburgh: Scottish Film

and had various jobs including cement mixing, bricklaying, coffin polishing, and lifeguard. He didn't get into the entertainment industry until he went to London to enter a Mr. Universe competition and ended up in the chorus of a stage production of South Pacific. From there he worked as an understudy on stage and on screen, working his way up through smaller roles until he finally got his big break as James Bond<sup>60</sup>.

In addition to his image as a typical working class Scotsman, Connery's star status is such that he need make no attempt to disguise his Scots accent. He has played a wide range of nationalities from an Irish-American cop in The Untouchables (Brian De Palma, 1987) to a Lithuanian in The Hunt for Red October (John McTeirnan, 1990), yet his accent remains unchanged. In the cult status action film The Highlander (Russell Mulcahy, 1986) a Frenchman, Christopher Lambert plays the Highlander, while Sean Connery plays a Spanish noble. He seems to relish in his Scots burr, making no discernible attempt to sound Spanish.

Despite Connery's continued international success, cracks have begun to appear in his "hard man" star persona. During the campaign for devolution, Connery financially and publicly supported the Scottish National Party (SNP), causing much derision in the press due to his status as a non-resident (he and his wife live in a tax haven off the coast of Spain). As The Guardian reported in May 1999, "The Scottish tabloids go strong on that peculiarly Caledonian trait of bashing successful exiles who display signs of forgetting their roots."<sup>61</sup> The controversy over Connery's persona as a Scots nationalist

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Council and BFI, 1990, 166.

<sup>60</sup> Andrews, Emma. The Films of Sean Connery. Somerset: Petherton Press, 1974.

<sup>61</sup> Fraser, Douglas. "What this front page reveals about the battle for Scotland." Monday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1999.

who does not own property in Scotland appeared again in the Scottish media in the weeks leading up to his knighthood. This time, however, his image as the Bondian “hard man” was questioned as rumours circulated in the press that he may advocate violence against women:

‘To slap a woman is not the cruellest thing you can do to her,’ he said in a Vanity Fair interview in 1993. Expect opportunist politicians and lazy commentators to raise this issue again, as Sir Sean bends the knee in a fortnight. But by way the most interesting aspect of Connery’s biographical darkness is the way it feeds into his own film history – and into the highly charged politics of masculinity in modern movies. When the idea of the ‘crisis of men’ is one of the biggest cultural themes in the developed West (from Fight Club to American Psycho), how do we assess a movie icon who stands, like no other, for ‘real’ manhood – with all the dangers it implies? <sup>62</sup>

Thus, while the star persona of Sean Connery typifies the hard man stereotype on several levels: his charisma, his ability to maintain his cool in dangerous situations, his sexual and physical prowess, and his capacity for physical violence, this portrait of manhood is no longer seen as the ideal as Scotland moves into the twenty-first century.

### **Trainspotting**

In Trainspotting, Sick Boy is a huge fan of Sean Connery. According to the Oxford dictionary, a trainspotter is “a person whose hobby is observing trains and recording locomotive numbers.” In a broader vernacular sense, the expression “trainspotter” tends to include any person who makes a hobby of remembering the minute details of any subject. Thus, Sick Boy can be considered a trainspotter who specialises in facts about Sean Connery. At the beginning of Trainspotting, Renton’s

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<<http://www.guardianunlimited.co.uk/Archive?Article?0,4273,3860798,00.html>>

<sup>62</sup> Kane, Pat. “Hero today, but gone tomorrow?” Sunday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2000.

explanation in voice-over of the reasons people have junk habits is intercut with Sick Boy's theory about the popularity and masculinity of Sean Connery: "Goldfinger's better than Dr. No. Both of them are a lot better than Diamonds are Forever, a judgement reflected in its relative poor showing at the box office, in which field, of course, Thunderball was a notable success. . . I would say, in those days, he was a muscular actor, in every sense, with all the presence of someone like Cooper or Lancaster, but combined with a sly wit to make him a formidable romantic lead, closer in that respect to Cary Grant."

In the process of adapting the screenplay from Irvine Welsh's novel, many of Sick Boy's indulgent musings over Sean Connery have been omitted. In one scene that made it into John Hodge's original shooting script but was omitted from the final edit of the film, Sick Boy quizzes Renton on his James Bond knowledge<sup>63</sup>. Sick Boy frequently mimics Connery's Scots burr, "Do you *shee* the *beasht*? Have you got it in your *shights*?", and he and Renton also get into debates over whether or not Sean Connery's masculine appeal is in decline:

SICK BOY

All I'm trying to do is help you understand that The Name of the Rose is merely a blip on an otherwise uninterrupted downward trajectory.

RENTON

What about The Untouchables?

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<<http://uk.news.yahoo.com/000625/37/abpsn.html>>

<sup>63</sup> Hodge, John. Trainspotting & Shallow Grave. London: Faber & Faber Ltd. 1996, 14.

SICK BOY

I don't rate that at all.

RENTON

Despite the Academy award?

SICK BOY

That means fuck all. The sympathy vote.

RENTON

Right. So we all get old and then we cannae hack it anymore. Is that it?

SICK BOY

Yeah.

RENTON

That's your theory?

SICK BOY

Yeah. Beautifully fucking illustrated.

RENTON

Give me the gun.

At which point, Renton and Sick Boy demonstrate their masculine prowess by target shooting at the rear end of a pit bull terrier. The allusions to Sean Connery as the archetypal "hard man" emphasise the ways in which the young men in Trainspotting equate their masculinity with their ability to get laid. The status of Bond as a womaniser is seen as the ultimate, if unattainable goal. Sick Boy describes Ursula Andress as "the quintessential Bond girl." In his opinion, she embodies "[Bond]'s superiority to us: beautiful, exotic, highly sexual and yet unavailable to everybody but him. Shite. Let's face it: if she'd shag one punter from Edinburgh, she'd shag the fucking lot of us."

Sick Boy and Renton idealise the Connery of the Bond days but for them, he "cannae hack it anymore" as a masculine ideal. In fact, they seem to have lost faith in

more than just their masculine hero. They've lost faith in themselves. This is revealed to their lack of respect for themselves (abuse of drugs, alcohol), each other (lies, cheating), and their community (shoplifting, general disdain).

The community depicted in Trainspotting is that of a group of "mates". Renton, the main protagonist and narrator, and his mates Spud, Sick Boy, Tommy, and Begbie have all grown up in the same area of Edinburgh and attended school together. They hang out in pubs, shoplift, and shoot heroin together. Each of the young men is trying to be a hard man, but with little success. Sick Boy, Tommy, and Begbie all consider themselves to be ladies men – Sick Boy emulates the charm and cool of Sean Connery, Tommy swears off drugs and tries to keep himself in good physical shape – "It was one of his major weaknesses," says Renton at one point, "he never told lies, never took drugs, and never cheated on anyone" - and Begbie also swears off drugs but is prone, with little provocation, to acts of extreme violence. Robert Carlyle's portrayal of Begbie is one of the most disturbing elements in Trainspotting. Begbie constantly bristles with a nervous kind of energy - as if begging people to give him an excuse to act out violently. In one scene, he recklessly throws a pint glass over his shoulder in a pub and it smashes onto the head of an innocent woman, thus inciting a riot. Renton, in his monotone voice-over, says: "Yeah, the guy's a psycho, but it's true, he's a mate as well, so what can you do" Just stand back and watch and try not to get involved."

Through Renton's voice-over narration, one gets the impression that there is no sense of close friendship between the men, it is more that they've formed a habit of each other. As the film progresses it becomes further apparent that the young men feel no true

sense of loyalty to each other. Renton shamelessly steals Tommy's video cassette of Tommy and Lizzy having sex and watches it with Sick Boy. He does not tell Tommy the truth, even though the missing video results in Lizzy dumping Tommy. While Tommy is in a heartbroken state, he decides to try heroin and Renton does not discourage him because Tommy offers to pay for Renton as well. Thus, Renton and Sick Boy are instrumental in the downward spiral and ultimate death of Tommy, yet they seem to feel no sense of responsibility or remorse.

The ultimate betrayal comes at the end of the film when Renton rips off his friends, or "so-called mates" as he calls them, stealing the drug money they've just acquired together. Renton excuses his actions to himself by saying that they would have done the same to him if only they'd thought of it earlier, except for Spud, for whom he leaves some money in a bus locker.

### **Looking After JoJo**

Betrayal is also at the heart of John MacKenzie's 1998 television miniseries, Looking After JoJo starring Robert Carlyle as JoJo. Like Trainspotting, the series is set in 1980s Leith. Although the community, themes, and music are similar to that of Trainspotting, the opening credit sequence, with its overt political coding as cues the audience to expect a slice-of-life social realist drama like Mike Leigh's High Hopes (1988) or even one of Ken Loach's films like Riff Raff (1991) or My Name is Joe, which will be discussed later. In fact, the opening and closing credits of Looking After JoJo are a thought-provoking sequence of images that cue the audience to expect a story depicting the decline of life among the lower classes in Britain. In the background, dominating the

frame, is a Tory party billboard advertisement displaying a larger than life bust of Margaret Thatcher. The white billboard is dirty, pockmarked, and scarred, perhaps from ageing or from kids taking pot-shots at it with stones. There appears to be a junk yard of some kind in front of the billboard and a couple of children are jumping up and down in slow motion to the pop music theme tune. One gets the impression that the Thatcherite message for a new Britain on the billboard has little significance for these children; they are not included in Thatcher's vision of Britain. Thatcher's pockmarked face looms over them as a signifier of the crumbling power of colonial Britain over nation-states like Scotland.

Looking After JoJo depicts a greater sense of the impact the troubled main protagonists have on their working class community. Although there are a few allusions to the pain the protagonists in Trainspotting are having on their families (Spud's mother's devastation when Spud is imprisoned and Renton's parents' futile attempts to sober their son up), such allusions are only peripheral to the story. The medium of a miniseries instead of a feature film allows MacKenzie more time to develop this aspect of drug culture with greater depth.

As in Rob Roy and Braveheart, Looking After JoJo develops a good versus bad dichotomy. Instead of a dichotomy of English versus Scottish, MacKenzie set up a dichotomy of a working class community versus figures of authority; namely, the police, as well as middle and upper-class business owners. Or, in general terms, a dichotomy of poverty versus the middle classes. Although the underprivileged community depicted in



Looking After JoJo is rife with corruption, they still live with a system of universally understood values.

The main protagonist, John Joe McCann, JoJo for short, comes from a family of thieves. His driving ambition in the series is to be a hard man like his father and Uncle Charlie before him. There are two senses to the term “hard man”. The first, as discussed in relation to Sean Connery and Trainspotting is that of the “tough guy”. The term can also be used to refer to a gang leader. JoJo’s Uncle Charlie is a figure of leadership in the community, mainly because he is a hard man. He runs the local pub, he plans heists and has his underlings, like JoJo and his brother-in-law Big Danny, do the dirty work for him, and he has a surveillance system set up in his apartment so that he can hear activities on the police radio and see the council estate activities on his video monitoring system. JoJo’s father worked with Charlie and spent time in prison for his crimes. He was killed under unusual circumstances and JoJo believes that the police murdered him.

The code that the council estate lives by is established in the very first episode: “no grassers”. In British slang, a “grasser” or someone who “grasses” on someone else means an informer, particularly someone who gives information to the police. At the beginning of the first episode of Looking After JoJo, we see JoJo and his mates pulling off a robbery at a warehouse. A few scenes later, one of JoJo’s mates, Eddie, is picked up by the police. The police tell Eddie that no one saw them pick him up, in order to convince Eddie to give them names connected to the warehouse robbery. In return for Eddie’s co-operation they promise to release him without laying charges. Unfortunately, neither Eddie nor the police, are aware that Charlie McCann listens to the police radio

and knows that Eddie was picked up. Thus, when JoJo and Basil get arrested, Charlie knows that Eddie must have grassed on them in order to save his own skin. When Charlie reveals that Eddie was the grasser, they are shocked that one of their own could be guilty of such back-stabbing. To them, grassing is a bigger offence than criminal activities. When word of Eddie's betrayal gets out, a group of young men go to Eddie's flat and scream insults at him, calling him a grasser, and throw things at the flat. Everyone in the community supports the attack on the stool pigeon. When the mob set Eddie's brother's motorbike on fire, even the brother encourages the community's violent punishment of Eddie. He throws Eddie out to the crowd to receive his due.

This situation with Eddie demonstrates the code by which the community works. This ideal of community solidarity is reminiscent of the Highland codes of Rob Roy and Braveheart. For example, Robert the Bruce's betrayal of William Wallace in Braveheart is shown to be more than just a betrayal of a friend, it is depicted as a betrayal against the common Scottish people's fight for autonomy and freedom. The establishment of the "no grassers" code emphasises the gravity of the ensuing string of McCann family betrayals that are either committed or revealed throughout the series. The main protagonist, JoJo McCann, is developed as a sympathetic character – a victim of the betrayals committed by his own family. Even JoJo's own Uncle Charlie sets JoJo up with a robbery job that results in his being arrested by police. The ultimate betrayal comes when JoJo learns that it was his mother, not the police, who killed his father.

The character of JoJo McCann is a complex one for he is both a sympathetic and a loathsome character. For, while JoJo is betrayed by his family, he and his family betray the values of his own community by bringing hard drugs to Leith. It does not take long for the McCann family, under Uncle Charlie's watchful eye, to set up a lucrative business in their neighbourhood. Soon, most of the estate is addicted to the hard drugs. Crime goes up in the neighbourhood as junkies commit crimes such as theft in order to support their drug habits. As the series progresses, further consequences of the widespread use of drugs surface. The young people are beginning to fall ill with jaundice, hepatitis, and AIDS. Even JoJo's girlfriend, Lorraine, who does not use drugs, fears that she and her unborn baby may have become affected with AIDS due to JoJo's own drug addiction.

The McCann family are vilified by the community for their role as drug dealers. JoJo's older sister, Jackie, is the only voice of dissent within the McCann family. Although she would never grass on her own kin, she is torn by her loyalty to her family and her concern for the well-being of the community and its children. She takes her son, Christie, to a community meeting about the drug problem and despite her support of their concerns, she is castigated for being a member of the McCann family. Strangely, despite the fact that everyone in the community knows who is responsible for dealing the drugs, no one steps forward to grass on the McCann's to the police. This can only be accounted for due to a fear of community reprisal for grassing or violent retribution from the McCann gang connections, such as those suffered by Eddie. The community acts out through verbal and graffiti insults and threats to the McCann family and friends.

In the end; however, the community does not put an end to the destructiveness of the McCann family. Rather, the family destroys itself. JoJo murders his Uncle Charlie, thinking that his uncle killed his father. Soon afterwards, his relationship with his mother is destroyed when it is revealed that it was she who killed his father. The series ends with the community finally seeing justice in that JoJo and his gang are all imprisoned together. But we are not left with a complete sense of resolution. In the last scene, JoJo's young nephew Christie is shown acting in a defiant manner towards the police and making it clear that Christie, even at his young age, has taken on the mantle as the new "hard man" McCann. Yet again, the cycle of destruction and nihilism is about to repeat itself with the next generation of young men. This perpetual cycle of addiction, hard luck, and hard men is a constant theme in contemporary representations of Scotland, and is associated with the discourse of Clydesideism.

### **Small Faces**

In delineating Clydesideism as twentieth century Scottish mythology, Caughie described the discourse as "a modernised myth of male industrial labour, pub and football field alive and in place, surfacing. . . in the celebration of a 'real Glasgow' beneath the yuppie surface of shopping malls and Garden Festival and City of Culture."<sup>64</sup> The definition of 'real Glasgow' and 'real Leith' in film and literature tends to focus on the lives of the working classes or the underbelly of these cities, riddled with crime, violence, drugs, and alcoholism. The gangs in films like Trainspotting, Looking After JoJo, and Small Faces function in ways similar to the Highland code of the clan as demonstrated in

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<sup>64</sup> Caughie, 16.

films such as Braveheart and Rob Roy; however, the link between family and clan has become more complicated. Whereas in Highlandism, the nuclear family is at the centre of the clan, in Clydeside or Leith films the gang takes precedence over the family, and in many cases the family unit has completely broken down. In many ways, the gang works as a surrogate for the unstable family unit. As Guggenbühl notes on gangs in general:

Boys feel connected to the other gang members. Due to their sense of belonging, they forget that they are weak, insignificant members of society at large. The gang compensates for any feelings of powerlessness its members otherwise experience in their everyday lives and gives them a sense of strength.<sup>65</sup>

This is certainly the case in the Mackinnon brothers' Small Faces, a film based on their childhood experiences in late 1960s Glasgow<sup>66</sup>. Small Faces is narrated by the youngest of three brothers in the Maclean family, Lex. The story that Lex unfolds is that of his turbulent early adolescence. The Maclean brothers live with their mother in a small flat, the three brothers sharing the cramped quarters of the same bedroom. Their father died when the boys were very young and each of the boys is affected in different ways by their father's death. Lex barely remembers his father, and suffers from a lack of guidance. Apart from their uncle Andrew, who is visiting from the United States, Lex has no adult role models. The plot is mainly driven by Lex as he tries to find his place in his community. Lex does have a good role model in his brother Alan who, of the three boys, is the only one who has a clear idea of who he is and what he wants to do with his life. The eldest brother, Bobby, seems the most affected by the absent father, in that, as his brother Alan reveals, Bobby was often severely beaten by their father. Bobby is not

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<sup>65</sup> Guggenbühl, 88.

that bright, but desires to belong to a group. Thus, Bobby is drawn into the Glenleith gang, a group of young men, asserting their community identity through violence and crime. At the head of this surrogate family stands Sloan, a young man whose ego is so large that he has Alan add his face to a mural of famous faces at the public art gallery.

The Maclean brothers are stuck in the middle between opposing clans: the Tongs and the Glenleith boys. Each gang, like the Highland clan of Braveheart and Rob Roy is defined by their community. The Tongs inhabit Tongland: a community of tall, desolate council flats in the middle of a muddy wasteland. The leader of the Tongs, Malky Johnson, is the father of a surrogate family. As his cousin, Gorbals, explains to Lex, this collection of siblings and cousins living without parents is a kind of “experiment”. The absence of parents is further exaggerated by the lack of community involvement in the lives of these young people. As Gorbals tells Lex, they “don’t see much of the law down here.”

In contrast, the Glenleith neighbourhood is a series of brick row-housing with small backyards. Again, with the exception of Norma, the Maclean brother’s mother, and their visiting American uncle, this is also a world without adults. Bobby considers himself to be second in command of the Glenleith gang, but his membership does not extend to his two younger brothers. Alan and Lex find themselves through matters of chance to be caught in the middle of the gang activities. Alan’s involvement is accidental, through his brothers’ involvement and through his romance with Joanne – a young woman who is desired by both the leader of the Tongs, Malky, and the leader of

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<sup>66</sup> Kennedy, 32.

the Glen, Sloan. The youngest Maclean brother, Lex, depending on his needs, wavers between the two gangs. His inability to choose sides is mainly due to the ignorance of youth. Lex aspires to be a hard man but he doesn't know the rules of the game he has become involved with yet. His naïve attempts to become involved with the gangs eventually result in the murder of his eldest brother, Bobby.

Lex's involvement with the gangs begins with a random act of violence. In order to make amends for murdering Lex's pet fish, Bobby gives Lex an airgun. While walking in the park with Alan, Lex decides to take a pot-shot at a field of football players. He ends up hitting Malky Johnson in the eye, thus beginning his accidental involvement with the gangs. Many of the young men in Small Faces indulge in senseless violence. It is a world that is strangely without parental supervision, or at least without fathers, and the gangs take the place of the family with the gang leader at the head of the patriarchal system. Much of the violence stems from homophobic tension. Gang leaders Malky and Sloan are defined as leaders because they are slightly mad and through their capacity for extreme, uncontrolled violence – like that demonstrated by Begbie in Trainspotting.

One of the most disturbing scenes in the film is the attack on Alan's best friend Fabio. Although Fabio is not identified in the film as being homosexual, he is seen as different by the gangs because he is an outsider (son of an Italian immigrant), an artist, and a non-violent person. The theme of homophobia is expressed overtly in the Maclean brothers final scene with their Uncle Andrew before he goes back to America. Their American uncle walks with them in a park and tries to establish a fatherly rapport with

the boys. Bobby sullenly lags behind the group, his behaviour indicating that he would rather be somewhere else. When Uncle Andrew asks them what's been bothering them, Alan and Lex whisper confidentially that they fear that something is the matter with Bobby, their choice of words implying that they think Bobby is gay. This is of course only a joke that they're playing on Bobby, and they laugh uncontrollably when Uncle Andrew tries to broach the subject with Bobby. In the context of the film, however, homophobia is no joke. The male characters define their masculinity through overtly heterosexual and violent behaviour.

Alan and his best friend, Fabio, are unique among the portrayals of masculinity in Small Faces. Both young men are artists and as such shown to be quieter and more thoughtful individuals, who stand outside of any involvement with the Glen or the Tongs. Whereas the gang members simply desire more power within the gang, Alan and Fabio have a greater vision of what they want to do with their lives. They both plan to continue their education at art school. Alan's nature attracts Joanne, a stereotypically smart and "feisty" young woman who, since childhood, has been a friend to both Malky and Sloan. In fact, Sloan feels quite possessive about Joanne. This involves Alan even more in gang activity, though he never becomes actively involved in the gangs except to do one artistic favour for Sloan.

Fabio, on the other hand, is attacked for being different. He is as "other" than the Glen and the Tongs not only by his status as artist, but also as an immigrant (his father is Italian), and for being non-aggressive. In one scene, Fabio is punished for his passivity by a small gang of Glenleith girls. They surround him and taunt him: "How come you're



not with the Glen? You too good for them? Bet he fights like a lassie!” Fabio’s passivity enrages them further and their taunts lead to the girls screaming, hitting and kicking him. Soon they are joined by male members of the Glen who enthusiastically join in the attack. the camera is positioned at a low-angle, close to Fabio’s point-of-view, thus emphasising the eagerness with which the violence is being inflicted. Only one of the girls becomes panicked by the escalation of the violence and yells at them to stop, fearing that they’re going to kill Fabio. The other girls look on her concern with disdain.

The brutal attack on Fabio reinforces the underlying homoerotic tension in Small Faces. The main story in Small Faces is the coming of age of youngest Maclean brother, Lex, who is the main protagonist and narrator in the film, although we are privy to many scenes involving of which Lex is not a participant or spectator. Like his brother, Bobby, Lex is prone to acts of thoughtless violence, such as shooting Malky Johnson with a BB gun. At the same time, however, Lex is smarter and more contemplative than his eldest brother. Lex is looking for people to look up to, and thus is fascinated by the Tongs and the Glen. Yet, as a budding artist, Lex also looks up to Alan and Fabio.

Lex’s embarrassment at sharing his artwork with Fabio stems not just from modesty, but from an discomfiture of his hero-worship of Fabio. As Fabio leafs through Lex’s sketchbook, Lex becomes more and more restless and tries to prevent Fabio from seeing the sketch that he drew of Fabio. When Fabio turns the page, Lex explodes with pent up anger from embarrassment at having his admiration for Fabio thus revealed: “You think I’m an idiot, don’t you?” he shouts, “Admit it, it’s rubbish.” Fabio calms him by assuring him that the portrait is good, but it is implied that Lex’s discomfiture stems

from a fear of homosexuality. This is further emphasised by how upset Lex is when he learns of the brutal attack on Fabio. When he's recovering in hospital, Lex slowly walks past the beds of infirm old men in the ward until he gets to Fabio's bed. Once there, he finds that he is unable to approach Fabio or even let him know that he's there. Lex seems to feel ashamed that his hero was beaten up by the gang, and the next scene shows him crying in his bed. Lex is torn between his desire to be a hard man – or at least to be accepted and admired by the hard men of his community – and his desire to become an artist like Fabio. Although Lex feels responsible for his brother Bobby's death, this event finally pushes Lex away from the gangs towards becoming his own person. The film ends with Lex dreaming about the future for his family. His dream for himself he describes as "more like a nightmare." He says, "I grew hair all over me. I had body odour. I suffered from uncontrollable senseless impulses. I felt responsible for everything. I dreamt I was a man. Luckily, when I woke up I was still a boy."

### **Orphans**

In discussing the idea of the Scottish film in From Limelight to Satellite, John Caughie wrote:

Scotland is still more readily imagined, and the imaginings more easily sold, along the predictable lines of the scenery, the small community, and the post-industrial angst. Most debilitating of all, loss still pervades Scottish feature films, still appearing as the characteristic mark of really serious Scottishness: the loss of the natural community in Ill Fares the Land or Venus Peter, of innocence in Another Time, Another Place, of manhood in Living Apart Together, of the family in Silent Scream.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Caughie, 25.

Loss is certainly a pervasive theme in Scottish filmmaking; in particular, men who are lost: they suffer from the loss of ideals, the loss of a strong community, or the loss of a parent. At the heart of the troubles of JoJo McCann in Looking After JoJo and the Maclean brothers in Small Faces lies the loss of the father. Peter Mullan's directorial debut Orphans, is a small, low-budget film compared to the others discussed in this section and it explores the theme of a crisis in masculinity in the context of adult children trying to deal with the death of their mother. Their father is rarely alluded to as he has been gone from their lives for many years. Each of the four siblings, Thomas, Michael, Sheila, and John, are rendered helpless without their mother's guidance. The eldest brother, Thomas, rather than assuming the mantle of the head of the family, seems to allow himself to die along with his mother. He refuses to leave the side of her coffin in the church. Not even to help his siblings who all find themselves in desperate situations during the course of the night. Sheila is wheelchair-bound and now finds herself dependent upon her unsteady brothers.

Michael has a tendency towards senseless violence, much like the violence of Joe in My Name is Joe when under the influence of alcohol. There is a streak of nihilism in Michael. He starts a fight in a pub and allows himself to bleed, almost to death, during the course of the night. All this despite the fact that he has two children to support. It becomes clear that Michael has difficulties in living up to his responsibilities. The youngest brother, John, becomes directionless after his mother's death, and spends the night trying to seek revenge for Michael's stabbing. When finally faced with the perpetrator, John is unable to shoot him because the man is holding his child in his arms.

The four siblings in Orphans are rendered helpless not only because they have been orphaned by the death of their mother. Her death exaggerates the fact that they are floundering through their lives with nothing to believe in. This is demonstrated through the powerful use of the church as a symbol. As the film cross-cuts between Thomas, Sheila, Michael, and John as they wander the streets of Glasgow we see how they're selfish suffering alienates them from each other and from other people in their lives. Thomas is the only character who finds solace in the church, but he does so at the exclusion of his siblings. When he refuses to help Sheila, who is unable to help herself, Sheila lashes out with her electric wheelchair and smashes the statue of the Virgin Mary. Later that night, while Thomas tries to put the statue back together again with candle wax, he refuses to let Michael, who is bleeding profusely, into the church. Michael yells at him: "Why do you always have to be the hard man?" The implication is that Thomas always puts on a front of being in control and is unable to show his feelings of loss, not even to his family. At the climax of the film, a storm blows the roof off of the church and the statue of the virgin Mary smashes into pieces yet again.

The destruction of the church is symbolic of Thomas' need to reach beyond his religious beliefs and to seek solace in his siblings. While all of the contemporary films discussed in this section are dealing with the theme of lack of faith, and a lack of role models, Orphans and Small Faces are the only films to end on a positive note. Looking After JoJo and My Name is Joe give the impression that the cycle of violence and poverty never ends, except in death. In contrast, Small Faces gives the impression that the young male protagonists, Lex, Alan, and Fabio can find a creative and progressive

future away from the gang life that resulted in Bobby's death. In Orphans, there is a sense that the problems faced by each of the characters can be dealt with, or at least endured, by the family coming together to support each other.

### **My Name is Joe**

In My Name is Joe, Ken Loach also explores the link between community and gangs, but this time in Glasgow. Like Orphans, it was shot on location in Glasgow using Scottish actors and funding from the Glasgow Film Fund. Both films have also adopted a social realist style of filmmaking associated with Ken Loach's earlier films and the films of Mike Leigh. Looking After JoJo was also very reminiscent of Loach and Carlyle's 1990 film Riff-Raff and its critique of Thatcherite Britain recalls the sombre tones of Mike Leigh's 1988 film High Hopes. Peter Mullan's Orphans also recalls sombre atmosphere and social realism of Loach and Leigh, with the tender concluding scene of the family in the Glaswegian cemetery reminiscent of the tragicomic funeral set in Glasgow in Riff-Raff.

Although Loach is an English film director, his filmography emphasises the fact that the depiction of masculinity in Scottish films is not entirely unique to Scotland. Similar uses of archetypes can be found in Irish films and literature, as well as in England and Wales. If one considers Ken Loach as an auteur, it becomes evident that crises in masculinity are a recurring theme in films such as Robert Carlyle's debut film Riff-Raff (1990) and Carla's Song (1996). In fact, the subject of men grappling with issues of masculinity are abundant in films in many countries as recent Hollywood films like

Being John Malkovich (Spike Jonze, 1999), American Beauty (Sam Mendes, 1999) and High Fidelity (Stephen Frears, 2000) demonstrate.

The main protagonist of My Name is Joe, Joe Kavanagh, can be seen as a middle-aged version of JoJo McCann in Looking After JoJo. As the plot unfolds, it is revealed that Joe is trying quite desperately break free from his alcoholism and from the influence of the local gang led by a hard man named McGowan. In fact, Joe is first introduced as an alcoholic in a voice-over during the opening credits. He's talking to his Alcoholics Anonymous group about how he joined the group. He describes the cycle he had to go in order to recognise that he had a problem, and that the process of recovery from his alcoholism is a slow process of getting from day to day. Joe has arrived at a point in his life where he has rejected the gang and adopted a football team as his family. Just as at the end of Looking After JoJo, when we realise that the cycle of crime and addiction is about to start again with young Christie McCann, in My Name is Joe, we see the same pattern. The young men on Joe's football team all seem to have problems with the law in some capacity or another. The team are like Joe's surrogate sons. In fact, early in the film when Sarah asks if he has family, first he says "no", but then he hastens to correct himself and shows her a photograph of the team he carries in his wallet. His fatherly feelings for the team members is further demonstrated through Joe's relationship with Liam, Sabine, and their baby boy. With Joe's help, Liam has kicked his drug habit and has, since being released from prison, has cut off his ties to McGowan.

In My Name is Joe, Joe tries very hard to fit into just such a middle-class world. When Joe meets Sarah, a successful woman who runs parenting courses at the local health

clinic, it seems that he has finally begun to triumph over the alcoholism and violence of his youth and is moving towards a better future. Sarah seems drawn by his charming personality, his honesty, and his ability to deal with past ghosts. She even accepts him into her life after he tells her the real reason he stopped drinking: a senseless violent attack he made on a former girlfriend while drunk one night. Joe recalls the event in a flashback shot vividly with a handheld camera, and remembers with shame telling the girlfriend that he didn't remember the incident even though he did. The thing that sickened and frightened him the most was his inability to control his violent actions because of the drink. Joe's tragedy in My Name is Joe is his inability control of the direction of his life and the lives of those he cares about.

For example, despite Joe's best efforts at turning his life around, there is still a divide between the lifestyles of Sarah and Joe that is very difficult for them to cross. In order to save Liam and Sabine from being coerced back into gang leader McGowan's circle of power, Joe agrees to do two jobs for him that involve bringing a shipment of drugs down to Glasgow. Joe thinks that he is wise enough now to handle the situation and get out again but his long-time friend, Shanks, chastises him for being so naïve: "You might as well get your fucking membership card for the McGowan clan!"

Just as Rob Roy in Michael Caton-Jones' film accepts responsibility for the large amount of money that disappeared with Alan MacDonald, Joe feels that he has no choice but to accept responsibility for Liam and Sabine. In his eyes, either he does this job for McGowan, or Liam and Sabine, who are like family to him, will suffer. He soon learns that he should have heeded Shanks' warning because when Sarah finds out what he has

done, she is unwilling to condone his participation in drug-dealing and she leaves him. The main issue is their difference in world views. As Joe, in anger and frustration, explains to Sarah:

I'm really sorry but we don't all live in this nice tidy wee world of yours. You know, some of us cannae go to the police. Some of us cannae go to the bank for a loan. Some of us cannae just move house and fuck off out of here. Some of us don't have a choice. I didnae have a fucking choice!

The tragedy of Joe and Liam is that even though they try desperately to do what is right to protect those that are close to them, they are caught in a self-defeating cycle. There is a sense that on some level the community, in the greater context of urban society in general, has let down these young men. For example, when Joe offers to wallpaper Sarah's flat in order to make some extra money, he finds that the welfare office has sent out a photographer to spy on him to make sure he's not making any money under the table while on welfare. The system is treating him like a criminal even though he is not even making enough money to cover a week's worth of rent.

In short, one of the major themes that emerges from recent Scottish film and literature is what Peter Kravitz described as the guilt and anger of Scottish men at their inability to be "real hard men."<sup>68</sup> I remember when Trainspotting was first released in the United States that there were some complaints from critics accusing the film of glorifying heroin culture. I found this strange because I, and my Scottish friends, had been both enraptured and disturbed by the film. After mulling the issue over I came to

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<sup>68</sup> Kravitz, xx.



the conclusion that perhaps these critics had not understood the ironic tone of Renton's opening and closing speeches in the film:

Choose leisurewear and matching luggage. Choose a three-piece suit on hire purchased in a range of fucking fabrics. Choose DIY and wondering who the fuck you are on a Sunday morning. Choose sitting on that couch watching mind-numbing, spirit-crushing game shows, stuffing fucking junk food into your mouth. Choose rotting away at the end of it all, pishing your last in a miserable home, nothing more than an embarrassment to the selfish, fucked-up brats you spawned to replace yourself. Choose your future choose life. But why would I want to do a thing like that?

Perhaps these critics had thought the film was advocating the drug-dealing and the betrayal of one's mates as a way of buying into what in the United States they would call "The American Dream." To me, Renton was voicing the cynicism of male protagonists like JoJo McCann, Lex Maclean, and Joe Kavanagh who are unable to "choose life." Instead, they find themselves stuck in the same lifestyle of abuse and dependence as their parents before them. To them, the middle-class lifestyle described by Renton and advertised in Hollywood movies as an impossible dream. Renton addresses the middle-class, movie-going populace in his final monologue, reminding the audience that the main reason for the unhappy events in Trainspotting, heroin addiction to Tommy's death, is apathy:

The truth is that I'm a bad person, but that's going to change, I'm going to change. I'm cleaning up and I'm moving on, going straight and choosing life. I'm looking forward to it already. I'm going to be just like you: the job, the family, the fucking big television, the washing machine, the car, the compact disc and electrical tin opener, good health, low cholesterol, dental insurance, mortgage, starter home, leisurewear, luggage, three-piece suit, DIY, game shows, junk food, children, walks in the park, nine to five, good at golf, washing the car, choice of sweaters, family Christmas, indexed pension, tax exemption, clearing the gutters, getting by, looking ahead, to the day you die.

## Conclusion

The new questions for representing Scotland in the nineties are questions born of a measure of success and a recognition of potential. They are not simply critical and theoretical questions of the new forms and old discourses, though these remain important, but are also material and practical questions of the structures from which new forms and discourses will emerge, and of the ways in which they will find new audiences.<sup>69</sup>

In February of this year, I met with John Caughie, currently the Dean of Arts at the University of Glasgow, to discuss my thesis as a work in progress. I had an outline of my first draft with me, in which I planned to discuss Highlandism in the first two chapters and domestic Scottish feature films in the last two chapters. I hoped that Caughie, having been involved in film studies in Scotland for at least twenty years, could provide me with a fresh approach on the subject. Or, at the very least, could point me towards recent scholarly work on the subject. Most Scottish universities have strong Scottish Studies departments, particularly in the areas of Scottish history, culture, and literature. To my dismay, I learned there was little, if any, scholarly work addressing the recent wave of filmmaking in Scotland.

Thus, my intent in this thesis is not to draw immutable conclusions about the current state of Scottish national identity. Rather, I feel that the study of Scotland in film has been undeservedly neglected in recent years and, as a sympathetic Canadian of Scots-Irish heritage, I find myself wishing to draw more attention to the exciting new cultural and artistic developments in the new Caledonia. Scotland is going through one of its most exciting times in history: a new beginning. There is a feeling of excitement in the

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<sup>69</sup> Caughie, 30.

air as the birth of a new parliament in Edinburgh has sparked new industrial and commercial growth.

This thesis was conceived around the time of Hogmanay 1998. I had been working and living in Switzerland for several months and having a terrible time adjusting to life there. I decided to use my Christmas holidays to return to a culture and community I felt I could identify with – that of the United Kingdom. After Christmas in England, I travelled up to Edinburgh to spend Hogmanay with some close friends. One of my dearest friends in Edinburgh, Annie Kennedy<sup>70</sup>, and I holed ourselves up one afternoon in a vegetarian restaurant in the New Town with a bottle of Spanish red wine, and discussed the state of cinema in Scotland.

As our animated discussion went on throughout the afternoon, Annie rekindled and inspired my interest in Scottish culture. I recognise in Scots, like Annie, the same kind of an ambiguous, love-hate relationship with their national identity as I have with my own national identity as a Canadian. While Annie is fiercely proud of her Scottish heritage, she loathes the overuse of Tartanry, particularly when Tartanry overshadows what she sees as the true Scotland: a mix of the modern and the ancient, of technological advances and tradition, of cultural diversity and cultural preservation. There is a desire, I believe, in the minds of many Scots, to see themselves reflected in literature and film. I feel that films like Rob Roy and Braveheart in the end are mere fairy tales that do little to address the concerns of contemporary Scotland. Liz Lochhead's article on Rob Roy, which I referred to earlier in the second chapter, was entitled "The Shadow." To me,

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<sup>70</sup> No relation to Scottish novelist A.L. Kennedy.

that title reveals the true nature of Rob Roy: a film that presents a mere shadow of Scottish identity. As Lochhead describes herself:

Now, in Rob Roy, I was looking at a very familiar landscape (although piled up cairns are rather more familiar than standing stones on hilltops, truth be told) that I absolutely did not recognise, so successfully had it been transformed into a romantic dreamland. Of course we must dream on celluloid, but we need to dream more, different and varied dreams, to ask ourselves what truths about the present we are hiding from ourselves by lying about the past. It's obvious why Brigadoon is such a perfect metaphor for Scottish culture. If you only come alive for one day every 200 years, or you only flare out on film once every decade, then it's hard not to stay frozen in static, heroic but hopeless representations of necessary myths. As Eddie Dick says in. . . From Limelight to Satellite: "The imagined Scotland is not imaginary."<sup>71</sup>

The quote from Eddie Dick, is referring, of course, to Benedict Anderson's famous statement that a nation "is an imagined political community"<sup>72</sup> Unfortunately, too often in Scottish filmmaking the idea of Scotland is created by looking into the past, rather than into the future. John Caughie observed this in Eddie Dick's 1990 book From Limelight to Satellite, where he wrote an essay exploring the new questions for representing Scotland into the nineties. In it he outlined the ways in which past theories of Scottish representation, such as those developed at 'Scotch Reels' at the Edinburgh Film Festival in 1982, have become caught up in reductive ways of thinking about Scottish identity; in particular, the schematic identification of such discourses as Tartanry, Kailyard, and Clydesideism. Furthermore, he criticised 'Scotch Reels' for

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<sup>71</sup> Lochhead, 18.

<sup>72</sup> Anderson, 2.

having bypassed the films of Bill Douglas, because they didn't fit the schematics the academics at 'Scotch Reels' had been laying out<sup>73</sup>.

While I can sympathise with Caughie's desire to move away from the overuse of reductive discourses in Scottish Studies, from my own studies in Scottish film and literature it has become apparent to me that, although modern Scottish literature has been making great advances in creating new and diverse images for Scotland, many Scottish discourses, particularly those that make it onto the big screen, are still caught up in repeating familiar discourses. Often, this is due to an almost obstinate obsession with holding onto old national myths, such as those represented in Braveheart and Rob Roy. In a 1998 issue of Cencrastus, Willis Pickard wrote a review of William Ferguson's book: The Identity of the Scottish Nation. In the review, Pickard describes how every new generation has to decide what it means to be Scottish, and it often does so by looking back. Pickard recognises that "[i]n the multi-ethnic Scotland of today the old obsession with identifying the true nature of the nation seems absurd", at the same time, however, he understands how difficult it is to avoid looking to the past for current truths about one's identity.<sup>74</sup>

The need for a wider representation of Scottish culture was made apparent in a recent study carried out in London and Manchester by the Scottish Tourist Board which found that "[t]he stereotype of the Scots as kilt-wearing Bravehearts is still alive and well among our southern cousins, but. . . mass-media representations of drug-taking and

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<sup>73</sup> Caughie, 14-19.

<sup>74</sup> Pickard, Willis. "Taking the Myth." Cencrastus. 62 (Winter 1998/9). 25-6.

mental hospitals are also creeping into the minds of some potential visitors.”<sup>75</sup> The latter stereotype was attributed to the controversial television drama, Psychos, and to the cult novel and film Trainspotting. Furthermore, “Scots were unanimously viewed as male, outdoor types who either wore a kilt or outdoor-style clothes. Rugged, strong and tough individuals who could enjoy fishing and hunting, would like football and would like to drink.”<sup>76</sup> Scotland now has an opportunity to imagine a new future for itself – and certainly has slowly begun to do so as publications such as The Cannongate Prize for New Writing: Scotland into the New Era, and the recent works of popular authors like Ian Rankin and A.L. Kennedy can attest. In From Limelight to Satellite, Caughie spoke of the sense of loss and the backward look that he felt pervaded Scottish feature films:

The backward look, epitomised by the final shot of Ill Fares the Land of the boy’s last longing look out of the back window of the taxi which is carrying him away from the natural but impossible community into the modern world, still seems a characteristic trop of ‘serious’ Scottish film narrative. It hardly needs saying that it is almost invariably the menfolk who bear the responsibility for this look.<sup>77</sup>

It is time for Scottish filmmaking to move away from this “backward look” and to look forward to Scotland as a rapidly diversifying, progressive nation and to include a wider range of voices in its vision of Scotland in the twenty-first century.

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<sup>75</sup> Watson, Craig. More sick minds than Bravehearts. <<http://www.theherald.co.uk/news/archive/16-8-1999-0-6-26.html>> 16<sup>th</sup> August 1999.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Caughie, 25.

**Selected Filmography**

Brigadoon (Vincente Minnelli, 1954)  
Whiskey Galore! (Tight Little Island, Alexander Mackendrick, 1949)  
The Highlander (Russell Mulcahy, 1986)  
The Big Man (David Lelenad, 1990)  
Shallow Grave (Danny Boyle, 1994)  
Braveheart (Mel Gibson, 1995)  
Rob Roy (Michael Caton-Jones, 1995)  
Small Faces (Gillies MacKinnon, 1995)  
Breaking the Waves (Lars von Trier, 1996)  
Trainspotting (Danny Boyle, 1996)  
Mrs. Brown (John Madden, 1997)  
Orphans (Peter Mullan, 1997)  
Acid House (Paul McGuigan, 1998)  
Looking After JoJo (John MacKenzie, 1998)  
My Name is Joe (Kenneth Loach, 1998)

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**Internet Resources**

The Internet Movie Database  
The Electronic Telegraph archives  
The Scotsman archives  
The Guardian archives

<http://www.imdb.com>  
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk>  
<http://www.scotsman.com>  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk>