

**Projecting the Nation: Constructions of Scotland in
Film Since 1979**

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Abstract

This thesis examines questions of the continued significance of national cinemas and identities, focussing on the case of Scottish cinema. As a small, devolved nation with relative autonomy from the United Kingdom, Scotland presents an interesting case for how films are labelled with a national identity, as Scottish films can also often be understood in a British, European, and even global context. Rather than attempting to construct a working model of Scottish cinema based on representation or production context, I ask how films have been constructed as Scottish. I approach the concepts of Scotland and Scottish film as sets of meanings that are subject to change over time and in different contexts. This facilitates a perspective which asks in what ways Scotland and Scottishness is constructed in film. I examine how multiple identities are balanced in the filmic construction of Scotland first by considering how Scottish films—both those made in and which are about Scotland—from the early 1980s to the present construct Scottish identities. I will consider the way these films explored ‘traditional’ Scottish identities in the 1980s, Scottish masculinity in the 1990s, and Scottish identities based on ethnicity and gender in the 2000s and 2010s. Second, I look at how these films are received as Scottish by examining reviews and other press materials to determine how the Scottishness of the films considered is discursively constructed for potential audiences.

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the work in this thesis is my own, except where otherwise stated, and has not been submitted for examination at this or any other institution for another award. All sources are acknowledged as references.

Introduction

In this thesis, I am interested in examining questions of the continued significance of national cinemas and identities, focussing on the case of Scottish cinema. As a small nation with its own devolved political institutions and relative autonomy from the United Kingdom, Scotland presents an interesting case for how films are labelled with a national identity. Claiming the national identity of a film to be Scottish on the basis of representation is difficult because representations of Scotland appear in films made by Hollywood, Bollywood and many other cinemas. Basing the national identity of Scottish film on the production context and the provenance of funding is also problematic since while there are limited sources of Scottish film funding, even low budget feature films require investment from other non-Scottish sources such as the BFI, Channel Four, or BBC Films. A film defined as Scottish will almost always qualify equally as British, or in cases where there has been international co-production or transnational sources of funding and production partners involved, 'Scottish' films might equally be labelled European or even transnational. The situation is further muddled in that these categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive. As a regional cinema, the former includes films from a variety of European countries; the latter by its definition implies that films can be labelled with two or more national identities. Researchers such as John Caughie, Duncan Petrie, and Jonathan Murray have constructed various working models of Scottish national cinema. However, rather than attempting to continue in their vein, I will ask instead how films have been constructed as Scottish.

There are a variety of approaches to the study of national cinemas, many of which have been collected by Valentina Vitali and Paul Willemsen in *Theorising National Cinema* (2006) and by Mette Hjort and Scott MacKenzie in *Cinema and Nation* (2000). My concern is with both the national identity of films and with the ways in which filmic representations and the discourses they are informed by and contribute to

construct ideas of identity, national and otherwise. I will therefore approach the concepts of Scotland, Scottish identity and Scottish film as sets of meanings that change over time and function differently in different contexts. This allows for a heterogeneous view of Scotland at the same time that it removes it from questions of positive and negative representation and the often politically-tinged debate over the nature of Scottish national cinema. Therefore, I will be asking not only in what ways the idea of Scottishness has been, and continues to be, constructed in film, but also, and more importantly, considering who is doing the constructing. What and who are included as Scottish? What and who are excluded? And what do these inclusions and exclusions signify? As Duncan Petrie has suggested in *Screening Scotland*, it is important to investigate whether different constructions of Scottishness found in film have been created by Scots or whether they have been constructed externally¹. In the case of the latter, it is important to ask by whom, in which ways, and to what extent and for what reason might they have been appropriated? In this thesis I will ask also how Scottishness in film is constructed in relation to various sub- or extra-national groups. I will explore the ways pluralistic identities are balanced in the Scottishness of films by asking in what ways their constructions are inclusive or exclusive of these people.

My methodological approach has two dimensions. First and foremost I will engage in the textual analysis of specific examples of films that can be defined as Scottish in terms of production and funding, the subject represented, or both. While I will take the production context of these films into consideration in labelling a film as ‘Scottish’, this type of approach already has been well-covered by other researchers like

¹ Petrie highlights the importance of examining external and internal constructions of Scotland alongside one another: ‘The repertoire of images created by an emerging Scottish cinema represents both a challenge to and an extension of certain dominant cinematic projections of Scotland and the Scots dating back to the earliest days of the medium. Consequently, this is an opportune moment not only for sustained engagement with the present, but also to reconsider the wider legacy of cinematic representations of Scotland [...]’ (2000a:1-2).

Petrie and Murray. Consequently, I will concentrate on how Scottish films construct Scottish identities. I will limit my study to films made after the political watershed moment of 1979 that saw both the failure of a referendum for Scottish devolution and the victory of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Party in the General Elections, which not only began the current era of neoliberalism in Britain, but also saw Scottish nationalism shift from the political to the cultural sphere which some critics have argued constituted nothing less than a renaissance in Scottish cultural expression (Petrie 2004:1-3). The early part of that decade witnessed certain significant institutional developments, including the establishment of the Scottish Film Production Fund in 1982, which created an infrastructure that made it possible to talk of a certain set of films produced in Scotland as 'Scottish cinema'. By the end of the 1990s, there was 'a sufficient body of work being produced to allow a tentative exploration of the aesthetic and thematic trends defining this important moment in Scottish cultural production' (Petrie 2000a:191). Moreover, the same year as the creation of the SFPF saw the publication of *Scotch Reels*, the seminal work edited by Colin McArthur that arguably created the idea of a distinct field of Scottish cinema studies. But the 1980s is a decade that also witnessed certain wider intellectual developments that are relevant to my central research questions. In particular the development of postmodernist theories and concepts such as Frederic Jameson's work on late capitalism, Jean-François Lyotard's on metanarratives, and Jean Baudrillard's on simulacra² have served to shape our current understanding of national identities as plural and contingent rather than singular and essential.

² See Jameson, F. (1984) 'Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism'. *New Left Review* 1.146. Lyotard, J. (1984) *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Trans. Bennington, G., and Massumi, B. Manchester: Manchester University Press. Baudrillard, J. (1983a) *Simulations*. Trans. Foss, P., Patton, P., and Beitchman, P. New York: Semiotexte.

I will therefore consider if Scottish films, as defined by these parameters, reproduce traditional modes of representation, offer alternatives, or whether they combine aspects of both. I will be asking whether the films construct Scotland in terms of ‘Scotch myths’—the predominant representational traditions of Tartanry and Kailyard that Cairns Craig has argued ultimately portray Scotland as a land locked out of historical progress (1982:13)—or whether they hold more complex understandings of what it means to be Scottish. In order to be inclusive and heterogeneous, my study will include a variety of films from different production contexts—from personal art cinema like *Ae Fond Kiss* (Ken Loach 2004), *Orphans* (Peter Mullan 1997) and *Morvern Callar* (Lynne Ramsay 2001); mainstream genre films like *Highlander* (Russ Mulcahy 1986), *Braveheart* (Mel Gibson 1995) and *Brave* (Brenda Chapman, Mark Andrews, and Steve Purcell 2012); and films like *Local Hero* (Bill Forsyth 1983), *Trainspotting* (Danny Boyle 1995), and *Strictly Sinatra* (Peter Capaldi 2000) that are in a more independent cinema vein. Though certain films that may have been labelled important in previous studies of Scottish film (such as *Venus Peter*, *Stella Does Tricks*, *Young Adam*, etc.) may as a consequence be left out, this variety will allow me to see whether certain Scottish identities are widespread, or whether they are more closely associated with certain types of cinema. Furthermore, I will be considering the films in a broadly chronological framework, beginning with a more concerted engagement with Scottish subject matter in cinema during the 1980s, subsequently enhanced in the 1990s with the flourishing of the New Scottish Cinema, before giving way to the more fragmented and globalised production context of the 2000s. Underpinning this framework is an intention to illustrate and consider how the changing forms of Scottish identities are historically contingent.

Secondly, I will consider how these films have been received as Scottish by critics and reviewers. The perspectives of audiences are important because, according to David McCrone, ‘we may think that we are making it [our identities] up as we go along,

but we are in fact dancing to a tune laid down by others. We can do it our way, but, like karaoke, it must bear a passing resemblance to its representation to be treated as tolerably recognisable and authentic by the audience. We cannot, in other words, make it up as we go along if others are to take our performance and our presentation seriously' (2001:152). Therefore, one's claim that a film is Scottish needs to be supported by others who received it as such. Reception studies provides a useful tool, then, because it accounts for the variety of ways audiences approach and understand film. According to Janet Staiger:

The use-value of reception studies includes, then, a foregrounding of differences, of institutions and ideology, and of implicit (and not external) systems of cognition, emotion, and judgement. For film history, reception studies asks, What types of interpretive and emotional strategies are mobilized by various spectators? How did these strategies get in place? How might other strategies, perhaps of a progressive nature, replace them? (1992:13).

In this way, using reception studies to compliment an analysis of the way films construct Scotland can further the understanding of a heterogeneous Scotland.

Mark Jancovich defines the function of film reviews: 'reviews and feature articles set agendas for audiences by drawing attention to what is taken to be interesting or noteworthy about a film. They also reflect differing attitudes of different sections of the media to varying taste formations. In the process, they focus their attention on different features and employ wildly different notions of cinematic value' (2001:37).

Analysis of film reviews is important not only because it provides insight into how one specific audience, film critics, understands film, but also because this audience is one that can shape how other audiences understands it as well. Therefore, I will examine reviews and related press materials to determine how discourses of national identity are utilised to construct particular films as Scottish. These materials will include pre-release

press reports and initial reviews, reviews published around both festival and wide release dates of the films, and, occasionally, year-end reviews that feature these films in best- or worst-of lists. I will exclude reviews of home video releases as they are a different medium and press materials after the year of the film's theatrical release as the writers' understandings of the films may have been shaped by events, opinions, and attitudes of the intervening years.

I have collected nearly 800 reviews in the attempt to identify and understand how a variety of critics, both cultural insiders and outsiders, identify, examine, and understand the films to be Scottish. These reviews will come from a variety of English-language publications based in Scotland, London, and North America: film magazines and journals for a specialised audience (*Sight & Sound*, *Film Comment*), film and entertainment industry publications (*Variety*, *Screen International*), and newspapers and magazines intended for a mass audience. These will range from broadsheets (*The Guardian*, *The New York Times*) to tabloids (*Daily Mail*, *New York Post*), and from the left of the political spectrum (*Daily Mirror*, *Morning Star*) to the right (*The Times*, *National Review*). Of these, I have searched for every review available of the fourteen films considered in forty-seven British national papers based in London and publications for a UK-wide audience including: *Comedy Review*, *Daily Mail*, *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Star*, *Daily Star Sunday*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Empire*, *Evening Standard*, *The Express*, *Film Review*, *Films and Filming*, *Financial Times*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *The Independent on Sunday*, *The Listener*, *The Mail on Sunday*, *The Mirror*, *Monthly Film Bulletin*, *Morning Star*, *Moving Picture International*, *New Statesman*, *New Statesman and Society*, *News of the World*, *The Observer*, *The People*, *Premier*, *Screen International*, *ScriptWriter*, *Sight & Sound*, *Starburst*, *The Sun*, *Sunday Express*, *Sunday Mail*, *Sunday Mercury*, *Sunday Mirror*, *Sunday Sun*, *The Sunday Telegraph*, *The Sunday Times*, *Telegraph*, *Time Out*, *Time Out London*, *The Times*, *Today*, *The Voice*, *What's On*, and *What's on in London*. I will do the same with papers from Scotland's urban

centres such as Edinburgh's *The Scotsman*, *Edinburgh Evening News*, and *Scotland on Sunday*; Glasgow's *The Herald*, *Sunday Herald*, *Daily Record*, *Daily Record & Sunday Mail*, and *The Evening Times*; and the regional variants *Scottish Express* and *Scottish Star*.

Initially, I was going to consider English-language papers from the rest of the world, but availability from some markets proved inconsistent. I therefore chose to focus on North American—specifically American and Canadian—publications as they are in close geographical proximity, have similar distribution patterns for the fourteen films considered in this thesis, and were the markets with the most consistently available reviews. I will examine thirty-one specialist and industry publications and newspapers and magazines covering many of the major markets across the United States such as *American Film*, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Daily Herald* (Chicago), *Daily Variety*, *The Denver Post*, *Film & History*, *Film Comment*, *Films in Review*, *National Review*, *The New Republic*, *Newsweek*, *New York*, *New York Daily News*, *New York Post*, *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, *Premiere*, *The Salt Lake Tribune*, *Star Tribune* (Minneapolis), *Starlog*, *St Louis Post-Dispatch*, *St Petersburg Times*, *Tampa Bay Times*, *USA Today*, *Variety*, *The Village Voice* (New York), and *The Washington Post*. I will also look at the Canadian newspapers *The Gazette* (Montreal), *The Globe and Mail*, *National Post*, *Ottawa Citizen*, *Toronto Star*, and *The Vancouver Sun*.

Taking such a broad sampling as opposed to focusing on specific critics or publications will show the consistencies and inconsistencies of how critical audiences across a range of geographic, class, political, and other differences understand the 'Scottishness' of films. First, I will be asking what, if any, importance the national is to critical audiences. Second and as with the films themselves, I will be asking about how reviewers understand Scotland in terms of Scotch myths or alternative constructions.

And, third, in considering reviews alongside the films, I will on the one hand be asking where, how, and why they diverge in their constructions of Scottish identities, but on the other, where they are consistent and what trends these consistencies may suggest. I will carry out my research by looking in reviews and other press materials for words and phrases that both implicitly and explicitly label films according to national, transnational, regional, international, or global identities; cinema practices and styles; and genre and star discourse. With these words and phrases listed in their categories, I will organise them by how they can lead the films to be understood in both Scottish and a non-Scottish (e.g. British, European, Hollywood, etc.) contexts, and from these groupings, I will make my analysis.

This thesis will begin with broader contextual issues before moving on to a series of case study chapters. In Chapter One I will examine the broader theoretical concepts that have shaped our understanding of Scotland. First I outline the negative view of Scotland's 'deformed' culture as it emerged out of theories of uneven development, most influentially by Tom Nairn, before presenting what I consider to be more useful definitions of nation and nationalism—including the work of David McCrone, Michael Billig and Cairns Craig—that lead us to more productive understandings of Scotland as a plural entity. Chapter Two will provide a survey of the development of the field of Scottish cinema studies from the critical deconstructions of Scotch myths by McArthur and his colleagues in the early 1980s through the more positive reclamations of Scottish cinema in the 1990s by Duncan Petrie and Jonathan Murray to today's preoccupations with the transnational and gender, epitomised by the work of David Martin-Jones, Sarah Neely, and Jane Sillars among other commentators, highlighting not only how the field has changed, but also where its continuities lie.

Turning to the case studies, Chapter Three begins by looking at films from the 1980s, the decade during which an independent Scottish cinema began to emerge. In this chapter, I will consider three very different films—*Highlander*, *Local Hero*, and

Restless Natives (Michael Hoffman 1985). *Highlander* was chosen because it is arguably the most well-known Hollywood cinematic representation of Scotland from the 1980s. I chose to examine *Local Hero* because, of Bill Forsyth's four late 1970s/early 1980s films set in Scotland, it is the one with the most international aspirations, both in terms of its casting and thematic concerns. I then decided to look at *Restless Natives*, because, as one of the Scottish films from the 1980s that attempted to capture something of Forsyth's success, it shares similar themes and preoccupations with *Local Hero*. The analysis of these three films together reveals that, in their own ways, they construct and play with 'traditional' forms of Scottish representation to create postmodern Scottish identities. This chapter introduces the idea of there being multiple forms of Scottish identity and thereby multiple ways to understand a film as 'Scottish', as Scotlands are constructed in which both 'traditional' and contemporary identities are available.

The subsequent chapters extend the idea of multiple Scottish identities by looking at specific formations of identity. In Chapter Four I will consider the depiction of Scottish masculinity in the 1990s because the two most prominent films subjects of that decade that deal with Scottish subjects are *Braveheart* and *Trainspotting*, both of which deal with questions of masculinity. *Rob Roy* (Michael Canton-Jones 1995) and *Orphans* were then chosen to compliment these films and add a more nuanced understanding of Scottish masculinities in the 1990s. It is important to focus on masculinity in this decade because, as will be discussed at greater length in Chapter Four, for one thing, Scottish identity has been traditionally constructed as masculine, and, for another, masculinity was a particular concern of 1990s British cinema. First I will look at the way traditional forms are perpetuated or problematized in Hollywood films—*Braveheart* and *Rob Roy*—and then I will look at the way in which key films in the New Scottish Cinema of the 1990s such as *Orphans* and *Trainspotting* have critiqued the traditional tropes of Scottish masculinity as defined by Clydesidism and the figure of the 'Hard Man', and offered alternative versions of contemporary masculinity.

In the first decades of the twenty-first century, films were beginning to imagine Scottish identities in terms of ethnic, racial, and gender difference. And so Chapter Five shifts the focus to the question of ethnic difference within in Scottish films of the 2000s, using *Strictly Sinatra* and *American Cousins* (Don Coutts, 2002) to explore Scots-Italian identities, and *Ae Fond Kiss* and *Nina's Heavenly Delights* (Pratibha Parmar, 2006) to consider Scottish-Asian identity. These four were chosen as they are the most prominent examples from this period of films that deal with Scots-Italian and Scots-Asian identities. This discussion will consider how in some instances hybrid identity apparently supersedes national identity, while in others the space of the nation is what binds different identities together. All of the films studied in this chapter are in some way genre hybrids, which often reflects hybridity in Scottish identity. Indeed, genre plays an important role in this study as it is often used in identifying films with Scottish or other international cinemas. This chapter also moves from the traditionally male domain of the gangster film to those of the melodrama and romantic comedy that are often constructed as feminine. This provides a way into Chapter Six in which I consider different forms of Scottish femininity on offer in films produced since the beginning of the new millennium. I chose *Morvern Callar* and *Red Road* (Andrea Arnold 2006), two films with female protagonists and directors, because both have transnational elements in terms of production and, in the case of the former, in theme. I chose to consider Pixar's *Brave* because, though it seems on the surface to be another Hollywood film rehashing Scotch myths, it nevertheless has a both female protagonist and co-director. This chapter will include a discussion of how *Red Road*, *Brave*, and *Morvern Callar* play with traditional forms of Scottish representation, but I will also consider how all three films re-appropriate and reimagine Scotland as a feminine space and introduce new, fluid forms of Scottish female identity.

In examining the ways, based on tradition, gender, ethnicity, and so on, that films construct different Scottish identities, I hope to show that the national is still a useful

framework for how we understand both identity and films. As our understanding of the national evolves to accommodate the realities of a postmodern world, more identities, many of the marginalised under the old understandings of homologous national cultures, are becoming accepted as national identities. Therefore as there the forms of Scottish identity on offer increase, so too do there become more ways to label a film 'Scottish'.

Chapter One

The Difficulty of a Scottish National Culture

Introduction

Recent political events in Scotland may seem contradictory to outside observers. For example, in the 2014 Independence Referendum, the majority of Scots voted to remain within the United Kingdom. Yet in the 2015 UK General Election, 56 out of Scotland's 59 seats in Westminster went to the Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP). How could so many people reject independence and then back the nationalists? Unfortunately, there is no clear answer to this. Support for the SNP in the General Election could be attributed to a feeling among Scots that mainstream UK political parties no longer represented their interests. Others may have felt a sense of betrayal that the Labour Party, traditionally strong in Scotland, sided with the Coalition Government's 'No' campaign. On the other hand, with 55.3% of the votes in the Independence Referendum for 'No' and 44.7% for 'Yes', it was hardly an overwhelming defeat for the 'Yes' campaign. Many potential 'Yes' voters may have been swayed by last-minute offers of further devolved powers from the 'No' campaign. Despite these and other explanations, though, we are still left with a complicated picture of how Scots currently understand themselves as a nation.

Unfortunately, Scottish culture provides no easy answers to questions of national identity. For one thing, there is no clear line where Scottish culture ends and British culture begins. Over the centuries, some of Scotland's top artists and intellectuals—David Hume, Robert Louis Stevenson, John Grierison, etc.—have been appropriated as British, seemingly creating a high/low culture divide between British and Scottish culture. But given the Scottish reclamations of many of these figures in recent decades, this distinction has become less clear. For another thing, certain popular signifiers of

Scottishness do not necessarily reflect the realities of being Scottish. For example, films like *Brigadoon* and *Braveheart* might signify Scottishness to people around the globe, but they do not really reflect the day-to-day experiences of people living in Scotland. National identity clearly means different things depending on context.

Therefore, establishing the identity of a film in relations to questions of the national is not as simple as it may first seem. Most of the time, we try to do so by grouping films together into national cinemas. National cinemas are the films of a given nation, although what is meant by this is not always clear and consistent. Andrew Higson for example identifies four categories into which definitions of national cinemas can be grouped:

First, there is the possibility of defining national cinema in economic terms, establishing a conceptual correspondence between the terms ‘national cinema’ and the domestic film industry [...] Second, there is the possibility of a text-based approach to national cinema. [...] Third, there is the possibility of an exhibition-led, or consumption-based approach to national cinema. [...] Fourth, there is what may be called a criticism-led approach to national cinema, which tends to reduce national cinema to the terms of a quality art cinema, a culturally worthy cinema steeped in the high-cultural and/or modernist heritage of a particular nation state, rather than one which appeals to the desires and fantasies of the popular audience (1989:36-7).

All four of Higson’s definitions are in some way concerned with how the nation is represented by films. The second and fourth tend to focus more on how the nation represents itself to itself and to others in the ways films either reflect or engage with national myths, values, tastes, and so on. In the first, the nation is represented by the films produced there; it is a representation of the nation as film industry. Though less directly about representation, by the third we can nevertheless construct a picture of the nation in terms of a film-going audience.

The national context is thus, like authorship and genre, one of the most common frameworks by which we classify films. In fact, nation often supersedes the other two mentioned above. Genre studies often focus on specific national variations on the forms, and it is hard to imagine a study of an 'auteur' without some reference to his or her specific national context. National cinemas also provide the critic with a convenient way to contextualise individual films and to limit the field. For example, the international history of the film medium would be a lot to tackle, but, by focusing on one nation's cinema, it is possible to explore the subject with the appropriate depth. The national context has an important industrial role as well. From the various ways states support filmmaking, to the way films are presented at festivals, the national context informs the way films are produced and received.

However, any individual film's national identity is rendered more complex when one considers the realities of film production and consumption. There has been a shift toward thinking of films in a transnational context. For example, for Tim Bergfelder, suggests that, rather than as a set of geographically related national cinemas, we should conceptualise European cinema as core/periphery relationships that allow for movement and migration:

a history of European cinema might well begin by exploring the interrelationship between cultural and geographical centres and margins, and by tracing the migratory movements between these poles. In this context, the various waves of migration into and across Europe, motivated by the two world wars, the policies of ethnic exclusion, and the post-war legacy of colonialism and economic discrepancy between Europe and its others are fundamentally link to the development of European cinema (Bergfelder 2005:320).

Andrew Higson, on the other hand, argues for a transnational understanding of cinema by problematizing the concept of a stable national identity: 'the degree of cultural cross-

breeding and interpenetration, not only across borders but also within them, suggests that modern cultural formations are invariably hybrid and impure. They constantly mix together different “indigeneities” and are thus always re-fashioning themselves, as opposed to exhibiting an already fully formed identity’ (2000a:67). Additionally, in an age in which globalization seems so rampant and much of the media is owned by multinational corporations, small or minor nations, or at least, those with small film industries, are finding it increasingly necessary to co-produce or receive funding from a supranational source such as the European Union fund Eurimages. How can we make sense of the national specificity of a film made under co-production agreements by two or more nations, or one that is encouraged by its financiers to adopt the flavour of a continent or another geographical area? Furthermore, in the domestic market, a nation’s films are screened alongside those films from Hollywood and other nations, and, on the festival circuit, they are taken out of a strictly national context and placed alongside other international art cinema offerings.

Many of these problems are encountered when trying to identify a specifically Scottish national cinema. Since British filmmaking has been generally centred on London, there is very little in the way of industrial infrastructure in Scotland or the resources to fully sustain feature film production without support from co-production or UK-wide funding sources like the British Film Institute or Channel 4. In addition to these complications, there remain questions of the nature and significance of a wider sense of Scottish national identity. Scotland has, thanks to the Act of Union of 1707, been part of the United Kingdom for over three hundred years, and so any sense of Scottish identity has had to compete with or coexists alongside British identity. In this sense, it might be tempting to see Scottish cinema as a subset of or just one of many various British cinemas.

Politically speaking, Scotland is also difficult to define. Historically existent as a state, for nearly three hundred years it was, to use David McCrone’s formulation, a

‘stateless nation’, and it is currently a devolved political body within the United Kingdom. However, the years between 1707 and 1999 saw not the complete absorption of Scotland into the British state, but the maintenance of a degree of autonomy, especially regarding the separate institutions of church, law, and education. Scotland’s complicated political situation has made it difficult to fit into definitions of nation that align it closely with the state, and yet, something that looks very much like nationalism exists within Scotland. By nationalism, here I do not mean the ‘hot’ variety³ of nationalism expressed by those seeking independence, or even the patriotic nationalism expressed by football supporters—though these both can be a part of it. I speak of nationalism in its ideological sense: that the nation is assumed to be a ‘natural’ thing. Scottish nationalism exists because of the existence of a distinctive Scottish culture. However, due to the lack of political autonomy, many have been tempted to view certain expressions of Scottish culture negatively. As I illustrate below, certain definitions of nation have argued that Unionist Scotland developed a ‘deformed’ culture, which in turn influenced the first generation of Scottish cinema scholars to regard their subject in rather negative terms.

Scotland: A Deformed Culture

The 1980s saw a flourishing of the arts—cinema among them—in Scotland. As a reaction against the disappointments of 1979—both the failed devolution referendum, in which the votes were in favour but the percentage of voter turnout was not enough for the results to be valid, and the Conservative victory in the General Elections that year, which ushered in the era of Thatcherism—Scottish nationalism shifted from the political to the cultural sphere. However, the intellectual climate of the 1970s and early 1980s took a very negative view of Scottish culture, with figures such as Tom Nairn, Cairns

³ Michael Billig defines ‘hot’ nationalism as that involved in the formation of the nation, and ‘cold’ as the banal nationalism that sustains it in the everyday (1995 43-6).

Craig, and Colin McArthur seeing it as reductive, ‘backward’ or even ‘deformed’. This view of Scottish culture is shaped by Marxism and a modernist understanding of nation.

In modernist constructions of nationalism, the nation-state emerges out of the beginnings of capitalism as a means of controlling people and money. Nationalism, then, is the ensuing feeling of belonging to the nation-state. For Ernest Gellner, whose theory of nation was crucial to many of the key Scottish cultural critics, nationalism arises out of the spread of capitalism and the shift from an agrarian to an industrial society. He describes how the spread of modernization creates nationalism:

Industrialization engenders a mobile and culturally homogeneous society, which consequently has egalitarian expectation and aspirations, such as had been generally lacking in the previous stable, stratified, dogmatic and absolutist agrarian societies. At the same time, in its early stages, industrial society also engenders very sharp and painful and conspicuous inequality, all the more painful because accompanied by great disturbance, and because those less advantageously placed, in that period, tend to be not only relatively, but also absolutely miserable. In that situation—egalitarian expectation, non-egalitarian reality, misery, and cultural homogeneity already desired but not yet implemented—latent political tension is acute, and becomes actual if it can seize on good symbols, good diacritical marks to separate ruler and ruled, privileged and underprivileged (Gellner 1983:73-4).

Nationalism is thus a product of the way industrial development spreads unevenly and societies’ desires for advancement they see in other societies. To catch up, educated workers are required to fill the bureaucratic systems found in both capitalism and the nation-state. According to Gellner,

The level of literacy and technical competence, in a standardized medium, a common conceptual currency, which is required of members of this society if they are to be properly employable and enjoy full and effective moral

citizenship [...] can only be provided by something resembling a modern 'national' education system [...] The fact that sub-units of society are no longer capable of self-reproduction, that centralized exo-education is the obligatory norm, that such education complements [...] localized acculturation, is of the very first importance for the political sociology of the modern world [...] At the base of the modern social order stands not the executioner but the professor. Not the guillotine, but the (aptly named) *doctorat d'état* is the main tool and symbol of state power. The monopoly of legitimate education is now more important, more central than is the monopoly of legitimate violence (1983:34).

These functionaries who work in industrial societies learn a basic level of skills needed for their tasks, but, more importantly, they learn how to live within the dominant culture that controls the nation state. Cultural knowledge, then—particularly that of the language—is passed on through education, which codifies culture, creating high art, a 'proper' way of speaking, and so on, that become identified as belonging to the nation. National culture therefore grows out of economic development.

Gellner provides the theoretical core for American scholar Michael Hechter's subsequent understanding of Scotland. Hechter is more interested in nations generally than Scotland in particular, so for him, the 'Celtic fringe' (Scotland, Wales, and Ireland) is an interesting case for understanding why ethnicity persists in nations. As for Gellner, nationalism is created through the spread of development. According to what Hechter calls the diffusionist model of how nations are created, in the nation-state...

[...] core and peripheral regions exist in virtual isolation from one another. Events in the core have but slight influence in the periphery, and the corollary situation holds as well. A very small proportion of the acts occurring between individuals in each region involves actors from the other region. Not only are the core and the periphery mutually isolated; there are

many significant differences in their economic, cultural, and political institutions (1975:7).

As modernization spreads, these once culturally distinct regions become more and more alike because ‘regional wealth should equilibrate; cultural differences should cease to be socially meaningful; and political processes will occur within a framework of national parties, with luck, in a democratic setting, thereby insuring representation to all significant groups’ (Hechter 1975:8). With the coming of modernization, all difference is gone and a homogeneous national culture emerges.

By this formulation, there should be no ethnic difference within a nation; any differentiation that does occur is because there are regions isolated from the main national culture (Hechter 1975:23); however, this model cannot explain ethnic difference in Western nations because, due to the spread of industrialization and the mass media throughout, there are no isolated regions (Hechter 1975:26). In order to explain how Scotland and other Celtic groups maintain a separate identity, Hechter proposes that we understand them as colonies—a model he calls ‘internal colonialism’.

Internal colonialism relies on a relationship between core and peripheral spaces. Hechter says that ‘there are two collectivities or objectively distinct cultural groups: (1) the *core*, or dominant cultural group which occupies territory extending from the political center of the society (e.g. the locus of the central government) outward to those territories largely occupied by the subordinate, or (2) *peripheral* cultural group’ (Hechter 1975:18). The core, then, is the area that dominates the entire space, the figurative centre of the nation that has control over the entire area. The periphery, then, are those spaces moving out toward the very margins of the core’s area of control and are subordinate to it. This inequality comes about due to the uneven spread of modernization. Hechter explains that core areas are the first to modernize, and they use this to gain advantage over peripheries by stabilizing the conditions that helped them to modernize faster, ensuring that they will always be ahead of the peripheries (1975:9).

Peripheral spaces are therefore kept dependent upon the core in that the core is allowed to economically diversify whereas the peripheries must have specialized industries, limiting their economic autonomy (Hechter 1975:9-10). At the same time, the core/peripheral relationship creates a sense of ethnic difference, what Hechter refers to as a cultural division of labour. Positions of power are reserved for members of the core, whereas the periphery is only allowed in to subordinate positions; therefore ethnic distinctions are maintained in order to distinguish who plays what role in the nation (Hechter 1975:9). In this way, then, it is not that isolation from the core causes difference, it is actually contact with the core that causes the peripheries to develop as ethnicities, for the nature of the relationship between core and periphery is one of exploitation (Hechter 1975:32). Therefore, Scotland, and the rest of the Celtic fringe, maintained a separate identity from England because it was one of the internal colonies of the British Empire.

Following on from Hechter, Scottish culture has been regarded as a colonial culture: it will always be 'backward' so long as its economic relationship with England is maintained. However, as others have pointed out it is not entirely accurate to describe Scotland as an English colony. After all, Scotland entered willingly into Union with England in 1707. And although it may have taken a subordinate role as the 'junior partner', Scotland nevertheless was an eager participant in the opportunities offered by the British Empire. But even though some would allow Scotland more agency than Hechter's model of internal colonialism provides, for Scottish cultural critics of the 1970s and 1980s this did not necessarily result in a culture that was any less backward.

The scholar who has perhaps contributed the most to the understanding of Scottish culture as a 'backward' or 'deformed' culture is Tom Nairn. Though Nairn rejects Hechter's model of Scotland as an internal colony, he nevertheless shows Gellner's influence in maintaining that nationalism is created out of uneven development between core and peripheral spaces. As the spread of modernization from centre to

periphery is inconsistent and favours the centre, creating economic inequalities, peripheries must ‘in order to “catch up” (to advance from “barbarism” to the condition of “civil society”, as the Enlightenment put it), are *also* compelled to mobilize against progress. That is, they have had to demand progress not as it is thrust upon them initially by the metropolitan centre, but on their own terms’ (Nairn 1981:97). In other words, for the periphery to catch up to the centre’s level of development, it must break the relationship by rejecting the centre’s model and modernizing in its own way. This is where nationalism comes into the picture. Nationalism is created out of a nexus among the bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia, and the masses. The bourgeoisie, seeking greater participation in modernization, must form new relationships which place them at the centre. Nairn describes the middle-class’s problem:

They have (usually) to get rid of an anachronistic *ancien régime* as well as to beat ‘progress’ into a shape that suits their own needs and class ambitions. They can only attempt this by radical political and social mobilization, by arousing and harnessing the latent energies of their own societies. But this means, by mobilizing people. People is all they have got: this is the essence of the under-development dilemma itself (1981:100).

It is up to the intelligentsia, the thinking mechanism of the bourgeoisie, to define who the people of a given state are. They turn to the masses, not just because the bourgeoisie needs their number, but because in their ‘pre-modern’ state can be found the mythology and folk culture needed to shape the nation. According to Nairn, ‘the bourgeois and intellectual populism which, in existing conditions of backwardness where the masses are beginning to enter history and political existence for the first time, is ineluctably driven towards ethnic particularism. Nationalism’s forced “mobilization” is fundamentally conditional, at least in the first instance, by its own mass basis’ (1981:102). And nationalism is therefore created out of the bourgeois desire for modernization.

However, according to Nairn, in Scotland this process never occurred; because of the union with England in 1707, modernization in Scotland took place in roughly the same time-frame as in its larger Southern partner. For Nairn, the Union allowed development to occur in Scotland earlier than in most of Europe, and so ‘the Scottish bourgeoisie had been able to exploit (by alliance) some of the consequences of the English bourgeois revolution’ (Nairn 1981:109). At this point the core/periphery structure had not yet fully emerged, and so, for the Lowlands at least, Scotland did not experience uneven development. In a way, Scotland itself was a centre, both in that many of the figures of the Scottish Enlightenment such as Adam Smith or David Hume helped shape what it meant to modernize, and in that the underdeveloped Highlands formed an internal periphery to the Lowland’s centre. Therefore, it was unnecessary for Scotland to utilize the Romantic nationalism that was so prevalent on the continent. Nairn argues that...

[...] there was no real, material dilemma of under-development; hence the intelligentsia did not perceive it, and develop its perception in the normal way—it did *not* have to ‘turn to the people’ and try to mobilize first the middle strata then the masses for the struggle; hence there was no call to create a new inter-class ‘community’ of the sort invoked by nationalism, and no objective need for the cultural instrument which permitted this—‘romanticism’; hence the intelligentsia in Scotland [...] was deprived of the *normal* function of an intellectual class in the new, nationalist, European world (1981:117).

Europe may have been mobilizing its national mythologies in order to developmentally ‘catch up’, but for Scotland, no such catching up was necessary. Indeed, such Romantic nationalism in Scotland could not be allowed to happen as separation would undermine the cosy niche the Scottish bourgeoisie had carved out for itself in the British Empire. While for Hechter, Scotland’s ‘backward’ culture comes from its colonial relationship,

for Nairn the failings of Scottish culture are internal: Scotland had been sold out by its own middle class.

While other European nations were using their shared pasts to create a sense of national identity, according to Nairn it was being put toward a different purpose entirely in Scotland. Although there was certainly enough appropriate material in Scottish history to form a national mythology, virtually no Romanticized nationalism formed in Scotland in the nineteenth century. Again, this was because the Scottish bourgeoisie, sensing Scotland was not developmentally behind, had no need for it. The intelligentsia who would have been involved in nation-building found that their services were not required. According to Nairn, the intellectuals, 'unable, for the structural reasons described, to fulfil the "standard" 19th-century function of elaborating a romantic-national culture for their own people, they applied themselves with vigour to the unfortunate southerners. Our former intelligentsia lost its cohesion and unitary function (its nature *as* an elite) and the individual members poured their formidable energies into the authentically "organic community" centred on London' (1981:124-5). Scottish intellectuals moved, often literally, to where they were needed—i.e. London. In other words, their works became culturally British, not Scottish. What was left in the void, then, was not a true national culture, but what Nairn refers to as a deformed, pathological 'sub-national culture' (Nairn 1981:155). He further explains:

An anomalous historical situation could not engender a 'normal' culture: Scotland could not simply be adapted to the new, basically nationalist, rules of cultural evolution. But since the country could not help being affected by this evolution, it produced something like a stunted, caricatural version of it. [...] It was cultural, because of course it could not be political; on the other hand this culture could not be straight-forwardly nationalist either [...] It could only be 'sub-nationalist', in the sense of venting its national content in

various crooked ways—neurotically, so to speak, rather than directly (Nairn 1981:155-6).

Whereas across Europe nations were mobilizing their pasts so that they could have a future, in Scotland there was a break in continuity with the past. This came to be elegized, sentimentalized, and turned into the sort of kitschy pop culture images found on shortbread tins and picture postcards. Because Scotland's future was with Britain, the past was made nostalgic to make 'the implication that it is a past we have, in certain vital ways, irreparably lost. It is gone for good. This is why we have to be so emotional about it, and also why we have to try so hard to "preserve", husband, patch up, and, generally savour all those relics and ruins it has left behind' (Nairn 1981:151). This version of Scottish culture is, on the one hand, non-threatening to Scotland's position in the Union, and thereby the version of most use to Scotland's bourgeoisie. But on the other hand, it is a psychologically ill culture in the way that its treatment of the national past represses nationalist urges.

Three modes of representation—often referred to as 'Scotch myths'—have been identified as the most pervasive in this 'deformed' Scottish culture: Tartanry, the Kailyard, and Clydesidism. Tartanry, associated with the early nineteenth century novels of Sir Walter Scott—though others have written in the genre—is characterised by a Romanticisation of the Highlands. It usually focuses on Scotland's Jacobite past, turning the Highlands into a mystical place out of step with the contemporary reader's world (Cairns Craig 1982:10). By contrast the Kailyard, a later nineteenth century literary movement which includes the likes of J. M. Barrie, Ian McLaren, and S. R. Crockett, focuses on small town Lowland Scotland, which it presents as dour, parochial Calvinist spaces full of small mindedness, places from which a young man on the make, or 'lad o'pairts,' must escape (Craig 1982:11). However, it is not quite a clean break as the Kailyard tradition maintains a sentimentalized view of the rural Lowlands; the lad o'pairts may move on, but the narratives look back nostalgically (Craig 1982:11).

It is these two discourses which have incurred the most ire from Scottish cultural critics, including the pioneers of Scottish cinema studies. For Nairn, they are the utmost signs of the deformity of Scottish culture. Because Scotland had been cut off from the development that was occurring in the rest of the Western world, it had nothing to offer the intellectual class, which includes writers and artists, and so they moved on, leaving Scotland with a cultural vacuum that could only be filled by the popular fictions found in Tartanry and the Kailyard. Scottish figures—Nairn cites Macaulay, Carlyle, and Gladstone among others, but we can also consider John Reith, founder of the British Broadcasting Corporation, and John Grierson, leading figure of the British documentary film movement of the 1930s, in the same context—often find themselves categorized as British when their cultural contributions exceed certain Scottish particularities. Reith and Grierson, then, would be considered British because their contributions were universal: Reith's public service model of broadcasting and Grierson's model of filmmaking supported by the state and free of commercial constraints shaped long-standing attitudes toward broadcast media and cinema in the United Kingdom (Caughie 1986:191), and, indeed, throughout the world. By this logic, had they never left Scotland, they would only have been able to address what was specifically Scottish. An authentic high culture cannot be attained in Scotland because, after the Union, high culture became British. All that could be attainable in Scotland was a popular culture.

Cultural critics found Tartanry and the Kailyard to be signs of what was lacking in Scottish culture, but also highly limiting forms of representation. Initially, Cairns Craig, contributing to the 1982 study of Scottish visual culture *Scotch Reels*, edited by Colin McArthur, felt both representational strategies present a vision of Scotland that is firmly grounded in the past. Tartanry, through its Romanticized use of the past, may seem like other European literatures of the nineteenth century, but whereas these literatures used a heroic sense of the past to create nationalist sentiment, in Scotland this was not possible because, the historical moment evoked by Tartanry, the Jacobite

rebellion, was not one of great feats of heroism, but ultimately one of defeat and failure (Craig 1982:10). There is no sense of futurity created, then, through this mode of representation because, in focusing on past failures, it offers no potential for later success. For other cultures, literature made up a part of the nationalism that was coming out of their development, but since Scotland was cut off from development, there could be no future.

A similar vein runs through the *Kailyard*. Craig does admit that one of the redeeming features of the *Kailyard* is that it uses the language of ordinary people (1982:11), but it, too, offers no possibility of a future for Scotland. It is addressed to an audience that has left behind a Scottish identity for a British middle class one. Craig explains that the way the *Kailyard* condescendingly characterizes its subjects is meant to distance the reader from any sense of Scottish national identity. He says that ‘What has to be elided from that mythic world, therefore, is any suggestion that there could be a positive development of the culture from *within* the social classes portrayed by the writer’ (Craig 1982:11). The *Kailyard* gives no sense of future development occurring in Scotland; it must come from without, from Britain. The representation of Scotland in the *Kailyard* is located in both the authors’ and audience’s past. It may be looked back upon sentimentally, but it is nevertheless behind them. Both *Tartanry* and the *Kailyard*, then, are limiting modes of representation because, in placing Scotland in the past, they do not allow for any sense of future development.

Steeped in an intellectual climate which saw Scottish culture as having been ‘deformed’ by the process of economic development, *Scotch Reels*, the seminal work of Scottish cinema studies, takes an unsurprisingly negative view of the cultural myths of *Tartanry* and the *Kailyard*. Edited by Colin McArthur, *Scotch Reels* extends the Marxism of Nairn’s analysis out to a deconstruction of the myths these modes of

representation create. Tartanry and the Kailyard, in their cinematic forms⁴, continue to be limiting in their association of Scottishness with pastness, and they put limits on indigenous Scottish filmmaking as well. These are the main images of Scotland that had been appropriated by Hollywood and taken up by its peripheral industries, British cinema included. And, since there was very limited film production within Scotland until the 1980s, these were the only images Scots could see of themselves on screen. Thus, cinematic images of Scotland were not only limited to these ‘deformed’ representations, but they were also representations from the outside. What really irritates McArthur about this is that when Scots began producing films for themselves, for the most part they did not break away from the traditions of Tartanry and the Kailyard. Rather ‘the dominant filmic representations of their country have been articulated elsewhere, and the indigenous Scottish institutions which exist to foster film culture have never articulated as a priority the helping of Scottish film-makers toward the discourses which would effectively counter the dominant ones’ (McArthur 1982a:58). Scottish cinema has had a limited scope because the images it uses were imitated from a culture outside its own, while at the same time those making films in Scotland were not encouraged to find alternatives to these modes of representation.

However, Tartanry and Kailyard are not the only common Scottish representational tropes, nor were there never any attempts to break away from them. Clydesidism, as a contrast, does attempt to acknowledge the forces of modernity. In its representation of Scotland as working class, Clydesidism provided an alternative to the rural spaces of Tartanry and Kailyard while also connecting it to an industrialised and urban world—primarily that of Glasgow and the surrounding Clydeside region—as well as contemporary discourses and aesthetics of realism (Caughie 1990:16). McArthur

⁴ Some notable films that for McArthur invoke these tropes are: *The Little Minister* (1934), *Bonnie Prince Charlie* (1948), *The Maggie* (1954), and, of course, *Brigadoon* (1954).

analyses Clydeside films such as *Floodtide* (1949) and *The Brave Don't Cry* (1952), though, and finds them just as ideologically lacking. While Clydesidism offers alternative images, they are a 'celebration of its [Clydeside's] people rather than the analysis of their situation' (McArthur 1982a:52). For McArthur, Clydeside films, instead of using their industrial settings to explore the reasons for Scotland's underdevelopment, glorify the working class male. Makers of these Clydeside films are fast turning Clydesidism, what could potentially have been a mode of representation that would allow for the development of Scottish film, into yet another myth like Tartanry and the Kailyard. In short, what McArthur sees as wrong with all these modes of representation is that they do not allow for a critical analysis of why Scotland is a deformed, failed culture.

An emerging Scottish cinema studies was thus initially influenced by the idea that there was something wrong with Scottish culture. While these formative critics may have broken down cultural myths, this form of analysis is limiting, in that it does not account for how people use these myths. In the decades since, more positive, or, at least, neutral understandings of Scottish culture have emerged. Before discussing them, however, we must look at other theories of nationalism that made these new understandings possible.

Toward a More Productive View of Scotland: Theories of Nation

While Gellner's theory that nations arose out of economic and industrial development shaped the views of cultural critics who saw Scotland as having a 'deformed' culture, there are other theories that help contribute to a more productive understanding of it. The first of these theorists here considered, Benedict Anderson, shares certain commonalities with Gellner. Both of their theories are modernist constructions of nation, in that they see it as having a homogenous culture, and both understand the nation as a product of early capitalism. But Anderson's ideas are perhaps more suited to

the study of cinema because for him, nationalism emerges out of the beginnings of what we would now call mass culture. Anderson defines the nation as ‘an imagined political community [...] It is *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’ (2006:6). In nations people feel as though they have some kind of tangible connection to one another even though in reality that would be impossible. If we take the example of a newspaper, a single reader might know a few other people reading it, but he or she cannot know every single member of the paper’s audience. The reader must imagine that these other readers exist. For Anderson, the imaginative process happens because

The obsolescence of the newspaper on the morrow of its printing [...] creates this extraordinary mass ceremony: the almost precisely simultaneous consumption (‘imagining’) of the newspaper-as-fiction. We know that particular morning and evening editions will overwhelmingly be consumed between this hour and that, only on this day, not that. [...] each communicant is well aware that the ceremony he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion. [...] At the same time, the newspaper reader, observing exact replicas of his own paper being consumed by his subway, barbershop, or residential neighbors, is continually reassured that the imagined world is visibly rooted in everyday life (2006:35-6).

The reader, because of the language it is written in, the news it reports, and so on, imagines not just a community of newspaper readers, but the community in which such a newspaper is possible: the nation. Members of the nation cannot possibly know or have daily, real-life interactions with every single other member of the nation, but they imagine connections between each other because of the shared language of the mass

media—print journalism and the novel for Anderson, but we may add film, radio, and television to this—as well as war memorials, sports, maps, and a host of other cultural artefacts, practices, and institutions.

Anderson's view of the nation as an imagined community may still be modernist and still connected to the emergence of capitalism, but, because it is about an action—imagining—performed by a people, it gives a greater agency in the creation of nations to those who inhabit it and to culture and cultural production than the economic model Gellner provides. In this way, for the imagined community, the people are just as important as the economic conditions. This focus on people helps pave the way for postmodern ideas of nation.

Modernist understandings of nation such as those of Gellner and Anderson are not entirely adequate for the postmodern era. In addition to constructing the nation as a homogenous entity, the modernist view of how nations come to be does not explain why nationalism persists in the era of late-modern capitalism. In the postmodern world of multinational corporations and supranational governing bodies, the nation-state is supposed to be a thing of the past, and nationalism moved aside for increasingly fragmentary identity politics. So why then have nationalist movements survived? Some have turned to the myth of blood and soil to explain it. In this formulation, there is something biological and spiritual that connects a people not only to each other, but also to a land. This, however, is a dubious theory as it is scientifically unfounded and based on Romantic ideas that sound vaguely racist. Anthony Smith, however, explains the real part ethnicity has to play in the formation of nations.

For Smith, ethnic groups, or '*ethnies*' as he calls them, are 'looser collective cultural units [...] which we can define as "named units of population with common ancestry myths and historical memories, elements of shared culture, some link with a historical territory and some measure of solidarity, at least among their elites' (1995:57). *Ethnies* are not based on race, but are groups of people that originated in some form of

pre-modern community, and therefore have a shared past. As modernization under capitalism occurred, these communities were absorbed by the nation-state to become ethnic minorities. Smith describes this process: ‘in relation to a given state and its dominant *ethnie*, the incorporated ethnic communities and categories were treated as sociological minorities. That is to say, they were not only minorities in numerical terms, they were also marginalized and discriminated against, in varying degrees’ (1995:61). However, ‘these ethnic minorities retained into the modern epoch a sense of their cultural distinctiveness. They remained, in varying degrees, separate from the culture of the state and of the dominant *ethnie*’ (Smith 1995:62). According to Smith, when *ethnies* feel too excluded or overlooked by the nation-state, they will politically activate their cultural difference:

Historians, linguists and writers attempt to rediscover the community’s past and to elaborate, codify, systematize and streamline into a single coherent ethno-history the various collective memories, myths and traditions that have been handed down piecemeal from generation to generation. Where there is a well-established ethno-history in a canonical form, they select and use those of its components which in their judgement can serve specific political purposes (1995:65).

The shared past becomes mythologized and creates a sense of nationhood. Postmodern identity politics and the nation-state’s loss of influence might make it easier for these ethnic nationalisms to arise, but it should be noted that this form of nationalism still reinforces rather than undermines the sovereignty of the state. According to Smith...

[...] this kind of national mobilization does not simply dissolve old empires and national states, it creates more new national states, each based on a dominant *ethnie*. This means that the idea, numbers and structures of the national state have been reinforced by a new wave of cultural and political pluralism. Not only has the number of national states multiplied, the concept

of the national state itself has actually become more firmly entrenched as the norm of political association in the modern world, and its structures have been strengthened by the trend to greater cultural homogeneity that successful ethnic secession entails (1995:103).

While the emergence of nationalism among *ethnies* may fragment existing states, what is formed out of the fragmentation is still based on the model of the traditional nation-state.

In a way, Smith's concept of *ethnies* is an extension of Anderson in its focus on the people who make up a nation. However, Smith's nation is a postmodern one in that it is made up of different groups of people; it is heterogeneous. Smith's theory is useful for considering Scotland. The emergence of Scottish cinema alongside the development of a Scottish nationalism that has led to devolution and has raised questions of independence is certainly suggestive of a people turning their mythology into a sense of nation. But Smith does not explain why the model of nation has remained in an era of globalisation and fragmentation. For that we must turn to Michael Billig and the concept of banal nationalism.

While Gellner, Anderson, and Smith all explain how nations were and continue to be formed, they do not directly examine how the nation is maintained, especially in an era that is supposed to be tending increasingly toward transnationalism and the global. Billig is more interested in how nations continue to exist. For Billig it becomes important to question the assumptions we make about nations. This is no easy task, for nationalism functions ideologically in that we assume the nation to be a natural or logical way for people to organize themselves, but, in reality, nations are the product of a specific historical moment. The spread of capitalism—and with it the nation-state—has meant that nationalism 'has shaped contemporary common sense. Notions, which seem to us so solidly banal, turn out to be ideological constructions of nationalism. They are "invented permanencies", which have been created historically in the age of modernity, but which feel as if they have always existed' (Billig 1995:29). In other words,

nationalism as an ideology is so deeply ingrained in us all that we cannot see it in ourselves, nor can we adequately explain nationalism without reverting to the paradigm of nation. It therefore becomes essential to ask what ‘common sense’ assumptions are being made about the nation in, for just a few examples, political discourse, the daily media, theories of nationalism, and, for the specific purpose of this study, Scottish identities and the construction of national cinemas.

For Billig, then, it is central to uncover the ways in which the nation reproduces itself. The patriotic display reserved for special occasions is not enough to sustain the nation all the time; instead Billig turns to what he calls ‘banal nationalism,’ the everyday reminders or ‘flaggings’ of the nation. A frequently cited metaphor is that of the unwaved flag hanging outside a public building or filling station. Unlike the waved flag that is meant to invoke a patriotic response, these unwaved flags serve merely as a reminder of the nation, and perhaps in the case of the former, a connotation of the building’s national function. Moreover, according to Billig, this ‘reminding, involved in the routine business of flagging, is not a conscious activity; it differs from the collective rememberings of a commemoration. The remembering is mindless, occurring as other activities are being consciously engaged in’ (1995:41). Flags (actual and otherwise) remind us of the nation without our having to think about it. It becomes a process of remembering and forgetting. It is the symbol of the nation we remember when we see (or hear) these flags, not what the nation connotes. In seeing a flag, one is supposed to remember that it stands for the nation, but one is also at the same time asked to forget the specific historical circumstances that created and continue to reproduce it. In this sense, the nation has been, through this remembered forgetting, placed outside time, and thus made to seem natural, a given. This is the ideological function of banal nationalism: through filling our daily lives with these inconspicuous reminders of the nation, we are enabled to forget that the nation is historically grounded and not just how things are.

Therefore, we are situated in a space, the homeland, which allows us to forget our own nationalism. Nationalism therefore becomes something other people—separatist and far-right groups in particular—are engaged with, but not us. Our nationalism is recast as unproblematic or ‘natural’ patriotism, and, as a subject of sociological study, the nation becomes a society. In projecting nationalism onto others, we overlook the extent to which the ideology of nationalism is pervasive in our lives. We do not, then, see how much it shapes our thinking on concepts seemingly unrelated to and beyond the scope of the nation. Billig examines how small, deictic words like ‘we,’ ‘here,’ and even ‘the’ point continually to the nation. When politicians say ‘we the people’ they mean not just those who hear their speech, but the people *of the nation*. Likewise, when a newspaper reports on the weather, it means *the nation’s* weather. The language being used constantly reminds its audience of the nation, though they may not be entirely consciously aware of it. It is in this inconspicuous manner that the ideological function of nationalism works.

Because the nation is an ideological assumption, we do not see it at work in our everyday lives. Therefore, anything situated or produced within the nation—cinema included—is flagged nationally, though it may not be readily apparent. The three theories of nation presented here—Anderson’s imagined communities, Smith’s *ethnies* and their shared pasts, Billig’s nation in the everyday—offer a much more productive framework to consider the case of Scotland. Indeed, such ideas would help to shape alternative views of Scottish culture and its legacy that rejected the negative, ‘Scotch myths’ understandings and evaluations.

New Understandings of Scottish Culture

Bolstered by the flourishing of Scottish cinema and other arts in the 1980s, critics of Scottish culture began to see it in a less negative light, especially as, with the election victory of Tony Blair and New Labour in 1997 and the 1999 restoration of the Scottish

Parliament, it was becoming more apparently possible to speak of Scotland in national terms. For Tom Nairn, though, devolution would do little to cure Scotland's ills because Scottish civil society—its separate institutions of church, law and education...

[...] had to be *self-alienating* as well as self-preserving. While the Scottish *chasse gardée* had to be conserved, both as corporate privilege and a redoubt of nationhood, the conservation went hand in hand with a constant (but less noticed) self-limiting or non-political observance. It entailed above all a refusal of leadership, or any deviance liable to disrupt orderly working (2000:237).

Scotland still lacks a true national culture because while on the one hand its institutions keep Scotland Scottish, on the other they avoid stirring up trouble by keeping it from becoming too nationalistic. According to Nairn, devolution was a means of preserving the Union by offering Scotland an alternative to independence (Nairn 2000:7).

In the years since the publication of *Scotch Reels*, however, other scholars questioned the negative attitude that had previously been shown toward Scottish representational discourses. For example, *The Eclipse of Scottish Culture* (1989), Craig Beveridge and Ronald Turnbull draw on Frantz Fanon's concept of inferiorism (1968) to assert that much that had been written on Scottish culture was plagued with an assumed sense of Scottish inferiority. In addition, in *Out of History* (1996), Cairns Craig re-evaluates the earlier position he took on Scottish culture in *Scotch Reels*. The perception that Scotland did not have a 'real' culture came from those who tried to get away from Scotland's perceived parochialism. Craig explains that...

[...] the consequences of accepting ourselves as parochial has been a profound self-hatred. It is not our personal self that we have hated, but that self when seen moulded to the physiognomy of the group, a group whose existence has no significance in the eyes of the world: to escape the parochial we borrow the eyes of the dominant culture and through those eyes

we are allowed to see ‘the world’. But we are also forced to see how close that parochial group-self stands to us—Hyde behind Jekyll—ready to claim again the self we have invented. We must distance the group-self, see it projected in the comic Scotsman of the tartan kitsch, the parodic versions of working-class Scotland, that the gap between it and us will be so wide no observer could reunite us with our cultural origin (1996:12).

To stop being parochial, these Scots had to look at the world through the eyes of the dominant culture, the English. However, in seeing the rest of the world in this way, Scots also looked back on their own culture this way, and so, when compared to the English norm, Scotland seemed backward or deformed.

Craig re-evaluates Tom Nairn’s position in *The Break-up of Britain* which had formed so much of the theoretical background of his and the others’ contributions to *Scotch Reels*. For Nairn, Scotland’s diverging from the historical paradigm of development was traumatic, and caused Scotland to develop a ‘neurotic’ culture. Craig explains that “‘Dream” and “neurosis” are thus the imagery for Nairn by which a country’s distance from the reality of history can be measured. History is a plenitude of historical paradigms and for those who desert it the consequences are traumatic: they are left as the inhabitants of a history which is characterised by its *absences*’ (1996:94). The history of Scotland, then, is one of absences—absences of the kind of development that was happening on the continent, but also of the intellectuals who felt their skills were more appreciated elsewhere. Craig points out, though, that the way absences relate to their opposites is more important. Scotland’s ‘neurosis’ is in reality absences created by historians, rather than being an intrinsic problem of Scottish culture (Craig 1996:98). Moreover, historians tend to omit the Scottish figures who have had influence on British culture out of their histories of Scotland. This is to deny that their success had anything to do with being Scottish as well as that they had any impact on Scottish culture. In the former case, historians measure Scotland by a historical model designed to fit another

society. They assume that development goes through the same process everywhere. In the Marxist view of history, progress occurs due to the opposition of socio-economic classes. For Nairn, because Scotland had been cut off from the developments of the nineteenth century, these classes did not fully emerge, therefore Scottish history is characterised by the absence of class conflict (Craig 1996:102). From this perspective, Scotland can only have a minor history characterized by issue of national consciousness instead of participating in the universal struggles between classes that characterize History. According to Craig, though, Scotland is here being compared to England, which had a 'real' class system, and so does not seem to have a 'real' history (Craig 1996:103).

Craig also points out that Marxism also heavily influenced the Scottish Myths view of Scottish culture that developed in the wake of *The Break-up of Britain* in that myths are ideology, and, as such, need to be demystified in order for people to understand the reality of their situation. Following Nairn's example, Scottish cultural critics, such as those involved in the *Scotch Reels* project, wanted to remake Scottish culture by breaking with the past, and so their analyses tended to reject Tartanry and Kailyard while at the same time promoting Scotland's historical connection with socialism (Craig 1996:109). We can see this process in relation to in *Scotch Reels*. McArthur and the other contributors seem to champion Clydesidism in that work, though they are cautious of the ways Clydeside films seem to become yet another Scottish myth. By the time of writing *Out of History*, however, the Scotch Myths view of Scottish culture has become flawed for Craig. For one thing, the Scotch Myths approach seemed to Craig to reveal more about the self-hatred of the analysts than it does about Scottish culture. He says that:

What the Scotch Myths debate pointed to was not the tawdriness of Scottish culture—that was no more tawdry than any other popular culture anywhere in the world—but to the profound hatred of the intellectuals for the culture

they inhabited, the profound embarrassment they suffered by being unable, any more, to identify themselves with some universalist truth that would redeem them from Scottishness. They did not want to carry the burden of the Scottish past; they did not want to negotiate with the actualities of Scottish culture: they wanted to abolish it and create it anew in their own image (Craig 1996:107).

For another thing, for Craig, Tartanry and Kailyard are not signs of Scotland's neurosis, but are instead signs of the dialectical relationship between Scotland and England. Craig explains a coherent culture was desired for Scotland because 'from an Anglocentric point of view, Scotland is seen as a broken, incoherent culture, lacking in 'organic' development, traditional nationalists respond by trying to reveal "Scotland" as having an authentic unity of some sort—as having, in fact, a wholeness which is the mirror-image of that claimed for English culture' (Craig 1996:110). These forms of Scottish culture are a response to the perceived wholeness of English culture. Therefore, it is the way we define culture—not the culture itself—that has let Scotland down.

Finally, Craig's re-evaluation of Nairn reveals that the latter's analysis may not fit the current understanding of history. Nairn's conception of Scotland's stunted development is based on a progressive model of history in which different people are at different stages of development. Craig explains that for Nairn 'Nations and classes are therefore seen as having an essentially *temporal* relation to one another, with repetition being the model of how progress actually works—by the later comers imitating and repeating the experiences of those who have preceded them' (1996:113). In other words, those who are developmentally behind are at different points in time. However, the postmodern view of history acknowledges that people experience time in the same way, and so focuses on space. Craig says that in the current mode of thought culture is formed by the relationships between different spaces according to their relative economic positions (1996:115). This model sees history as the dialectical relationship

between core and peripheral spaces. Rather than seeing the core/periphery relationship as having a negative impact on the periphery, both core and periphery have a role in shaping each other's culture (Craig 1996:115). Therefore, while core and periphery remain important concepts for Craig, instead of contrasting the two, he suggests that we should be focusing on the relationship between them. It is not so much that Scottish culture has been held back and deformed by its relationship with England, then, but that both cultures have shaped each other. Because England and Scotland are in a dialectic of core and peripheral space, they have changed each other's cultures. The idea of one culture as being more 'normal' than another is therefore inaccurate. Because core and periphery are part of the same system 'neither represents a norm except as an act of cultural projection upon the space it is trying to control, we do not need to be in thrall to the supposed "norm" of the core which represents the "future" after which everyone else is striving' (Craig 1996:116). 'Normal', then, is what the core projects to legitimize its control of the flow of things—culture included—within given spaces.

For Craig, Nairn's analysis of Scottish culture is flawed because it assumes Scotland should have progressed as England did, which is a historical model that does not fit the modern world. Craig goes beyond criticising older understandings of Scottish culture, though, by proposing a more positive way to view it. He suggests that this can be found in the way Scottish literature relates to history. He points out that both the novel and written history construct teleological narratives. The simultaneous development of both meant that they influenced one another: the novel by imitating historical development, and history by creating totalising narratives (Craig 1996:33). In novels all events must lead logically to the plot's resolution; likewise, in written histories, past events must explain how we have progressed to the present. If English history is History because it fits and, in many ways, defines the model of historical progress, Scotland is cut off from History due to the Union with England (Craig

1996:37). Because progress in Scotland became part of England's progress, it does not have History, only a localized history. According to Craig,

By the very power of the model of history which they purveyed to the rest of Europe, the Enlightenment philosophers and Scott reduced Scottish history to a series of isolated narratives which could not be integrated into the fundamental dynamic of history: in Scotland, therefore, narrative became part of the world that was framed by art, while the order of progress could only be narrated from somewhere else—it would be ungraspable in a Scottish environment (1996:39).

The specifically Scottish narrative is outside the main thrust of historical progression; Scotland only enters back into History when something monumental such as the First World War intersects Scottish history.

For Craig, the outsideness of Scottish history is, however, where Scottish literature's strength lies. For example, Sir Walter Scott is often criticized for being too romantic when he should have been, like those who took up the form of the historical novel from him, engaging more realistically with contemporary social issues (Craig 1996:67). This criticism comes in part from a view 'in which "realism" is displaced by "romance", in which the historical novel is not the gateway to an understanding of contemporary history, but an escape route for its evasion' (Craig 1996:40). According to Craig, though, to look at Scott in this way is also to assume not only that his works should resemble later versions of the genre, but also that they should resemble those of English and continental authors (1996:41). However, because Scotland was removed from History, it became the purview of English literature to explore the conflicts that would contribute to the grand historical narrative of progress, but, left out of History, Scott, as well as other Scottish writers since him, was free to explore what happens outside of this model of history (Craig 1996:38-9). As Craig says, 'If, by its divorce from the narrative of history, the Scottish novel was deprived of the means of

confronting the realities of its historical situation through the medium of the “realist” novel, it was liberated for the exploration of those forces which would not succumb to history [...]’ (1996:44). Put differently, his is the history of the margins for, as much as Scott tries to validate through narrative a progressive model of history, those left out of it always return and set back the progress that has been reached by the end of the novel (Craig 1996:70). Therefore, in the nineteenth century, Scottish literature provided a counter history to that of English history. For Craig, these counter histories provide a challenge to the ‘truth’ of history (1996:81). The oft-thought ‘lesser’ works of Tartanry and Kailyard, despite their flaws, challenge the idea of history as progress by examining the areas that have been left out of the narrative of History.

What is important about Craig’s analysis of Scottish literature is that it gives us a way out of the negative view of Scottish culture. In measuring Scotland against the development of other nations, Nairn and McArthur conclude that Scottish culture has gone wrong. They can only see the negative aspects of Scottish culture. In rejecting this comparative model, however, Craig is able to evaluate Scottish culture without such a bias and is, in fact, able to highlight the positives of a marginal culture. Craig’s methodology gives us a way to examine Scottish culture that does not seek to describe what it should or should not be. In seeing Scottish culture in a dialectical relationship with English culture, we can get beyond the understanding of Scotland as a ‘failure’. Furthermore, if we are to link, as Craig does, the development of the novel to the development of ‘history’, then we can extend to that discipline the importance Anderson gives the novel in the imagining of the national community. To present alternative histories, then, as Scottish literature does, is to open up different possibilities for the nation to imagine itself as a community, suggesting multiple forms of Scottish identity.

Craig’s Scotland is postmodern because of his understanding of history as space and not time, which allows for the co-existence of narrative and counter-narrative. But there are other ways of seeing Scotland as a postmodern nation. In constructing his

sociology of Scotland, David McCrone presents us with a pluralistic Scottish nation. For McCrone, “‘Scotland’ exists at different levels of meaning’ (2001:37). The concept ‘Scotland’ can mean different things to different people, and the terminology used to describe it reveals much about the ways we define Scotland. McCrone looks at three terms often used to define Scotland as worthy of sociological study: country, society, and nation. In the first example, claiming Scotland to be a country, one fuses the land with the nation. It is not only Scotland’s shape on the map, but also its rural landscapes—specifically those of the Highlands—that become the symbol of the nation. Though the Highlands are actually only a small part of Scotland, they, in Romanticised form, had been appropriated by the whole country as a means of differentiation from England.

In the second example, claiming Scotland to be a society, one focuses on the way its civil society has made it distinctive. McCrone defines civil society as those portions of the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres that are linked to the state but not under its direct control, though the two (state and civil society) have become increasingly intermixed with increased demand for self-representation (2001:42). Because the Union of 1707 left most of Scottish civil society intact, Scotland has had institutional autonomy. According to McCrone, when the Scottish Office was created, it on the one hand bound the state to this civil society, and, on the other, created Scotland as a conceivable political unit. More importantly, though, civil society is how people encounter the state daily. It is the go-between for the state as political body and the nation as a cultural one (McCrone 2001:46). And it is in this way that defining Scotland as a society asserts its difference: civil society as experienced in Scotland is a Scottish, not British, civil society.

In the examples of country and society, McCrone illustrates how using different strategies for defining Scotland as unique are used for different purposes. But the third example, claiming that Scotland is a nation, is problematic because it is often caught up

in the political debate over whether or not Scotland should be a separate state. For McCrone, though, Scotland can and should be considered as a nation without involving such political questions. Although those who argue otherwise claim that Scotland either is not different enough from Britain or has too many internal differences to be a ‘proper’ nation, according to McCrone Scotland is a nation in Benedict Anderson’s sense of being an imagined community. It is like any other nation in that ‘they have to be interpreted as idea, made and remade, rather than simply as actual “places”. Above all, they are places of the mind’ (McCrone 2001:49). ‘Scotland’ is neither a place nor a people, but an imagining that changes and must be read for meaning. Moreover, while imagining the nation relies a great deal on establishing differences, for McCrone this is not so much about real differences than ‘the mobilisation of those which the actors believe to be salient’ (2001:50). In other words, it is more about who is using which differences for what reason in the way they reproduce their imagined Scotland. This way of framing Scotland as a nation is therefore predicated on people defining themselves as such. McCrone is careful to point out, though, that not just any group of people can call themselves a nation; it needs some basis in reality. The community that imagines itself as Scotland is, in this sense, a nation ‘because it fits and makes sense of the social realities as people see and live them’ (McCrone 2001:52). Because it is the civil society that people daily encounter, people experience Scotland as a nation, possibly even more so than they do Britain.

The way the concept of ‘Scotland’ has meant different things in different contexts can also be applied to national identities. For McCrone, because we have multiple identities—not just national but also those based on class, gender, ethnicity, etc.—to choose from, identity has become contingent rather than essential, a personal choice, though the choices are limited to already established identities which others would be able to recognize. Identities, then, are not so much received as they are performances which are to be interpreted. McCrone defines the workings of this as ‘a

complex matrix involving how actors define themselves, how they attribute identity to others, and how, in turn, they think others attribute identity to them' (2001:153).

Identity, then, involves not only how one perceives oneself, but also how one perceives others and believes others to perceive him or herself. However, McCrone cautions that when speaking of national identity, the focus is often placed more on national and less on identity. The danger of this is that it assumes national identity to have been consistent throughout time, whereas really, as McCrone illustrates with the shifting nature of Scottish identity, it changes with different historical contexts.

When speaking of Scotland in terms of national identity, though, it is often tempting to ask which national identity we mean: Scottish or British? For McCrone this is not the right question. Scottish and British identities are not necessarily either-or categories, rather, McCrone suggests that people in Scotland can and do understand themselves as both at once. Following the Act of Union, a similar religion and the opportunities offered by the Empire made it both fairly easy and appealing for Scots to adopt a British identity. According to McCrone, though, Britishness took on the form of a state identity whereas Scottishness was still retained as a national identity. He argues that, 'being British was not an alien imposition, but a complementary identity to one's nationality, and, above all, one with strong imperial connotations in which people took pride and confidence' (McCrone 2001:182). Because the Scots had entered willingly into the Empire, their participation created room for the two identities to coexist. In fact, McCrone further argues that British identity as a national identity is a product of the post-war Welfare State which 'had an intimate, a daily, impact on people's lives' (2001:183). Thus, the idea of a competition between British and Scottish identities only arose at a time when both the British state and Scottish civil society were encountered in people's everyday lives.

However, McCrone analyses data that would seem to suggest that people from all walks of life—and political affiliation—in Scotland are increasingly self-identifying

as Scottish, though it should be noted that he points out that, in the study used, it is not possible to know what people mean by Scottish. This shift is attributed to the dismantling of the Welfare State under the Thatcher government. For one thing, Britishness had, to a certain extent, been reimagined as Englishness, leading Scots to feel excluded from a sense of British nationhood. However, what we can also take from this is that, with a reduction of the role of the Welfare State, Scottish civil society may be the more dominant presence in people's everyday lives in Scotland. Because Scotland held on to its own autonomous institutions, the civil society has created a space 'within which rules are set and interactions take place' (McCrone 2001:180). Furthermore, the civil society's 'success in so doing helps to naturalise social processes so that we take it for granted that there is a "Scottish" way of practising law, religion, education, politics, and so on' (McCrone 2001:180). In other words, Scottish civil society, as Michael Billig might put it, makes the homeland homely. It is a space in which daily actions take on an assumed sense of Scottishness. Thus it is that one could think of one's self as Scottish *and* British, or be a Scottish nationalist and yet be in favour of the Union. For McCrone, then, this allows a certain degree of flexibility in nationalism. He suggests that 'Just as political sovereignty in the modern world is both layered and shared such that powers and responsibilities operate at different levels for different purposes [...] so people appear quite content to attach identity to these levels as and when it suits them. The issue is not which one you are, but which one you choose in different contexts and for different purposes' (McCrone 2001:192). In other words, identities are not so much about which one we *are* as it is about which ones we *choose* and when we choose to activate them. The multiplicity of identities may seem unsurprising in a postmodern milieu, but McCrone's emphasis on choice is important. National identity is not supposed to be one of the identities that we have any control over as it is often linked to the legal restrictions on who can or cannot be a citizen of the state. This suggests that

there is a great deal of human agency involved in the way we identify with our nationality. We are able to choose *how* we act on national identity.

Conclusion

Under a Marxist understanding of history and the formation of nations, Scottish culture had been seen as ‘backwards’ or ‘deformed’. However, emerging definitions of nationalism led to understandings of Scottish culture that were more positive. In the years since the publication of *Scotch Reels*, studies of Scottish cinema have tended to shift away from questions of negative and positive representation. Some, like Eddie Dick and the contributors to *From Limelight to Satellite* (1990), were influenced by changes in the Scottish film industry. Others, like Duncan Petrie, whose *Screening Scotland* (2000) sees ‘Scotch myths’ as ways of comprehending, not defining, Scottish culture, continued on from Craig in trying to look at Tartanry, the Kailyard, and Clydesidism in non-evaluative ways. As such, there has been a tendency in recent years to approach Scottish cinema from a production centred perspective. While production had always been a key element in defining a Scottish cinema, the main focus of the initial studies was to ask ‘how do we represent ourselves to ourselves and to others’? Now, however, the focus on production made the transnationality of Scottish film more readily apparent. It is more common now to find scholars asking questions of how Scottish films function as co-productions. As will be discussed at greater length in the following chapter, scholars are now asking questions about what impact the necessity for co-production has had on Scottish cinema.

In many production-based approaches, though, the national aspect of Scottish cinema is to a certain extent de-emphasised. Focusing on production avoids more ambiguous definitions of national cinemas instead of confronting such definitions. There is no troublesome construction of a national audience, nor is there much

consideration for how the films' contents are identified as Scottish. It is assumed that, produced in some way by Scotland, the films must therefore be Scottish *national* films.

As we have seen from Billig, however, when we take the nation for granted, we are buying into the ideology of nationalism. Therefore, I do not want to make the assumption that a film must be Scottish because it is produced by Scotland; however, in establishing the Scottish identity of a film, it is important to get beyond the representational modes discussed, and the ways Craig and McCrone have conceptualised Scotland can help us to do so. Both posit ways in which we can understand Scotland as a plural entity: Craig through counter narrative and McCrone through a contingent view of nation. Multiple Scotlands can help us to see the range of ways a film might be considered to be Scottish regardless of where it was produced.

Chapter Two

From the Uncomfortably National to the Inescapably

Transnational

Introduction

In the summer of 2012, the National Library of Scotland put on an exhibition celebrating over one hundred fifteen years of the cinema in Scotland. ‘Going to the Pictures: Scotland at the Cinema’ displayed a wide array of memorabilia: from the script of Bill Douglas’s *My Ain Folk* to movie magazines Scottish filmgoers may have purchased. Though the exhibition (somewhat deliberately, I suspect) did not offer a clear and limited definition of Scottish cinema, this serves to illustrate that our understanding of a nation’s cinema is complicated by the fact that we do not necessarily always mean the same thing by the term ‘national cinema’. As Andrew Higson suggests, ‘there is not a single universally accepted discourse of national cinema’ (1989:36), noting that we can construct a national cinema in a variety of ways based on production, content, consumption, and cultural criticism. Philip Rosen understands national cinemas as primarily an intertextual relationship between films and history:

a national cinema is a large group of films, a body of textuality. This body of textuality is usually given a certain amount of historical specificity by calling it a *national* cinema. This means that issues of national cinema revolve around an intertextuality to which one attributes a certain historical weight (2006:17).

Whereas for John Hill, British cinema is much more heterogeneous than previous models of national cinema have allowed. But crucially, while consideration of film production and audiences leads Hill toward a more multi-faceted understanding of British cinema, he still regards the primary function of national cinema as providing

national allegory, one ‘refashioned to express a new sense of difference, diversity and even conflict’ (Hill 2006:109). However, whatever arguments are posited, the definition of national cinema is still fundamentally a critical construct. It is as much a *representation* of the nation’s cinema as the cinematic image is a representation of the nation.

For the study of Scottish cinema no issue has perhaps generated so much debate as the question of representation. Though the watershed moment of Scottish cinema studies is usually ascribed to the publication in 1982 of *Scotch Reels*, writing on Scottish film first appears in the 1940s. Two slim (both fall far short of the fifty page mark) texts appeared in the post-war years: Norman Wilson’s *Presenting Scotland: A Film Survey* (1945) and Charles Oakley’s *Fifty Years at the Pictures* (1947). Both were published by professional bodies—the Edinburgh Film Guild and Scottish Film Council respectively. Oakley’s pamphlet surveys cinema exhibition in Scotland from the earliest projections to the time of publication. It provides detailed descriptions of cinemas and films shown, but spares little more than a paragraph on Scottish film production, and makes no comment on the nature of the images this generated. Wilson’s book, however, is focused on Scottish film production, arguing that it is essential that Scotland produce films that realistically portray the lives of Scots. This underpinning advocacy of realism is closely aligned to the ideas of John Grierson, and while all the films he chronicles are documentaries, Wilson does admit that this documentary realism could be met by ostensibly fiction films like Michael Powell’s *Edge of the World* (1936) on the grounds that it was both sympathetic toward the people it portrayed and used non-professional actors and actual locations to enhance its sense of realism (1945:10). Wilson sees in this film some of the techniques that would come to signify realism in post-war film, particularly in Italian neorealism. Moreover, such an emphasis on realism serves to counteract the depiction of Scotland created by outsiders which, for Wilson...

[...] ultimately have a direct and serious effect not only on the industrial prosperity of Scotland, but on the economic standing of Scots everywhere. Just as the merchant must advertise to sell his wares, nations, less crudely but no less effectively, must present themselves to the world in a light that must engender goodwill and sell their national products (1945:8).

There is a clearly stated economic dimension to Wilson's criticism. Not only are such images negative, but Scots are not even profiting from the stereotypes (quite literally in that these are not indigenous films). Thus as early as the 1940s, the question of the representation versus the reality is raised in relation to Scotland and cinema, an issue which will be returned to time and again.

Between the immediate post-war years and the 1982 publication of *Scotch Reels*, *John Grierson: A Documentary Biography* (1979) by Forsyth Hardy, as well as collections of the documentarian's writings also edited by Hardy: *Grierson on Documentary* (1946), *John Grierson's Scotland* (1979), and *Grierson on the Movies* (1981), were the only major works about Scottish film. Born in Perthshire, Grierson has been recognised as the founder of the British documentary movement, but he was also involved in the attempt to establish film production in Scotland and worked with both the first (1938) and second (1954-82) Films of Scotland Committee. The film criticism of Hardy and Wilson, and of their successors like David Bruce, was heavily influenced by Griersonian ideas of documentary realism, and consequently for a long time discussion of Scottish film was framed by discourses of realism.

Scotch Reels, therefore, represents a dramatic shift in tone and attitude toward Scottish film. There are two important catalysts for this shift. The first, as discussed in the previous chapter, was the rise of Scottish nationalism in the 1960s and 70s, which, especially in the wake of 1979, created the feeling that Scots were not being adequately represented, both in terms of politics and images. The second was the growth in those same decades of cinema studies as an academic discipline, which provided a different

way to analyse films, and therefore created a new critical perspective on the problem of representation. Before discussing the academic study of Scottish film, it is worth taking a moment to consider works on Scottish film published for a wider audience and which fulfilled a wide range of functions.

Forsyth Hardy's 1990 book *Scotland in Film* is part history of the representation of Scotland on screen and part autobiography, as the author offers his personal recollections of productions with which he was involved. Hardy straddles the boundary between academic and popular film criticism; having been a critic since the 1930s, his analysis of films recalls a time when film theory was transitioning from a justification of cinema as art based on the principles of montage to a greater interest in realism. David Bruce's *Scotland the Movie* (1996) on the other hand takes the form of a gazetteer that lists Scottish films and filmmakers and links them to places, concepts, and historical events that feature prominently in Scottish film from the earliest days of cinema to the present. Likewise, Brian Pendreigh's *The Pocket Scottish Movie Book* (2002) fills a similar function, though the focus here is mostly on films of the last two decades. Pendreigh is also the author of *The Scot Pack* (2000), which provides a journalistic account of the rise in profile of Scottish actors in the 1990s, as well as other books on Ewan McGregor, Mel Gibson's films, and other Scottish-related topics. These publications, plus the various biographies—authorised or otherwise—of high profile actors like McGregor or Sean Connery would suggest that there is a popular interest in subjects that can be related to Scottish film in its broadest context. Often this popular interest is closely associated with tourism; for example, *The Pocket Scottish Movie Book*, with its heavy emphasis on locations and settings that can be visited, is marketed in part for tourists. That the arts themselves could serve as a tourist attraction is evidenced by List Ltd., a company that publishes promotional magazines in Scotland, producing, in association with the mobile phone company Orange, a guide to key Scottish films and filmmakers. Of course, as any Google search of 'best Scottish films' will show, there is

no shortage of such lists, whether generated by professional journalists and critics or amateur bloggers. What these sources tell us about Scottish cinema is that there is a great deal of flexibility in the way people define films as ‘Scottish’, something that is addressed, though in a different way, in the more academic works on the subject.

Although there are of course exceptions—studies of individual films and filmmakers and cultural studies approaches which take a less medium-specific look at Scottish film as part of a wider cultural phenomenon, come to mind⁵—the main drive of academic Scottish film studies begins with *Scotch Reels*. Though attitudes, perspectives, and approaches may have relaxed, shifted, and changed since then, many of the questions remain pertinent. The general movement in the discipline of film studies has been from concern over the problematic of representation to the problematic of production in an increasingly global world. In the 1980s, broadly speaking, scholars considered the cinematic images of Scotland that had been produced from without, found them severely lacking, and used this to demand the creation of an indigenous Scottish cinema that would combat the distortions and stereotypes conveyed in films made by outsiders. The 1990s on the other hand can be seen as a period of reassessment, in which those images previously derided as ‘negative’ were re-appropriated. At the same time, the growth of film production since the early 1980s which led to the flourishing in the mid-to-late 1990s of what became known as the ‘New Scottish Cinema’ apparently heralded the emergence of a *bona fide* Scottish national cinema. By the 2000s and to the present, though, the focus had shifted again as questions of the production and consumption of films in an increasingly globalised

⁵ BFI Film Classics has volumes on both *Trainspotting* by Murray Smith (2002) and *Ratcatcher* by Annette Kuhn (2008). Jonathan Murray looks at the career of Bill Forsyth in *Discomfort and Joy* (2011), and Eddie Dick, Andrew Noble and Duncan Petrie edited *Bill Douglas: A Lanternist’s Account* (1993). Two examples of books that take a more general cultural studies approach to Scottish film are *Scotland as We Know It: Representations of National Identity in Literature, Film and Popular Culture* (2008) by Richard Zumkhawala-Cook and Petrie’s *Contemporary Scottish Fictions* (2004).

industry began to be considered. Questions were now raised about how Scottish cinema functioned less as a small national cinema and more as a transnational entity; notably how it presently exists and what future it has in a climate in which technological and economic changes make uncertain the survival of small national film industries.

Compared to the ground-breaking studies of the 1980s, the main focus of Scottish cinema studies during the 1990s and 2000s has been production-based. Concern with matters of representation has been superseded by other issues, and though there had been some examinations of Scottish film culture in earlier days of the field, Scottish cinema has, for the most part, been defined by scholars as one based on (or, at least, that would ideally be based on) films produced by Scottish sources of (primarily public) funding. While this method is certainly a practical way around some of the thornier issues involved in defining a national cinema, it also tends to deemphasise the way films create a sense of national self—whether the familiar homeland or as the exotic other.

Struggling with Representation

In 1982 the first volume in academic film studies on Scottish cinema, *Scotch Reels*, was published. Timed to coincide with a debate about Scottish film at the Edinburgh Film Festival that same year, the book's most basic function is to raise awareness of Scottish film. Editor Colin McArthur introduces the book as

a shot at mapping the field, a throwing into relief of the major filmic representations of Scotland from other cultures, of the most important indigenous attempts at self-representation, and of the key Scottish institutions within and through which the manifold activities which make up a film culture—film production, distribution, exhibition, archiving, and education—are carried on (1982:1).

While aiming to highlight issues of importance to Scottish film, *Scotch Reels* is *not* simply a survey of Scottish film. Rather, it should be seen as part of a wider movement

of cultural critique that followed in the wake of the failed 1979 devolution referendum and the subsequent Conservative victory in the UK general elections. The contributors to the book mostly operate under the same assumption: that Scottish culture is a pathological or deformed culture. Moreover, *Scotch Reels* is held together by an understanding of Scotland as an underdeveloped country. McArthur explains:

Denied by history a place in the cadres of the forces of progress [...] and shorn of the role of shaping—through particular works of art and polemic—the ideologies appropriate to a burgeoning nation, Scottish artists and intellectuals, where they did not leave Scotland and function solely within the discourses of other cultures, produced works in or about Scotland which were deformed and ‘pathological’ (1982:2).

This echoes Tom Nairn’s explanation that Scotland has a pathological culture because its best thinkers put their efforts toward the project of the British Empire, leaving their native land with only a ‘sub-national’ kitschy popular culture (Nairn 1981:154-56). Thus, *Scotch Reels* maintains the point of view that Scottish film has been held back by this deformed culture. Beyond raising general awareness of Scottish film, what the contributors attempt to do is to reveal the limitations inherent in Scotland’s on-screen representation—influenced by the discourses of Tartantry, the Kailyard, and, to a lesser extent, Clydesidism. The essays presented in the collection therefore illustrate the ways Scottish film has been kept back by these representations and, at the same time, offer models for how it can begin to progress beyond them. While the contributors may seem to adhere to a common critical perspective, one informed by a ‘Scotch myths’ framework that views cultural myth as something to be demystified, it is these models, particularly those proposed by Cairns Craig, Colin McArthur, and John Caughie, that show where the contributors to the collection have their differences—differences that will shape the development of Scottish film studies in the following decades.

Colin McArthur's contributions have been generally viewed as the cornerstone of *Scotch Reels*. They are most frequently returned to by subsequent scholars when discussing the early days of Scottish cinema studies. McArthur finds that the dominant modes of representation, especially in Hollywood and British cinema, are predominantly limited to the regressive discourses of Tartanry and the Kailyard⁶, though often times the two were molded together in attempts to convey Scottishness (1982a:41). Because there were no other alternative representations of Scotland available, this combination of Tartanry and the Kailyard became the default way to represent Scotland (McArthur 1982a:45). However, it is not just these limiting representations that are a problem; according to McArthur, it is the very type of cinema that is most damaging:

The objective function of popular cinema is very often to paper over the cracks in the society to mask contradictions. This has been a particularly urgent task for British cinema in its representations of Scotland as the clear benefits to Scotland of being a junior partner in imperial exploitation give way to the disabilities of being tied to a post-imperial geriatric with undiminished ambition of maintaining great-power status (1982a:49).

In other words, the representation of Scotland in the British cinema serves the ideological function of maintaining British power over Scotland, which, as it is portrayed in film, is rooted in the past and needs Britain to bring it into the present.

But McArthur also examines filmic representations that have been proposed as alternatives to Tartanry and the Kailyard. Clydeside films—those featuring the industrial or urban settings, especially those of Glasgow, for example *Floodtide* (1949) and the Grierson-produced *The Brave Don't Cry* (1952)—which present a modern vision

⁶ Among the films McArthur cites as containing the discourses of Tartanry and the Kailyard are: both the silent (1923) and sound (1948) versions of *Bonnie Prince Charlie*; Hollywood films like *The Little Minister* (1934), Disney's live-action *Rob Roy: The Highland Rogue* (1953) and *Brigadoon* (1954); and comedies such as *Whisky Galore!* (1949), *Laxdale Hall* (1952) and *The Maggie* (1954).

of Scotland, are found lacking because they do not provide any analysis of what they are trying to represent (McArthur 1982a:52). Moreover, the sponsored documentary films made under the auspices of the Films of Scotland Committees in 1938 and 1954-82, and predominantly made in Scotland by local production units, come under particularly harsh criticism because, while they offer images alternative to Tartanry and Kailyard, there is in them a notable 'failure to accommodate analysis and contradiction' (McArthur 1982a:62). In short, it is the lack of critical analysis in which McArthur locates the failure of these films. They do not do enough to critique neither the limiting nature of the images to which they pose alternatives nor Scotland's inability to progress. For McArthur, Scottish film needs to question these limiting representations so that it can progress:

the Scottish failure has not been one primarily of individual will; it has been the failure of institutions to create the conditions for the development of more politically and artistically relevant discourses. Put epigrammatically, institutions [...] have failed to keep a historic appointment with the discourses of marxism and modernism (1982a:67).

The problem, then, is that there had been little support for the kind of filmmaking that would best be able to critique Scotland's systemic problems, the most obvious being the kind of art cinema being produced by mostly European auteurs.

Subsequent scholarly works on Scottish cinema have mainly focused their critique of *Scotch Reels* on McArthur's perspective, and often it seems as if he has become a synecdoche of the whole collection. While the other contributions do in some ways either lend support to or extend aspects of the editor's argument, some of them tow the party line far less strictly than is often implied. There is a diversity of approach, though within certain ideological constraints. Moreover, while they all concur that the existing representations of Scotland are inadequate, they diverge in their proposed solutions to this problem. For example, Cairns Craig in his essay on the literary

traditions of Tartanry and the Kailyard suggests that these are limiting because they locate Scotland in the past, Tartanry through its use of the Jacobite past, a reminder of past failure, and the Kailyard in the way it addresses the reader as someone who has already left Scotland behind (Craig 1982:10-11). While for McArthur, the obvious solution to this is, through modernist critique, to demystify the myths, Craig, however, suggests that through certain elements of Tartanry and the Kailyard, in particular landscape and language, Scottish literature could be redeemed, though first they would...

[...] need to acquire a new historical significance before they can be released into the onward flow of the present from the frozen world of their myths of historical irrelevance. And what this historical significance needs, of course, if it is to come into being, is a sense of the nation's particular and individual development, both past and future (1982:15).

In other words, the 'myths' found in the discourses of Tartanry and the Kailyard could be relevant if a way could be found to re-historicise them. In fact, re-historicising Scottish literature would largely be the focus of Craig's works in the 1990s, informing his subsequent books *Out of History* (1996) and *The Modern Scottish Novel* (1999).

John Caughie's chapter in *Scotch Reels* on Scottish television also differs from McArthur in several key ways. While finding Scottish television lacking, Caughie indicates that this relates to whether or not one considers Scotland a British region or a nation, and in terms of what was shown by the national broadcasters, there is not much difference between Scottish and English regional television. For Caughie all this does

is to throw the question back onto the embarrassment which Scotland creates within a rigidly regional structure; the question of nation and region, and the forms of representation (in both the political and the discursive sense) which the distinction between the two involves (1982:112-13).

It does not clarify whether Scottish television is regional or national television and how representation is related to this issue. Caughie notes that in order to be profitable, Scottish television needs to be marketed outside of Scotland and consequently must rely on well-established images rather than producing new, challenging ones. Thus 'any discussion of Scottish television, then, has to start from a recognition that the complex and often contradictory institutional constraints of television are material factors in the production and circulation of television discourses' (Caughie 1982:114). This observation that the realities of production must not be overlooked is important because not only was it of secondary concern to other scholars of Scottish cinema at the time, but also because it would become an increasingly important method for Caughie and others which will lead them toward a more positive evaluation of Scottish film.

As for the influence Tartanry and the Kailyard have had on Scottish television, Caughie notes that the medium is too diverse to see the full impact of these discourses, so he narrows his analysis to drama because fiction is a possible site of the creation of a national identity (1982:115). And what he finds is that, in its present form, Scottish television is not engaged with the creation of a Scottish national culture. He suggests that

one of the most massive inadequacies of Scottish television is the absence of any sense of an engagement with a developed notion of national culture or national identity which goes beyond the reflection of an always already constructed 'Scottishness'. The professional ideologies and discourses of television, inflected historically by notions of impartiality, pluralism and paternalism, simply seem to offer no place for such an engagement to articulate itself. It seems not to be the business of television. It is in this radical sense, in its lack of engagement, rather than in the sense of good or bad programmes, that Scottish television is at best inadequate, at worst inimical to the development of Scottish culture (Caughie 1982:115).

In other words, Scottish television is not contributing positively to Scottish culture because the very industrial fabric of television prevents the creation of alternative Scottish representation as well as the critique of regressive ones. However, there is still importance in developing Scottish television. For Caughie, there is still ‘the possibility that television’s particular function in the development of a national culture—what it can do best as a popular form—is less to unsettle and unfix identity, than it is to recover, circulate and develop the progressive traditions which exist in culture’ (1982:118). While television may not support a modernist critic very well, it is useful in how it can be used to create greater engagement with Scottish culture (Caughie 1982:121).

The subsequent elaboration of the three viewpoints outlined above—Craig’s, McArthur’s and Caughie’s—would shape the further study of Scottish film. In the following decades, much of the study of Scottish film would grapple with McArthur’s assertion that Scottish film’s failure is due to its lack of modernist critique. But while McArthur himself would continue to explore these ‘myths’, the seeds of new methods of approach had already been sewn.

Toward the Redemption of Scottish Film

As far as the study of Scottish film is concerned, the 1990s proved to be a period in which some scholars set about reconsidering the positions of *Scotch Reels*. Past statements were re-evaluated, previously derided images reclaimed, and the concept of a Scottish cinema itself was re-imagined in light of the increase in film production since the 1980s. But these revisions were not without precedent. Much of the work being done was an extension of some of the ideas Craig and Caughie had initially put forth in *Scotch Reels*.

The publication in 1990 of *From Limelight to Satellite*, edited by Eddie Dick, then Media Education Officer for the Scottish Film Council, marks a shift away from the positions taken by McArthur et al. From a theoretical standpoint, we can see the critical

discourse on Scottish film moving away from Gellner's idea of the nation as a product of underdevelopment and looking toward other theories of nationalism. In *From Limelight to Satellite* Dick engages with Anderson's conception of the nation as imagined community; however, he notes that...

the imagined Scotland is not *imaginary*; what we collectively remember or forget, the geographical space we occupy, the institutions which support and control us—these and many other things operate powerfully on our daily lives to make us what we think we are. The imagining is not an illusion; being Scottish might be a pain or a pleasure but it is *real* (1990:9).

This idea of the imagined Scotland as a real, lived-in space seems to foreshadow Billig's banal nationalism in that here the nation is something experienced by Scots in their everyday lives.

In addition to exploring new theories of nationalism, Scottish cinema studies by the early 1990s was also moving away from the totalising approach that had guided *Scotch Reels*. Whereas that previous study had been in support of one very specific argument, often times to the extent of making some very glaring omissions, analysis now, if *From Limelight to Satellite* is any indication, welcomed different voices and perspectives. While acknowledging that it is neither a definitive nor complete history of Scottish film, Dick describes *From Limelight to Satellite* as 'a kind of mosaic in which each piece makes its individual sense but where the totality blends into a fuller impression of film in Scotland' (1990:10). This indicates that it was now thought that diverse points of view would offer a more accurate picture of Scottish film.

In keeping with this, *From Limelight to Satellite* provides a much broader and diverse view of Scottish film than *Scotch Reels* did. One point for comparison is Janet McBain's filmography (1990), a far more comprehensive list of films in which Scotland is represented than Jim Hickey's chronicle (1982) in that earlier volume. But many of the other essays in *From Limelight to Satellite* also work toward rectifying the

shortcomings of earlier scholarship. They address facets of Scottish cinema that had either been left out or glossed over in previous works, re-examine McArthur's position on the Films of Scotland documentaries, and provide case studies which offer both a more in-depth, nuanced understanding of works that had been criticised and readings that present different, sometimes contradictory angles on Scottish film. Moreover, Scottish cinema studies is brought up to date with the developments that had occurred over the course of the 1980s, covering contemporary issues in the production of Scottish film and television, as well as the potential changes to Scotland's sense of national identity in a post-communist Europe.

The increase in Scottish film production during the 1980s was largely responsible for this change in attitude toward Scottish cinema. In this we can see the continued influence of one of the divergent strains from *Scotch Reels*—John Caughie's suggestion that criticism should be shaped by the production context of Scottish film—which suggests that there is, in fact, continuity between the two collections. However, Caughie's contribution to *From Limelight to Satellite* also shows the ways the field was moving in new directions, trying to make sense of Scottish film rather than fitting it to the analysis. For example, the diversity of productions seen by 1990 suggested that the mode of analysis used in *Scotch Reels* was no longer appropriate (1990:20). For one thing, how people relate to onscreen images may be more complex than the earlier study had assumed. John Caughie argues that *Scotch Reels*

lacked a sense of historical resonances which the myths still contained, and the quite ambivalent feelings which they could evoke: it was insensitive, that is, to the implications for the experience of national identity of 'incorrect' pleasures [...] something which is ours, and whose important jokes are private to us (Caughie 1990:20).

The increase in Scottish film production during the 1980s, spurred on by Channel 4's commissioning of films, also provided a wider range of representations, prompting

Caughie to also suggests that now ‘there are on offer in Scottish cinema and television more complex ways of “being Scottish” [...] one of the effects of the relative proliferation of representations is to take the edge off the demand that each representation meet the requirements of “correct Scottishness”’ (1990:27). That there are now so many different ways to represent Scotland, the necessity for making a distinction between good or bad ones is no longer as relevant. What is needed, then, is a refining of the definition of ‘representation’. Caughie proposes that we understand the term in ‘the figurative sense, familiar to cultural criticism, of image and identity; but also the institutional sense, familiar to political discourses, of proportionality, representativeness and participation’ (1990:13). Representation is not just about the images that are supposed to stand for Scotland; it is also about Scots participating in the production of those images. It is therefore an active process, which implies that people have some degree of agency in how they represent themselves.

However, not everyone found inspiration in the 1980s and 1990s increase in Scottish film production. Colin McArthur continued to be very critical of Scotland’s public film agencies and institutions, including the Scottish Film Production Fund, which he felt were unnecessarily pushing Scottish filmmakers toward bigger budget, mainstream narrative films. The problem with this is that ‘the larger the project, the less Scottish it becomes’ (McArthur 1993:30). In other words, big projects necessitate not only seeking funds from sources outside Scotland, but also, as a consequence, trying to appeal to a global audience. Both of these issues lessen what is specifically Scottish about a film. Instead, McArthur advocates what he calls a ‘poor cinema’, for, he believes, only low budget filmmaking can produce the kind of analytical art cinema he believes would result in a truly national cinema for Scotland. Smaller budgets would eliminate the dependence on funding from external sources and allow films to be made completely within Scotland. For McArthur what would result from this is a coherent

national cinema that can be easily identified as Scottish precisely because it engages with concerns specific to the Scottish context.

McArthur also continued to explore the question of representation, notably in classic films like *Whisky Galore!*, *The Maggie* and *Brigadoon*, as well as *Braveheart*⁷ which indicate that the representation of Scots by outsiders remains a key concern. Whereas Caughie's examination of a wider range of Scottish films suggests that audiences can take pleasure in myth, for McArthur, these representations operate according to his concept of the 'Scottish Discursive Unconscious', a pervasive ideology which constructs Scotland and the Scots as a people and place as 'others' onto which desires, fears, etc. can be projected (2003a:12). However, this is not to say that such representations should be dismissed; rather, there are 'elements in them which are constructive, pleasurable and worthy of attention' (McArthur 2003a:5). It is clear, though, that for McArthur, pleasurable and worthy of attention are the same thing. Whereas in *Scotch Reels* he had described *The Maggie* as 'Scotland at its most self-lacerative' (McArthur 1982a:47), he now argued that:

the Scottish Discursive Unconscious is not something I approve of, but I find its delirious realization in these scenes so breathtaking that these moments (plus, of course, Mackendrick's sophisticated mise-en-scène throughout the film) confer on *The Maggie* a level of interest far in excess of that generated by *Whisky Galore!* For me, *The Maggie* does not 'come apart at the seams'. At the level of Mackendrick's mise-en-scène it is extremely controlled and at the level of the major unconscious ideology informing it—the Scottish Discursive Unconscious—it is all too coherent! (McArthur 2003a:99)

⁷ These films are analysed in *Whisky Galore! & The Maggie* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003) and *Brigadoon, Braveheart and the Scots: Distortions of Scotland in Hollywood Cinema* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2003) respectively. It should also be noted that McArthur is far less critical of the first three of these films than he had been previously.

Though expressing some appreciation of the film's aesthetic qualities, it is the way film is held together by its ideological underpinnings that ultimately makes it so compelling.

Though McArthur seems intent on continuing the line of inquiry he began in *Scotch Reels*, by the 1990s this was now only one of several different ways of approaching Scottish film. Caughie's suggestion that there are many modes of Scottish representation finds a parallel in the multiplicity of critical perspectives on offer. If there are numerous ways of relating to representation, so too could there be several different understandings of and ways of defining Scottish cinema. There are quite a few hints at this stage as to the direction Scottish cinema studies would take in the next century. The analysis of Scotland's relationship to the new Europe seems a precursor to much of what is being done in transnational cinema studies⁸, that, in Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden's definition, looks at how cinema 'transcends the national as autonomous cultural particularity while respecting it as a powerful symbolic force' (2), whereas the claim that 'good' versus 'bad' representation is less relevant is something that would be expanded as scholars explored identities on offer by Scottish films. But the emphasis on production context would have a more immediate effect as critics began to analyse Scottish films produced in the 1990s.

Devolution: The Emergence of a New Scottish Cinema

The 1990s saw the continuation of the 1980s trend of an increase in Scottish film production, but this time the films were met by a strong sense of optimism at a truly national Scottish cinema's viability. The back-to-back critical—and, more importantly, commercial—success of Danny Boyle's *Shallow Grave* (1994) and *Trainspotting* (1995), supplemented by international productions like *Braveheart* (1995) and *Rob Roy*

⁸ For recent publications that present a wide variety of cinematic approaches to the transnational, see Ezra, E., and Rowden, T. (Eds.) (2006) *Transnational Cinema, the Film Reader*. London: Routledge, and Āurovičová, N., and Newman, K. (Eds.) (2010) *World Cinemas, Transnational Perspectives*. London: Routledge.

(1995) and Ken Loach's Scottish films—*Carla's Song* (1996), *My Name Is Joe* (1998), etc.—brought Scottish film to the attention of international audiences. But it was not just high profile films that caused people to see Scottish cinema in a more positive light. Throughout the 1990s, there had been efforts made in different fields to reclaim Scottish culture. For example, as discussed in the previous chapter, Cairns Craig sees Scottish literature as being in a dialogue with English culture; instead of being inferior to it, both cultures have been shaped by their relationship to one another; therefore, one is not 'better' than the other. For the study of Scottish cinema, though, what became important about Craig's perspective on Scottish culture is that it sees myth not as something regressive or reactionary but as something that opens up possibilities and can offer alternative histories. According to Duncan Petrie, author of *Screening Scotland*, the first book to celebrate the emergence of the New Scottish Cinema:

the value of Craig's reclamation of the value of myth also suggests alternative ways of thinking about the history of representations of Scotland, particularly within such a popular mass medium as the cinema. [...] this history needs to be re-examined with a sensitivity toward questions of inclusiveness, popularity, pleasure and the complex negotiation of cultural meaning (2000a:8).

Therefore, just as Scotland poses alternatives to the way we understand history, so too can there be other ways of understanding Scottish representation.

In light of this, then, the representational modes of Tartanry, the Kailyard, and Clydesidism were redefined. Whereas the *Scotch Reels* critics saw them as myths to be demystified, for Petrie they are 'a complex set of ideas that are as much about the fantasies, the desires and the anxieties of metropolitan culture, as they are about simply confirming the imposition of cultural power over the Celtic subaltern' (2000a:28). In Petrie's redefinitions, then, the Scotland represented in films is a space where exploring alternatives is possible. In the Kailyard tradition, Scotland is constructed as a far-away,

peripheral space wherein ‘a range of fantasies, desires and anxieties can be explored and expressed; alternatively an exotic backdrop for adventure and romance, or a sinister and oppressive locale beyond the pale of civilization’ (Petrie 2000a:32) because, as an ‘other’ space—one beyond History, according to Craig—Scotland allows for alternative possibilities. Tartanry, as a form of Scottish heritage film, offers not only an alternative history, but also the spectacle of costume, landscape, action, etc. and therefore a different form of masculinity linked to ‘feminine’ display (Petrie 2000a:70). Finally, while Clydesidism’s urban industrial milieu situates Scotland within a real, contemporary world instead of a fantasy space, it nevertheless can offer alternatives. McArthur may have criticised Clydeside films for eliding social and class conflict, but these films ‘are not simply celebrations of social consensus; issues of conflict and crisis inevitably bubble to the surface particularly around issues of gender’ (Petrie 2000a:91). Clydesidism may not question the role of class, but in certain films the gender dynamics do trouble the idealisation of an industry in which everyone works together. These new definitions of traditional forms of representation, then, provide more positive ways of understanding them.

However, it was not only reclamations like these that were changing the perception of Scottish film. In 1997, not only was there a return to a Labour government, but Scots also voted in favour of devolution. Two years later, the Scottish Parliament was re-established. The process of devolution led to new ways to think about Scotland. No longer a ‘stateless nation’, Scotland is now a separate—though not fully autonomous—state. Likewise, Petrie suggests that Scottish cinema ‘should perhaps be understood in terms of a devolved British cinema rather than a fully independent entity’ (Petrie 2000a:186). By the end of the twentieth century, a distinctly Scottish cinema was evident. The First Films of Scotland Committee and subsequent funding bodies may have been very limiting in terms of representation (among other things), but they at least provided a training ground in which Scottish filmmakers could hone their skills and

ambitions. From this background several ‘auteur’ filmmakers, notably Bill Douglas in the 1970s and Bill Forsyth in the 1980s, whose films had many characteristics in common with European art cinema, emerged. Institutions like the Scottish Film Production Fund and funding schemes like Tartan Shorts continued to play an important role throughout the 1990s as the New Scottish Cinema emerged. However, while these bodies have allowed for a tremendous growth in indigenous film production, Scottish cinema still often relied, in no small part, on outside financing.

The idea of a devolved body, whether a state or a cinema, suggests a certain degree of continuity with what had come before. After all, devolution has been criticised for being a compromise to prevent the break-up of the Union. It offers partial independence without upsetting the status quo too much. And it is therefore unsurprising that there should be continuity in terms of content—styles, themes, subject matter—for a devolved cinema. While the ‘edginess’ of *Shallow Grave* and *Trainspotting* may have seemed like complete breaks with the past, traditional modes of Scottish representation appear in Scottish films throughout the 1990s. It may have looked like a *new* Scottish cinema, but in many ways it ‘also served to rework the dominant representational traditions of the past’ (Petrie 2000a:217). The idea of a continuity of representation, updated though it may be for a modern Scotland, and style, links the content of the ‘devolved’ Scottish cinema to the necessities of production. Just as it continues to need ties to British institutions, so too does it still utilise images propagated by a dominant British cinema, albeit not always in the same manner. Whether looked at in terms of representation or in terms of production, Scottish cinema is by this definition a devolved cinema.

In many ways, ‘devolved’ Scottish cinema is a continuation of the re-evaluation work that had been done at the beginning of the 1990s. It is the result of an increasing emphasis on production context, coupled with various efforts to reclaim traditional modes of Scottish representation. However, it should be noted that Petrie frames it in

terms of the art cinema models of Douglas and Forsyth, something that subsequent scholars would claim narrowed their definition of Scottish cinema. Nevertheless, over the course of the next decade, production-based approaches would become increasingly popular, which would in turn lead scholars to consider the growing significance of the transnational basis of moving image production. In the next century, just what it meant to be a 'devolved' cinema in the wider context of global film production would take on an increased importance.

Looking Outward, Looking Inward: The Current State of Scottish Film Studies

In the ensuing decades, there has been a reluctance to describe the increase in production of Scottish films as constituting a national cinema. For a time it was labelled a devolved (or, at least, devolving) cinema because, though it was distinctly Scottish, it was not (yet) fully self-sufficient (Petrie 2000a:186). However, as the new century progressed, some questioned the adequacy of this term as, in light of an increasing dependency on co-production, it seemed likely that Scottish cinema was heading nowhere near full autonomy. There has been a shift toward defining Scottish films as a transnational cinema, a shift influenced on the one hand by a greater focus on the realities of contemporary film production, and on the other hand by new understandings of national cinemas. Higson explains the difference between the national and transnational in the following way:

[the national] tends to assume that national identity and tradition are already fully formed and fixed in place. It also tends to take borders for granted and to assume that those borders are effective in containing political and economic developments, cultural practice and identity. In fact of course, borders are always leaky and there is a considerable degree of movement across them (even in the most authoritarian states). It is in this migration, this border crossing, that the transnational emerges. Seen in this light, it is

difficult to see the indigenous as either pure or stable. On the contrary, the degree of cultural cross-breeding and interpenetration, not only across borders but also within them, suggests that modern cultural formations are invariably hybrid and impure. They constantly mix together different 'indigeneities' and are thus always re-fashioning themselves, as opposed to exhibiting an already fully formed identity (2000a:67).

A transnational cinema model that considers, as Bergfelder has suggested, the movement of cinema (Bergfelder 2005:320), then, is more appropriate to our current understanding of nations. However, because greater emphasis is in this case placed on the connections between cinemas, what is particularly national about a group of films often ends up downplayed. Jonathan Murray suggests that Scottish co-productions demonstrate:

the extent to which, toward the end of the '00s, contemporary films and filmmakers can (indeed must) be labelled 'Scottish' without an automatic presumption that an extended or exclusive analysis of national history, society, culture and identity is what they will offer. Since the turn of the century, 'Scottish' films have increasingly been financed on a pan-European basis, and the stories such movies narrate are [...] often un-or only tangentially related to questions of national identity or specificity (2009:xi).

Increased internationalism has decreased the cultural specificity of Scottish films, and so it is suggested that we need a new way to define films as Scottish, one that does not rely on things that we assume to be Scottish. Of course, this is not to say that the issues previously explored have been resolved; there is still a great deal of continuity between earlier texts like *Scotch Reels* and *From Limelight to Satellite* and more recent works such as *Scottish Cinema Now*. Questions of representation are still raised, as are those about what kind of cinema Scotland should invest in. The main difference, though, is that now these questions most often deal in some way with the transnational. However, unlike in *Scotch Reels*, where contributors all in some way adhered to the same critical

framework, now it is not so much that scholars are towing a party line; it is more that conditions have changed so that all questions can be approached in light of greater transnationalism. Just as decades before Scotland's 'deformed' culture was the issue that *had* to be addressed, now there seems no way of avoiding the transnational. Many recent works have therefore considered what makes Scottish cinema transnational. Whether looking at specific co-production relationships or at Scotland's place in global cinema, answers are often sought in film funding and styles.

This transnational shift was anticipated in the early 1990s as some critics considered what impact the changing face of Europe would have on Scottish film. In *From Limelight to Satellite* Philip Schlesinger predicted that film and visual media would be important in the years after the fall of Communism because it 'places us squarely in the domain of how the new Europe is going to be *represented* to the multifold audiences that comprise European society' (1990:222). Film, then, would be important to the way changing Europe would be understood, and key among these changes was the new and multiple definitions of Europe that were emerging (Schlesinger 1990:224). It was thought that this could be beneficial to Scottish film if they could write themselves into a redefinition of Europe and thereby reduce dependence on a British film industry, but it was unclear if this meant being an art cinema that was part of a broader project of European cultural distinction, or one that was region specific (Schlesinger 1990:231-32). Whatever the case, Schlesinger argues that, on the one hand, it will address the different levels at which culture is being redefined, and, on the other hand, it is to deliberately play with identity (1990:232). The Scottish identity of a film could become less clear-cut.

However, the term 'transnational' does not get used extensively in relation to Scottish cinema until the beginning of the twenty-first century. As scholars began to reject the national cinema model, they needed new terms to describe it. Sarah Street for example questions the appropriateness of the label 'New Scottish Cinema' because the

national identity of this set of films is not so clear. The way the Scottishness of films like *Trainspotting* was underemphasised in their marketing and reception implies that ‘Scottish cinema [...] does not fit easily into any single national category’ because these productions ‘contributed, in terms of theme and casting, to the forging of an independent identity from British cinema. Yet at the same time, many of the same films were heralded as contributing to a revival of contemporary British filmmaking’ (Street 2009a:141). Though seeming to set themselves apart from the rest of British cinema, the films of the ‘New Scottish Cinema’ were still often received in a British context. In a way, the attempt to ‘brand’ Scottish films as something non-British parallels the idea that devolution means a greater alignment with a European identity (Street 2009a:142). Street therefore posits that the label ‘trans-national’ provides a more accurate description than a devolved cinema, explaining that Scottish film’s

trans-national elements transcend this description, that new Scottish cinema still remains bound by a particular conception of ‘the national’ that always gets caught up in limited frames of reference. By contrast, trans-national cinema is marked by diversity in terms of its production personnel and actors; variety of locations and patterns of cross-cultural reception (2009a:142).

Labelling Scottish cinema a ‘devolved’ cinema is still defining it within a national context; trans-national cinema, on the other hand, allows for a multifaceted picture.

While other critics have also questioned the use of describing Scottish cinema in national terms, not all have called for new terminology. For Jonathan Murray, a focus on mainstream film production by many of the institutions established to foster Scottish film production led many to seek alternative ways, in terms of both funding and aesthetics, of making films. He describes the change in Scottish film in the 2000s as being

a collective turn to Europe that was aesthetic, thematic and industrial in nature. The Scottish films screened at Edinburgh [International Film Festival] 2003 were all impeccably 'European art-house' fare.

Representative of how Scottish cinema was evolving in the years immediately post-2000, these films manifested a shared desire to explore private experience and complex, extreme psychological states rather than exploit popular genres and conventional narrative form (Murray 2007:84).

However, Scottish films were not just picking up European styles and concerns; there were also turning to the continent for production methods and financing. According to Murray,

the attraction of Scottish-Scandinavian partnerships [...] perhaps lay in the perception of late 1990s Danish film as a small national cinema that had achieved sustainable international commercial and critical success through a process of cultivated local differentiation from the Anglophone mainstream (2007:85).

European methods of co-production seemed to be a viable option for Scottish filmmaking.

Although European co-production seems to have solved many problems for Scottish filmmakers, it has caused several new ones for those critics who engage with Scottish film. Murray believes these problems are related to the unsuitability of using a national allegory model, which does not necessarily fit the conditions of film production this century, to talk about contemporary Scottish cinema (Murray 2007:88). While the national cinema model once was a useful way of considering Scottish cinema, that frame of analysis can no longer accurately describe it. However, Murray does not reject the notion of Scottish cinema as a devolved cinema, rather, he proposes a redefinition of the term: Scottish cinema is still devolving, but away from the nationally specific (Murray 2007:90). What co-produced films suggest is that instead of becoming more Scottish,

Scottish film is becoming less culturally specific. There are two parallel trends in Scottish film of the twenty-first century that seem to support this claim. The first is the above-mentioned tendency toward Scandinavian co-production, as can be seen in the relationship between Glasgow-based Sigma Films and the Danish Zentropa Entertainments. The second is a turning away by filmmakers from questions of the nation to those of race and ethnicity. However, these developments do not necessarily suggest a wholesale neglecting of study of the national. Instead, Murray argues that ‘we blind ourselves in one eye if we refuse to accept that both indigenous and international components of increasingly globalised creative careers ought to be explored in tandem’ (2012:416). Both the national and transnational have to be studied together.

Other critics found the national cinema framework insufficient to describe contemporary Scottish filmmaking, but for different reasons. Many of them now see a multiplicity of identities with which Scottish cinema engages, nation being just one of several possibilities. One way to approach the identities on offer in Scottish films is to situate Scotland within a global cinema context by broadening our understanding of Scottish film beyond art cinema to include genre films, as well as co- and international productions using Scottish locations. What this results in is a plural approach to Scottish film. According to David Martin-Jones, ‘[s]uch a shift in focus replaces existing discussions of Scottish cinema and Scottish identity with an analysis of Scottish *cinemas*, and Scottish *identities*’ (2009:3). By looking at a more diverse version of Scottish cinema, by focusing on genre, for example, instead of art cinema as Petrie and others tended to do, different versions of Scotland are created for different audiences. Studying genre films may diversify our understanding of Scottish film, but it also gives it a less culturally specific focus. After all, genre is considered by many to be a universal trait of the cinema. All cinemas use genre, whether they be ones specific to that culture or ones with international appeal; art cinema itself is a term that is often used generically. Furthermore, genres not only widen the field of study, they also allow for

greater possibilities of identity. Because popular films must appeal to a wide ranging audience and can explore weighty issues safely under the cover of their genre, Martin-Jones suggests that

Increasingly it is in popular genre films made and set in Scotland that non-national (ethnic, sexual, gendered, diasporic, transnational, global/local, regional) identities are often explored, despite the reputation that art and social realist films have for tackling 'serious' subject matter (2009:19).

Genre films are therefore in a better position than the art-based national cinema to explore Scottish identities that go beyond the national.

Though Scotland as a concept remains important for those like Martin-Jones who are concerned with identities, they, too, reject labels like 'devolved cinema' or 'New Scottish Cinema'. These labels might be a useful way to describe certain Scottish films, but they 'are not accurate enough when the broader context of filmmaking in Scotland is examined' (Martin-Jones 2009:11). The national is implied in these terms, and is therefore too specific for the consideration of film in a popular context. More importantly, they also suggest that the given films can only be understood in a Scottish context. Martin-Jones explains that

[...] this type of focus can predetermine the outcome of analysis of films made in Scotland which may be judged in terms of whether they are culturally or 'only' industrially important for Scotland, based on a desire to champion Scottish filmmaking internationally at the expense of the filmmaking taking place in the country (2009:11).

The group of films held up for example as Scottish films are ones that have been selected to promote a certain image. And so Martin-Jones avoids terms that would place Scottish films in a strictly national context, but, instead of using 'transnational' or redefining old terms, he defines Scottish cinema as a 'global cinema'. Scotland is a place that makes films that are seen internationally and in which international

productions occur, and, as such, is a part of a decentralised global film industry (Martin-Jones 2009:11). The concept of ‘global cinema’, then, can provide a way to understand the different sides of Scottish filmmaking as it occurs within a globalised film industry.

Cultural pluralism does not just occur on the macro level of genres and global identities however. We can also look at it in terms of Scotland’s internal differences, notably gender. Carole Anderson and Glenda Norquay’s 1984 article ‘Superiorism’, published in *Cencrastus*, elucidated the dominance of men in Scottish cultural production. In more recently years, the study of gender in Scottish film generally has included both the study of women’s contribution to Scottish filmmaking and the study of the role of gender in representation, both of which have provided a more diversified way of understanding Scottish film—and Scottish culture. The former approach often tends to be an act of recovery in that women’s filmmaking has often been lost or overlooked in the dominant narratives of cinema history. Moreover it has further opened up our understanding of Scottish film both as a practice and in terms of its thematic, stylistic, and narrative concerns. For example, Sarah Neely’s work on experimental filmmaker Margaret Tait opens up Scottish cinema in two ways. First, it shows that Griersonian documentary need not necessarily have been the only model of non-fiction or documentary cinema relevant to Scottish cinema. Instead, Tait and the avant garde provide an alternative to the binary of realism on the one hand and ‘mythic’ representations on the other. Second, it shows that Scottish film does not necessarily have to be concerned with questions of nation. According to Neely, ‘Ultimately, as Tait’s experience proves, this means that avant-garde works that do not engage with identity, or important feminist discourses relating to the domestic or the personal, essentially become invisible’ (2008a:218). Tait’s work is often left out of the dominant narrative of Scottish cinema because her interest in the material qualities of film was a more personal mode of expression. Therefore, the recovery of a filmmaker like Margaret Tait shows just how limiting the initial construction of Scottish cinema was,

not just in terms of gender but also in filmmaking practice and concerns, at the same time it broadens our definition to be more inclusive of these things.

The latter approach, which looks at how representation is gendered, has broadened our understanding of Scottish film in that it reveals shifting identities. Rural Scotland, for example, has traditionally been aligned with the female, whereas industrialised urban areas are gendered male. Changes in the global economy, however, have resulted in a reimagining of these spaces. For Jane Sillars and Myra Macdonald, this shift in gendering spaces signals

a Scotland of diverse identities opening up to the outside, but informed by a distinctive sense of place and cultural history. They show a receptiveness to the possibility of change and also some ways in which developing femininities and masculinities might attempt a fresh accommodation with the past (2008:197).

While Scottish cinema may suggest a shift from the homogeneous nation to one characterised by diversity and globally interconnected identities, it is not necessarily a destabilising shift because it does not represent a complete break from traditional forms of identity. Identities are adaptable: they may alter given changing historical circumstance, but there is nevertheless something—the past—that remains a constant with which these emergent identities can draw upon. What this suggests, then, is that, despite increasingly globalised and diversified production and cultural contexts, some sense of a stable idea of nation remains. Therefore, rather than looking beyond the nation it is perhaps more important to ask how emergent identities interact with traditional identities—the national included.

Conclusion

It may seem like a massive conceptual shift for the study of Scottish cinema to go from being so preoccupied with negative representation in its early days to now questioning

the stability of those identities being represented. The impetus, however, for such a development was already present in the subtle differences discernible between the contributors to *Scotch Reels*. Certain key issues have remained constant in Scottish cinema studies. Firstly, representation remains crucial, although it has evolved from a concern over negative images, to the reclamation of those images, to the realisation that representation is neither good nor bad. Secondly, the production context of Scottish films has gained an increasing amount of importance, especially as it appears as if the national is losing relevance.

One thing that has been fairly constant is that most of the scholars who have engaged with this subject have been Scottish or British. However, examining Scottish cinema from an external perspective offers certain insights that are not immediately obvious from within. For one thing, the question of good versus bad representation is already a moot point as there is no cultural investment in it. Representation is just representation; already positioned on the outside, it makes it all the more obvious to ask who is doing the constructing of Scotland. For another thing, the outsider's perspective allows us to see clearly the continued importance of the national. From the inside, industrial conditions and the diversifying of identities both above and below the national level have made it seem as if questions of nation are becoming less relevant. But, as an outsider, noticeable differences in national identity remain, especially as we continue to ask what makes 'them' not 'us'.

There is no denying that co-productions and emerging global and local identities have become essential elements of Scottish cinema, we need to, as Jonathan Murray has recently suggested, study these alongside the national. Though the world may seem at times a more interconnected place, and at others an increasingly fragmented one, we are still very much situated within the paradox of the nation. When considering co-production, we look at the interaction of two nations, and even if talking about cinema in a regional context, we construct a region as a group of nations with a common identity.

Furthermore, though ‘Scottish’ has become one of many identities from which people can choose, we do not have unlimited choice in our identities. Many of these are framed by the nation. In fact, many of the emergent identities could be said to be banal national identities: variations on global identities, they are shaped by the everyday experience of a specific nation. Part of the problem is that critics have tried to find new terms to describe the current production climate, when what has really happened is a shift in the way we understand nations. No longer regarded as homogeneous and fixed, nations are increasingly seen as plural or even fluid entities. National identities are equally porous, they take in and adapt to a changing world, but there is something of a basic framework that remains constant.

It should be noted that nations have not suddenly *become* heterogeneous and interconnected; it is our perception of them that has changed. Perhaps such a heavy emphasis on production context in Scottish cinema studies has become over-historicised. If Scottish cinema has been dependent in some ways on outside funding since long before devolution, then why is it only now that the national context seems to lose its relevance? I would suggest that even for a film such as *Local Hero* we can ask questions of Scottish films that trouble their national identity, including but also beyond the matter of Scottishness versus Britishness. These earlier films are not *just* read at the level of national allegory; they present multiple readings for audiences at different levels—national, but also sub- and supranational. Likewise, more recent films which are said to deal more with globalised and localised concerns also can be read in a national context, the national as the site where the global meets the local.

Of course, recent political developments lend the idea of a Scottish national cinema a greater immediacy. In light of the results of both the Independence Referendum and the 2015 General Election, asking what it means to be Scottish has taken on a greater relevancy. Scottish cinema undoubtedly is important not only as a

means of showing the issues facing small nations, but also in the traditional sense of a nation constructing a cohesive image of its self.

Chapter Three

From Local Heroes to Highlanders: Fantasy Scotlands of the 1980s

Introduction

As he accepted the Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay for *Chariots of Fire* (1981), Colin Welland declared that ‘The British are coming!’ Welland’s acceptance speech had been taken as a heralding in of a 1980s British cinema revival. Though box office figures were, due to the rise of home video, in decline, and both the dissolution of the National Film Finance Corporation and the removal of the Eady Levy⁹ in 1985 caused some alarm about the future of British film funding, there was a great deal of optimism about British cinema during the 1980s, especially in the earlier part of the decade. For one thing, the independent film sector was bolstered by the arrival of Channel 4 in 1982 since the broadcaster commissioned the production of new feature films to be shown on the channel as well as having a potential cinema release. Channel 4 also supported British Screen, helped salvage the BFI Production Fund after the end of the Eady Levy and, through the Department of Independent Film and Video, provided support to film and video workshops. In addition, the Oscar success of *Chariots of Fire* heralded a wave of international critical and commercial successes for ‘quality’ British films, including the even greater success of Richard Attenborough’s *Gandhi* (1982) at the Academy Awards the following year. This combination of high-profile films and a re-invigorated independent scene suggested that British cinema was undergoing something of a renaissance in the 1980s.

⁹ The NFFC had supported the British film industry by giving money to distributors, while the Eady Levy was a tax on cinema tickets, the proceeds of which went to producers based on their box office returns.

At the same time British film was receiving international acclaim, an independent cinema in Scotland was also starting to emerge. Though this could be seen as a side-effect of a British revival, it can also be attributed to the cultural turn Scottish nationalism took after the failed devolution referendum of 1979. Scottish nationalism had shifted away from the political tone it had adopted since the discovery of North Sea oil in the 1960s. Consequently, in the 1980s, questions of Scottish national identity were explored more in the cultural sphere. It was in this climate, then, that film production in Scotland became more narrative cinema-based and less focused on the sponsored documentaries that had dominated it during the post-war decades. The Scottish Film Production Fund was established in 1982 to promote film production as a part of Scottish culture. With additional assistance from Channel Four¹⁰ and BBC Scotland, the SFPPF contributed to the making of documentaries, animation, student film projects, and features such as *Living Apart Together* (1983) and *Venus Peter* (1989) (Petrie 2000a:174). Channel Four also established several film and video workshops in Scotland (Petrie 2000a:129). There was also an interest in producing the more established form of television series like BBC Scotland's *Tutti Frutti* (1987) or STV's *Taggart* (1983-2010) in Scotland during the decade (Petrie 2000a:141-42). The production of narrative cinema and television in Scotland was receiving more institutional support in the 1980s than it had previously enjoyed.

Alongside this emergence of Scottish cinema is the beginning, with the publication of *Scotch Reels* in 1982, of Scottish cinema studies as an area of academic interest. A few of the films made in Scotland during the 1980s met with critical approval from scholars like Colin McArthur; for example, Murray Grigor's *Scotch Myths* (1982) deconstructs traditional modes of representation and thereby puts into practice, through its modernist techniques, the ideas formulated by the likes of

¹⁰ Channel Four's chief executive at the time, Jeremy Isaacs, was Scottish.

McArthur, and Bill Forsyth's early films *That Sinking Feeling* (1979) and *Gregory's Girl* (1980) appeared to offer an alternative form of representation of contemporary Scottish life. However, for Scottish film critics the extent to which the traditional representational strategies prevailed remained troubling: as McArthur describes, 'these powerful existing traditions of representation beckoned them [Scottish filmmakers] Circe-like and lured more than a few onto the rocks' (1982a:66). Instead of developing their own cinematic versions of Scotland, filmmakers were copying the representational strategies of dominant cinema. Furthermore, this meant that Scottish filmmakers had internalised what McArthur would later call the 'Scottish Discursive Unconscious', a discourse 'which constructs the Scots [...] as having an essential identity different from—indeed, in many respects the antithesis of—the Anglo-Saxon identity exemplified by (a certain class of) Englishmen and Americans' (2003a:8). For McArthur and other contributors to *Scotch Reels*—Cairns Craig, John Hill, John Caughie, for example—to use Scotch myths is to perpetuate an ideological structure that positions Scotland as 'backward' in that it has only a popular culture and lacks a highbrow arts culture.

Since the publication of *Scotch Reels*, other ways of understanding Scottish cinema, some of which are much more forgiving of the Scotch myths forms of representation, have emerged. One important development that occurred over the following decade was the focus on production context. In light of this, we can perhaps see the use of Scotch myths in these films as a means of establishing their national identity. Scotland's situation in the 1980s helps highlight a problem for emerging national cinemas: does one find alternative forms of representing the nation or keep replicating externally constructed ones? On the one hand, to find alternatives is to self-represent, to produce more positive images of the nation. On the other hand, the representations produced by others are more widely recognisable and commercial, acting as a 'brand' for the nation. Thus Forsyth found success with the different way he represented Scots in films like *Gregory's Girl*. But more traditional forms of

representation were still prevalent in dominant cinemas. Therefore, in this chapter, I will be examining three films from the 1980s which epitomise the way in which such representations continued to be produced and consumed. They are: *Highlander* (Russell Mulcahy, 1986), the first film of the high-concept action/fantasy franchise of the same name; Bill Forsyth's *Local Hero* (1983), which had a much bigger budget and more international scope than his two previous films; and *Restless Natives* (Michael Hoffman, 1985), a lower budget, commercially-oriented film that is often seen as an imitation of Forsyth's style. I will consider *how* we might understand these films as Scottish in two primary ways. First, I will analyse the way the films' Scottishness was received by contemporary reviewers, comparing the perception of their national provenance or identity in different English-speaking international markets. Second, I will look at how each of the films engages with traditional 'Scotch myths' forms of Scottish representation. To a varying extent, rather than merely reproducing the tropes of Tartanry and the Kailyard, all three films 'play' with these representations, though for differing uses, and thereby produce images of Scotland that are not *quite* as limiting as is often thought.

***Highlander*: '...a mishmash of synthetic mythology'**

The title of the 1986 film *Highlander* immediately would lead one to conclude that the film will have something to do with Scotland. But instead of a simple rehashing of tartan myths, *Highlander*'s relationship to the familiar discourses of Scottishness is more complex. The film concerns a group of immortal beings, of whom 'there can be only one', who must behead each other in a process known as 'the Quickening' after which the last one standing will receive 'the Prize': a connection to every life on the planet. One of these Immortals, Connor MacLeod (Christopher Lambert), the titular Highlander, first discovers his immortality when another Immortal, the evil Kurgan (Clancy Brown), wounds him in battle in sixteenth century Scotland. MacLeod is cast out of his clan,

and, in his exile, meets the Spanish Immortal Ramirez (Sean Connery) who has come not to kill him but to mentor him in the skills he needs and the responsibilities of being immortal. MacLeod's goal, then, is one of survival, but also of honour, of ensuring that the Prize will be won by someone who will use it for good. In present day New York City¹¹ the remaining Immortals gather for the Quickening, and MacLeod draws the attention of the police and Brenda Wyatt (Roxanne Hart), a weapons expert, after a confrontation between him and another Immortal. MacLeod subsequently falls for Brenda, and the Kurgan uses her to force him into a final confrontation, which MacLeod wins. Having attained the Prize, he and Brenda return to his native Highlands.

On the surface this story would appear to have little to do with familiar Scotch myths narratives. Moreover, made by American producers; an Australian director; British, French and American actors; and with British company Thorn EMI providing a budget of \$14 million, *Highlander* is an undeniably international production. The original story stemmed from Gregory Widen's UCLA thesis script, though producers Bill Panzer and Peter Davis brought in Peter Bellwood and Larry Ferguson to work on the screenplay (Ismail 1985:13). Director Russell Mulcahy had made one feature film before, the unsuccessful Australian production *Razorback* (1983), though he was better known for directing iconic music videos, including Duran Duran's 'Hungry Like the Wolf' and 'Rio' and the video aired as MTV's launch, The Buggles's 'Video Killed the Radio Star'. Indeed, Mulcahy's video aesthetic, combined with a soundtrack by rock band Queen, clearly relates *Highlander* to the world of MTV. In the film Mulcahy plays with dissolves, flashbacks, and other cinematic techniques as style for style's sake. Through its emphasis on surface over depth, the film can therefore be related to the music video and advertising in general, as both those media rely on the surface image to

¹¹ Only two week's shooting took place in New York City, so London provides the locations for most of the scenes set there (Newport 1985:29).

push the product. *Highlander*'s play with surface qualities is also an example of the aesthetics of postmodernism.

Many different critics have offered definitions of postmodernism. Jurgen Habermas, for one, sees modernity as progressive and postmodernism as reactionary. He defines modernity as that which 'revolts against the normalizing functions of tradition; modernity lives on the experience of rebelling against all that is normative' (Habermas 1983:5) and criticises postmodernisms for on the one hand, being too destabilising (Habermas 1983:11). For Jean Baudrillard, the proliferation of communications collapses space and time, resulting in a schizophrenic postmodern subject (Baudrillard 1983:132-33)¹². However, according to Frederic Jameson, one of the key features of postmodernism

[...] is the effacement in it of some key boundaries or separations, most notably the erosion of the older distinction between high and low culture and so-called mass or popular culture. This is perhaps the most distressing development of all from an academic standpoint, which has traditionally had a vested interest in preserving a realm of high or elite culture against the surrounding environment of philistinism, of schlock and kitsch, of TV series and *Reader's Digest* culture, and in transmitting difficult and complex skills of reading, listening and seeing to its initiates. But many of the newer postmodernisms have been fascinated precisely by that whole landscape of advertising and motels, of the Las Vegas strip, of the late show and Grade-B Hollywood film, of so-called paraliterature with its airport paperback categories of the gothic and the romance, the popular biography, the murder mystery and the science fiction or fantasy novel. They no longer 'quote' such 'texts' as a Joyce might have done, or a Mahler; they

¹² As will be discussed later, Frederic Jameson also conceptualises postmodernism's linguistic breakdown between signifier and referent as schizophrenic.

incorporated them, to the point where the line between high art and commercial forms seems increasingly difficult to draw (1983:112).

Postmodernism, then, adopts lowbrow artforms, including advertising, in pastiche due to, on the one hand, the breakdown of ‘the ideology of the unique self’, and, on the other, the impossibility of creating something new (Jameson 1983:115). In its use of lowbrow art forms—music videos, but also the popular literature of Tartanry—*Highlander* fits Jameson’s definition of postmodernism.

In terms of critical reception to the film, British reviewers tended to react negatively to *Highlander*’s postmodern qualities, criticising it for having a great deal of style but very little substance. Several reviewers also emphasise the film’s genre cues over its representations of Scottishness. For example, both Tim Pulleine of *Monthly Film Bulletin* and David Robinson of *The Times* comment on Mulcahy’s video background; the former comparing the film to *The Terminator* in that it ‘crosses its *fantastique* premise [...] with the elements of an urban thriller’ (1986a:236), and adds that it also shares much in common with the swashbuckling films of Errol Flynn. Robinson places much more emphasis on the film as spectacle, and while he dismisses the story as having ‘little rhyme or reason’, Robinson says that ‘the photography [...] is spectacular and the special effects [...] are astonishing and faultless’ (1986). His emphasis on the spectacle of the film’s cinematography and especially its visual effects suggests a connection to other effects driven action and science-fiction/fantasy films of the 1980s from *The Dark Crystal* (1982) to *Aliens* (1986).

Similar reactions can be found in the North American press. Both Walter Goodman of *The New York Times* and Jay Scott of Canada’s *The Globe and Mail* invoke Mulcahy’s background directing music videos; Goodman connects the film to MTV, saying ‘it should surprise nobody if excerpts appear on the music video channel’ (1986:12e) Genre is again a key focus; *Variety* noting that ‘Russell Mulcahy can’t seem to decide from one scene to the next whether he’s making a sci-fi, thriller, horror, music

video or romance—end result is a mishmash’ (Brit 1986:16). As with Pulleine, Scott and Paul Attanasio of *The Washington Post* compare *Highlander* to *The Terminator*; for Attanasio, the comparison only serves to illustrate how much Mulcahy relies on ‘technique for technique’s sake’ (1986:B9). Compared to the British reviewers, the North American critics tend to be even more negative in their assessment of the film’s stylistic qualities, perhaps due to the fact that 20th Century Fox, the film’s American distributor, recut it. For Goodman, *Highlander* is ‘a cumbersome tale told with noise and flash’ (1986:12e), while Scott finds that ‘Mulcahy’s technique is all over the place [...] *Highlander*’s flashy style is the cinematic equivalent of a Las Vegas chorus line: always kicking’ (1986:C9).

Reviewers of *Highlander* both in and outside of Britain therefore seem to view the film in the international context of genres. Moreover, their emphasis on the music video aesthetics suggests an association with contemporary global visual culture rather than invoking any nation-specific issues of representation. In the North American press, there is some interest shown in cultural difference, but this mainly revolves around the issue of accents. While Scott puzzles at the contradiction between Sean Connery’s burr and the supposed Spanish origins of his character (1986:C9), most of the comments made are about Lambert’s lack of a Scottish accent. For example, Walter Goodman says that he sounds like he’s using a ‘vaguely Eastern European accent’ (1986:12e). They are commenting on a missing expected difference.

The emphasis on genre and style over questions of cultural identity or specificity would suggest that most of these reviewers saw *Highlander* in terms of its postmodernity. Pulleine suggests that ‘the underlying premise is rather vague and arbitrary, so that the movie lacks any real dimension of pop-mythology’ (1986:34), while Robinson refers to ‘a mishmash of synthetic mythology’ (1986). Though the elevation of style over substance is a charge levelled at postmodernism in general, Robinson’s phrasing here is telling. For the Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm,

'tradition' is invented when the practices of the past are adapted for the present to create a sense of continuity (1984:1). He explains:

[...] the peculiarity of 'invented' traditions is that the continuity with it is largely factitious. In short, they are responses to novel situations which take the form of reference to old situations, or which establish their own past by quasi-obligatory repetition. It is the contrast between the constant change and innovation of the modern world and the attempt to structure at least some parts of social life within it as unchanging and invariant, that makes the 'invention of tradition' so interesting for historians of the past two centuries (Hobsbawm 1984:2).

The continuity offered by tradition is disingenuous as it is more about the present seeking something in the past. Traditions are invented when

[...] a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which 'old' traditions had been designed, producing new ones to which they were not applicable, or when such old traditions and their institutional carriers and promulgators no longer prove sufficiently adaptable and flexible, or are otherwise eliminated: in short, when there are sufficiently large and rapid changes on the demand or the supply side (Hobsbawm 1984:4-5).

They are a way of compensating for social instability. Hugh Trevor-Roper, in his chronicle of how Lowland Scotland came to adopt Highland culture included in a collection on invented traditions edited by Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, provides an example of how one Scottish tradition came to be invented. According to Trevor-Roper:

The creation of an independent Highland tradition, and the imposition of that new tradition, with its outward badges, on the whole Scottish nation, was the work of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It occurred in three stages. First, there was the cultural revolt against Ireland: the

usurpation of Irish culture and the re-writing of early Scottish history, culminating in the insolent claim that Scotland—Celtic Scotland—was the ‘mother nation’ and Ireland the cultural dependency. Secondly, there was the artificial creating of new Highland traditions, presented as ancient, original and distinctive. Thirdly, there was the process by which these new traditions were offered to, and adopted by, historic Lowland Scotland [...] (1984:16)

After the forged Ossian poems had established a distinct folk culture for the Highlands, one of the ways it was expressed was through dress (Trevor-Roper 1984:18). Trevor-Roper claims the kilt in its modern form was an adaptation of Highland costume by an English industrialist (1984:22), but its modern usage is linked to ‘the romantic movement, the cult of the noble savage whom civilization threatened to destroy. Before 1745 the Highlanders had been despised as idle predatory barbarians, but then came to be feared as dangerous rebels. But after 1746, when their distinct society crumbled so easily, they combined the romance of a primitive people with the charm of an endangered species’ (Trevor-Roper 1984:25). The kilt, then, was adopted by middle to upper class Lowlanders as a means of connecting themselves to ‘authentic’ Highland culture and thereby establishing themselves in continuity with the romanticised past.

Though for Hobsbawm and Trevor-Roper tradition is invented, through the purpose of establishing continuity, a basis in history and culture continues to exist. A ‘synthetic mythology’ by contrast has no continuity as there is no past with which it attempts to connect the present. It is wholly invented, unmoored of structure. While *Highlander* is not without cultural context, it is unrelated to the culture from which it appears to borrow so much. Scotland becomes just another part of the mix. According to Jameson, another key feature of postmodernism is its schizophrenia. This schizophrenia is defined in terms of the linguistic relationship between signifier and referent:

[...] the signifier in isolation becomes ever more material—or, better still—*literal*—ever more vivid in sensory ways, whether the new experience is attractive or terrifying. We can show the same thing in the realm of language: what the schizophrenic breakdown of language does to the individual words that remain behind is to reorient the subject or the speaker to a more literalizing attention towards those words. Again, in normal speech, we try to see through the materiality of words (their strange sounds and printed appearance, my voice timbre and peculiar accent, and so forth) towards their meaning. As meaning is lost, the materiality of words becomes obsessive, as is the case when children repeat a word over and over again until its sense is lost and it becomes an incomprehensible incantation. [...] a signifier that has lost its signified has thereby been transformed into an image (Jameson 1983:120).

In postmodernism, the connection between the signifier to its referent is lost, leaving floating signifiers. Thus in the case of *Highlander*, while the signs of Scottishness may be present, the links to the culture to which they refer are broken. Because of this breakdown in the connection between signifier and referent, *Highlander* bares more resemblance to 1980s sci-fi fantasy films such as *Blade Runner* (1982) or *The Terminator* (1984) rather than to previous cinematic versions of Tartanry like *Brigadoon* (1954) or the various retellings of *Rob Roy*.

Though the final battle between MacLeod and the Kurgan takes place in modern day New York, much of the film's exposition is provided through flashbacks to MacLeod's past, most of which are set in Scotland. For Cairns Craig, the historical setting of Sir Walter Scott's novels portray a Scotland that is essentially out of history: removed from an understanding of History as progress, they offer counter-narratives to it (1996:81). Here, though, those scenes which take place in Scotland are not only set in the past, as flashbacks, they are also outside the forward progression of the narrative.

The structure of *Highlander*'s narrative, then, seems to reinforce Tartanry's structural function of portraying Scotland as a place locked out of time.

McArthur argues that these kinds of representation 'have been wholly inadequate for dealing with the historical and contemporary reality of Scotland' (1982a:66), but we need not necessarily see this as wholly negative. For Cairns Craig, being removed from the course of History as progress means that Scotland functions as a space in which alternatives can be explored. The first flashback in *Highlander* opens with a shot of the iconic Eilean Donan Castle¹³, a restored ruin often featured in the media as a place marker for Scotland. The castle is surrounded by the mists as kilted warriors head into battle, thereby encompassing nearly every visual stereotype of Scotland and establishing the nation as a mystical fantasy space from which an immortal being could conceivably spring. This need not be a reductive or regressive depiction, however. For Duncan Petrie, such representations of the Jacobite past can be seen as 'a full-blown celebration of myth, fantasy and overt display [...] by revelling in the popular spectacle of inauthenticity these mythical constructions of Scotland [...] directly engage a wide range of audience pleasures, emotions and fantasies' (2000a:70). As with melodrama, Tartanry provides spectatorial pleasure in that the viewer's attention can be drawn to excesses of display, in this case, the way the male body is put on display (Petrie 2000:67). *Highlander*, with its Queen soundtrack and its extensive action sequences, certainly seems to present itself as a hyper-masculine film. Yet the male body is continually put on display for the spectator's pleasure. Attention is called to the body through excesses of dress—although MacLeod's kilt looks rather plain in comparison to the flamboyant Spanish garb of Ramirez and the Kurgan's fur and bone and, later, punk fashions and body modifications. The Kurgan's modifications—shaving his head and

¹³ Eilean Donan Castle frequently appears in films, from those explicitly linked to Scotland like *Bonnie Prince Charlie* (1948), *The Master of Ballantrae* (1953) and *Loch Ness* (1996), as well as others such as *Entrapment* (1999) and *The World Is Not Enough* (1999). It also featured in a long-running BBC One ident.

piercing his neck with safety pins—makes us uncomfortably aware of his body. In addition, the pleasure offered by action in the film is an extension of this male display. It is fitting that swords should be the weapon of choice because swordplay requires a certain level of physical prowess and, on film, a great deal of choreography and movement. Of course, in this emphasis on the male body, *Highlander* can be linked to other 1980s action movies that also put masculinity on display—Sylvester Stallone in the *Rambo* films (1982, 1985, 1988), Bruce Willis in *Die Hard* (1988) and Arnold Schwarzenegger in *The Terminator* and the *Conan* films (1981, 1984), for example. It is through the pleasures of *Highlander*'s excesses, then, whether traditional excesses of Tartantry or those offered by overt stylistics and genre expectations, that the film offers if not an alternative to 'reductive' modes of representation, then at least a redeemable version of these.

The postmodern way in which *Highlander* plays with signifiers of Scottishness may provide the viewer with a source of pleasure, but it also troubles the authenticity of Scottish identity. It uses the tropes associated with Tartantry to create something new—David Robinson's 'synthetic mythology'. Just as this mythology is ungrounded, so too is the question of national identity. There is a shot toward the middle of the film in which present-day MacLeod looks at a framed nineteenth century print of a Highlander owned by Brenda. MacLeod scoffs at this traditional representation of Scottishness, as if the Romantic Highlander doesn't fit his experience. The implication, then, is that what Tartantry offers is not a real Scottish identity. But then, what is? Tartantry is the representational strategy referenced by the film, but to have MacLeod negate the very representation of Scotland used by the film is to leave 'Scottish' undefined, a set of signifiers with no referent. What *Highlander* therefore does offer is a destabilised national identity.

As has been discussed above, *Highlander*'s reception as postmodern and a genre film suggests that it was seen more in the context of global cinema trends than on terms

of the nationally specific. Casting further muddles the question of identity in the film. MacLeod is played by American-born French actor Christopher Lambert. Though Lambert is perhaps now best known for his role in the *Highlander* franchise, he has appeared in many French productions, and at the time he would have been recognised by English-language audiences as Tarzan from the film *Greystoke* (1984). Although we might *now* think of Lambert as *the* Highlander, before *Highlander*'s release, audiences would have had no particular reason to associate him with Scotland, and, furthermore, his own national identity is not clear cut, both in terms of his background, and in that he became known playing a character raised by apes—someone without a rooted identity.

Lambert's complicated national identity compliments the character he plays in *Highlander*. MacLeod may be Scottish, but he is a Scot in exile, first from his clan, then, as we see him living in present day New York, from his homeland. Moreover, Lambert's vocal performance in the film doesn't sound recognisably Scottish. Though the character fits many stereotypes of Scottish masculinity, Lambert's accent is markedly *not* a recognisably Scottish one. American viewers especially seemed to note this lack of a 'real' Scottish accent; according to Goodman, Lambert uses a 'vaguely Eastern European accent' (1986:12e), and Attanasio says that he 'winds up sounding like Zbigniew Brzezinski' (1986:B9). Lambert's lack of a recognisably Scottish accent was received abroad as an undermining of audience expectations of what a Scot should sound like. However, as an exile, it becomes difficult to assign national identity to MacLeod. Though he originates from Scotland, as he does not still live there, there are other national contexts in which he could be placed. Interviewed in *Starlog*, Lambert admits that he had been coached to get his accent to sound unrecognisable to give MacLeod a sense of having lived all over the world (qtd. in Pirani 1986:30). Therefore, the vague accent Lambert uses is appropriate for the character: his identity is as hard to place as his speech.

By contrast, however untraceable Lambert's accent, there is one actor in the film whose voice is as recognisable as it is recognisably Scottish: Sean Connery. As the first actor to play James Bond, Connery became an international superstar, but his former body-builder's physicality and the urbane sexuality he brought to the role differentiated him from other British leading men at the time. For Andrew Spicer, Connery is a very un-English figure; he is an international star more along the lines of an American action hero (2001:220). There is, of course, another way in which Connery is markedly not English. His Scottishness is an important part of his star persona. Connery uses his fame to promote Scotland. An ardent Scottish nationalist, Connery used his payment for *Diamonds Are Forever* to establish The Scottish International Education Trust (Spicer 2001:222), and he has been involved to a small degree with Scottish filmmaking, including the documentaries *The Bowler and the Bunnet* (1967), which he directed for STV, and Murray Grigor's *Sean Connery's Edinburgh* (1982). A viewer may therefore bring to his films extra textual knowledge about his political and philanthropic interest in Scotland.

Connery's Scottishness is apparent on-screen as well. For one thing, according to Spicer, the control his production company Fountainbridge Films, named after the street in Edinburgh where he was brought up, gave him in the later stages of his career made it so that 'the heavy underscoring of his characters' flinty Scottish independence is surely deliberate' (2001:228). Whether specifically Scottish or not, Connery has enough clout to give the characters he plays 'Scottish' characteristics. For another thing, his masculinity fits in with the stereotype of the virile Scotsman: John Millar describes *The Name of the Rose* as presenting Connery his greatest acting challenge because 'he played a virgin' (1990:163). Most importantly, though, is Connery's accent, which not only marks him as Scottish, but arguably marks every character he plays as Scottish as well. The actor rather notoriously does not disguise his accent; according to Millar, 'When you cast Sean Connery in a movie that's exactly what you get. [...] With some actors it

might matter, or even irritate, that the accent always remains the same. With Connery it is of no consequence' (1990:167). As part of his persona, it is expected, then, that Connery speak in his normal voice and accent; without it, audiences' expectations would not be met. He would sound very strange indeed.

It may seem strange, then, in a film that uses so many signifiers of Scottishness, to cast Connery not as MacLeod's fellow Scotsman but as his mentor Ramirez, a Japanese sword-wielding Spaniard who claims to be Egyptian. Yet this is all part of *Highlander's* postmodern play with identity. Connery's Scottishness remains apparent on the screen and contrasts with that performed by Lambert. In a scene at the beginning of MacLeod's training, he and Ramirez are in a boat on a lake. Ramirez is trying to teach MacLeod balance, and, frustrated by the lesson, MacLeod calls him a 'stupid haggis'. Ramirez asks him what a haggis is and is revolted by the explanation. There is an element of humour in this scene because, for Sean Connery of all people not to know what haggis is seems almost ludicrous. Connery's role reversal—he is meant to be Spanish, dressed in a way that marks him as feminine, not masculine, and serves as a mentor, not the hero—becomes almost a joke. Millar captions a still from the film 'Highlander high camp' (1990:169), and, indeed, it is as if Connery is a Scotsman in drag. He is, as MacLeod later calls him, an 'overdressed haggis'. National identity, therefore, becomes a performance. MacLeod is Scottish, but not really, whereas Ramirez is Scottish though he is not supposed to be. Because it can be claimed without any connection to the nation, identity thus becomes destabilised.

Cut off from their cultural referent, signifiers of Scottishness in *Highlander* cannot create a sense of stable identity. Though Connery is widely recognised as a Scotsman, there are other contexts in which to understand his nationality. For one thing, for tax reasons, he has not lived in Britain in decades and so is no longer a resident of the nation with which he is popularly associated. For another thing, the same things that for Spicer make Connery non-British also make him non-Scottish: he is an international

figure. As an international movie star, he is a figure that goes beyond the national. And as with Lambert's portrayal of MacLeod, a more nuanced understanding of Connery's national identity compliments the character he plays. Ramirez, too, is in exile from his native time and place. 'We are the same, MacLeod,' Ramirez says to MacLeod when first they meet. 'We are brothers!' They are both wanderers, unmoored from their native culture and forced to try on a variety of different identities. Through its play with traditional signifiers of Scottishness, *Highlander* therefore destabilises any culturally grounded sense of the national.

***Local Hero*: '...the dread cliché of the pawky Scot' or an Alternative Scottish Representation?**

Local Hero represents a different mode of filmmaking to *Highlander*. Writer/director Bill Forsyth briefly attended the National Film and Television School in Beaconsfield before he began his career making sponsored documentaries back home in Scotland. As he subsequently graduated to narrative features—beginning with the no-budget experiment of *That Sinking Feeling*, then moving on to the low-budget *Gregory's Girl* and finally on to the £2 million *Local Hero*—his films became noted for their distinctive sense of humour—quirky with an underlying seriousness—and approach to storytelling. Allan Hunter describes Forsyth

[...] as an artist, not an entertainer. His relationship with film is [...] as an individual exploring a means of expression to which he has grown passionately devoted. His healthy disinterest in the mythology of the film industry, his disdain for the increasingly prevalent creation-by-committee process and refusal to pander to anyone's sensibilities save his own, place him in the modest ranks of filmmaking mavericks who dream in celluloid (1990:151).

In other words, Forsyth is an auteur, an ascription which places him in the context of international art cinema. This, however, does not negate the ways in which he can also be understood in a national context. Forsyth was considered to be a key figure in the British cinema renaissance of the early 1980s, one of two filmmakers who for Nick Roddick ‘represent[ed] by far the best hope for the reviving British film industry’ (1985:109); furthermore ‘the films of Bill Forsyth [...] have provided many of the brightest moment of the renaissance’ (1985:110). For John Hill, Forsyth’s filmmaking defines British cinema of the 1980s:

the ‘Britishness’ of the British cinema in the 1980s was neither unitary nor agreed but depended upon a growing sense of the multiple national, regional, and ethnic identifications which characterized life in Britain in this period. So while it is *Chariots of Fire* which is conventionally taken to be the landmark in the revival of British cinema, it may, in fact, have been *Gregory’s Girl* which was to prove the more reliable indicator of the way in which British filmmaking was moving (Hill 1999:244).

Precisely because Forsyth offers multiple ways of inhabiting Scottish identity, for Hill his films present a truer picture of life in Britain in the 1980s than does the unitary Englishness offered by *Chariots of Fire*.

However, Forsyth was not just a leading figure in the British film revival; he was also, for a time, thought of as a putative model what for a Scottish auteur might be. Indeed the only other example was provided by Bill Douglas, whose autobiographical *Trilogy* (1972, 1973, 1978) had been made through the auspices of the BFI Production Board. According to Colin McArthur, Forsyth ‘is a gifted Scottish film-maker whose two feature films, *That Sinking Feeling* [...] and *Gregory’s Girl* [...], have decidedly eschewed Tartantry/Kailyard and deployed discourses which are not maudlin but which related to aspects of the lived experiences of contemporary Scots’ (1982a:66). Self-financed for only a few thousand pounds, *That Sinking Feeling* told the story of

unemployed Glaswegian youths who steal sinks, whereas *Gregory's Girl*, which had received its £200,000 funding from a variety of national sources, including Scottish TV, is about a teenaged boy who falls in love with the only girl on the football team, but is clueless when it comes from dealing with women. Both films used actors from the Glasgow Youth Theatre. Forsyth's personal vision, then, offered alternative forms of representation than those of the 'Scotch myths' that had previously dominated Scottish filmmaking; they are Scottish because they are *not* Scottish: they pose alternatives to negative versions of Scotland that had previously appeared on screen, and moreover, they are alternatives that represent a more 'real' Scotland, one that is part of a contemporary world, not locked in the past. Forsyth, then, could have served as a model for Scottish filmmakers.

Local Hero can be firmly located in the context of the wider British cinema revival in which Roddick situates Forsyth. Initiated and produced by David Puttnam, who had previously won an Oscar for *Chariots of Fire*, and featuring Burt Lancaster in a supporting role as a Texas oil man, the film had a much higher international profile than any Forsyth had made previously. Tom Milne remarked that 'one would have little difficulty in guessing that this was Bill Forsyth's first venture into the big time from the way his script has been broadened for commercial consumption' (1983:87). This broadening comes in the way the film represents Scotland. Instead of continuing the 'alternative' strategies of representation offered by Forsyth's earlier films, *Local Hero* was seen by many as a return to the Kailyard tradition. The story is about Mac (Peter Riegert), a self-described 'Telex man' working for Houston-based Knox Oil, who is sent by his boss, the astrology-obsessed executive Felix Happer (Burt Lancaster) to not only buy the fictional Scottish coastal town of Ferness, but also to look out for anything unusual in the night skies. Mac and his Aberdeen-based assistant Danny Oldsen (Peter Capaldi) find the couthy locals resistant to Knox Oil's offer; however, Ferness's residents, led by inn keeper/notary/all-around fixer Gordon Urquhart (Denis Lawson),

are actually eager to sell and try to squeeze every penny they can out of the deal. While negotiations are delayed, Mac becomes more and more enchanted with the place (and Gordon's wife, played by Jennifer Black), and Oldsen chases after a marine biologist with webbed toes (Jenny Seagrove). When finally a sum is agreed upon that the villagers are happy with, the lone holdout is the old beachcomber Ben Knox (Fulton MacKay), who owns a key piece of coastline and refuses to move. Happer arrives to negotiate with him, but, sharing a love of the stars with Ben, he soon changes his mind and decides to build an observatory instead and, at Oldsen's suggestion, a marine research laboratory. Mac is sent back to Houston alone.

Local Hero therefore resembles films such as *Laxdale Hall* (1952) or *The Maggie* (1954), and it is for this that the film received much criticism. Milne explains: 'the dread cliché of the pawky Scot hangs over *Local Hero* [...] the film takes a retrograde step back into the cosy Ealing ethos of *Whisky Galore* and *The Maggie* [...] it slips even further back into the facile demagoguery of Capra' (1983:88). Roddick, while still finding the film entertaining, noted that its avoidance of regressive representations could not sustain itself throughout the whole film (1985:110). Even over decade later, McArthur would argue of the film that 'The chilling fact is [...] in its representation of Scotland, *Local Hero* is ideologically indistinguishable from the earlier films' (1994:119). John Caughie criticises the way press and publicity following the film promoted Forsyth as a 'local hero' himself. This is problematic because 'The cultivation of a "local boy" image for Bill Forsyth disarms criticism, inviting a celebration which easily wrong-foots any consideration of his film in terms of the ideologies and representations which it puts into play supports' (Caughie 1983:45). Because Forsyth is held up as an admirable Scottish figure, it suggests that one should not criticise the film for its representational strategy. Furthermore, this serves 'to divert attention away from the material conditions which are necessary to cultural growth by focussing attention

instead on the individual artist heroes' (Caughie 1983:46). Promoting Forsyth as an auteur turns the focus away from the actual problems that need to be addressed.

Certain aspects of *Local Hero*'s production did little to calm fears that Forsyth had stepped back into Kailyard territory. Though Forsyth directed, the initial idea for the story and the idea to model it off of Ealing comedies came from producer David Puttnam, as Forsyth told Hunter:

He [Puttnam] had hired a theatre and he showed me *Whisky Galore*, we didn't say anything, we just sat in the theatre and watched it. At the end we said that's very good and all that, and went our separate ways. That way he planted the seed [...] He really initiated the idea with *Whisky Galore*, which dealt with a small Scottish community and some eccentric event happening inside it, that was the basis of it. Because the oil thing is quite prominent the modern equivalent would be the oil industry (qtd. in Hunter 1983:15-17).

The English producer, then, could be said to have set the tone of the representational strategies the film uses.

Others who worked on the production seemed to see their experiences in sentimental terms. Production designer Roger Murray Leach for example explained to Hunter why he thought the production

[...] was infested with good spirits: 'I never realised why the Victorians romanticised Scotland, what exactly they were on about, now I do. I've never worked with a group within which there has been less friction. People have become enmeshed in the atmosphere of locations, I think the magical effect of Mac in the script happened to the whole unit, we've been buying books on birds and flowers and collecting sea shells' (qtd. in Hunter 1983:37).

Here Leach's description of his own experience filming in Scotland is situated within the discourses of Tartanry and Kailyard. And this parallel between story and production

carried over into the press. It was reported that, like Ferness's 'canny inhabitants' who realise the opportunity oil can provide, 'when David Puttnam's production descended on its chosen location north of Aberdeen¹⁴, to find some of the locals apparently out to take the "fillum" folk for everything they could' (Falk 1982:226). Here the real Scots involved in the film are associated with Scottish stereotypes.

Reviews of the film, too, seem to pick up on its essential 'couthiness.' For *The Herald* critic Lindsay Mackie, 'It does [...] paint a romantic picture, which may cause a frown among those who hate that kind of portrayal in Scotland, but', he adds, 'there's nothing exploitative about it' (1983:9). In London-based publications, however, this was seen negatively. As was discussed above, Tom Milne criticised the film as being regressive, and while offering a bit more of a positive review, Nick Roddick does add that 'Ultimately, however, the affirmation of the superiority of the traditional culture over the money-oriented one turns out to be rather twee, if not actually apologetic' (1983:138). American reviewers, too, seem to pick up on *Local Hero*'s relationship to older forms of Scottish representation, though are less judgemental. David Ansen of *Newsweek* is explicit about this relationship: "'Local Hero' often seems like a throwback to British comedies of the 40s and early '50s—movies like Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's lovely "I Know Where I'm Going" and Alexander Mackendrick's "Tight Little Island" [*Whiskey Galore!*] and "High and Dry" [*The Maggie*]' (1983:79). Pauline Kael says that it 'offers a special pleasure to those of us who grew up listening to the recording of Sir Harry Lauder singing "Roamin' in the Gloamin'.'" We finally have the chance to experience that Scottish form of entrancement when the gloaming—an opalescent twilight—is made visible to us; night is magical in this movie, as it should be' (1983:115). And in *The Washington Post*, Rita Kempley associates the film with 'Scotch myths' representations with phrases like 'magical as the

¹⁴ Penan in Aberdeenshire.

Misty Isles', 'a wraith from the barrow' and 'lilting style' (1983:19). On the other hand, Andrew Sarris argues that *Local Hero* has thematic similarities to *Whisky Galore!* and *The Maggie*, but instead of emphasising Scottish stereotypes, he says that instead of expecting 'a series of cute highland flings and picturesque poses of facile antimaterialisms. With *Local Hero*, however, you must forget all your preconceptions, and prepare for a joyously grown-up, warm-hearted, and clear-headed meditation on the vagaries of contemporary existence' (1983:55). *The New York Times*'s Vincent Canby shies away from such comparisons, but he does note that 'the fact is that three of the best and most entertaining films [...] at the minute are from Great Britain [...] One might have been able to say "from England," expect that one of the three current offerings is "Local Hero" by Bill Forsyth, who is a Scottish director and Scots don't take kindly to being described as English. Old boundaries are to be respected' (1983:17a). But other than identifying the director's nationality, Canby does not describe what makes *Local Hero* Scottish; for him there is nevertheless something about the film that distinguishes it from other British films released at the time.

Most of these reviews also feature a strongly auteurist emphasis. Kael describes Forsyth as having 'invented his own form of poetic comedy. His style is far more personal and aberrant than that of the popular British comedies of the fifties [...]' Forsyth seems to go where impulse and instinct guide him; he's an entertainer-filmmaker who gives free play to his own sense of the ridiculous and his own sense of beauty' (1983:116-17). Others compare the film to Forsyth's two earlier films—*That Sinking Feeling* and *Gregory's Girl*—especially in terms of their humour. Gary Arnold of *The Washington Post* says that "'Local Hero" confirms the humorous promise shown last year' (1983:D1) by Forsyth's previous film. For Canby, "'Local Hero" is a more conventional work than "Gregory's Girl" though it still 'has the almost surreal appreciation for illogic that is one of the [its] delights' (1983:17a). Jay Scott is a bit more critical: 'The whimsicality that seemed effortless in *Gregory's Girl* is occasionally

forced here, and the repetition of uninspired gags [...] is an indication of an imagination on idle' (1983).

Furthermore, there are aspects of the production and promotion of the film that would suggest that *Local Hero* is not simply reproducing existing 'Scotch myths'. For one thing, Puttnam commissioned Mark Knopfler to write the score because, rather than using traditional folk sounds or sentimental orchestration, he wanted to give the film a distinctly contemporary feel (Hunter 1983:38-39). And Forsyth was able to put his own stamp on the film. Having seen *That Sinking Feeling*, Puttnam contacted Forsyth about the project because he wanted Forsyth's quirky sense of humour (Hunter 1983:13-15), and Forsyth was able to make changes to Puttnam's original idea that he felt necessary, for example taking emphasis away from the apparatus of the oil industry (Hunter 1983:15-17) because he 'saw it along the lines of a Scottish Beverly Hillbillies—what would happen to a small community when it suddenly became immensely rich' (Forsyth qtd. in Hunter 1983:87). Forsyth had room to focus on what he found interesting in the story: the human element. In addition, Christopher Meir notes that Scotch Myths stereotypes used in the film's promotion can be understood in terms of contemporary 'high concept' marketing (2009:193), and, furthermore, that its distribution pattern suggests that *Local Hero* could be understood in the context of art cinema. According to Meir, its marketing, along with that of the 2002 film *Young Adam*, 'attempted to situate them in *both* categories [art and genre], hoping to achieve a synergy of critical acclaim and mass appeal, attempting to generate a crossover critical and commercial success in international terms' (2009:200). This suggests two things: first, that the production was not committed to a limiting representational strategy, and second, that the way the film was promoted allowed audiences to approach it in a variety of ways. They didn't *only* have to understand it in terms of Scotch Myths representation.

Rather than merely perpetuating Scotch myths, then, Forsyth knowingly plays with them. For example, Mac and Oldsen fall for two women, Stella and Marina: the

stars and the sea. They therefore become quite literally enchanted by Scotland as a place. While Forsyth's works seem to frequently display a limited understanding of women as idealised creatures, we could also see this as him playing with this perception of himself. The over-the-top naming of Stella and Marina suggests an awareness of his shortcomings. It is through this kind of play that Forsyth transforms the 'negative' forms of representation into sources of pleasure. According to Jonathan Murray, *Local Hero* has 'a bifurcated form of viewer address' in that 'International audiences are offered pleasure through misrecognition; a domestic equivalent finds satisfaction through conscious awareness and avoidance of the same thing. A multifaceted understanding of national stereotypes, a cultural and ideological phenomenon variously resonant, resistible and revenue-raising, thus emerges' (2011:78). On one level, non-Scots can enjoy the film's representation of Scotland at face value, but on another level, those who recognise the Scottish stereotypes *as stereotypes* can enjoy the way Forsyth renders them transparent. Forsyth uses stereotypes to both make the film internationally marketable and to undercut this form of representation (Murray 2011:79). Forsyth's play with traditional modes of representation of Scotland keep *Local Hero* from being a backward step in what would otherwise be considered a move toward more progressive images of Scotland.

There are other ways to understand the representation of Scotland in *Local Hero*. Scotland is often constructed as a far-away, peripheral space wherein, according to Petrie, 'a range of fantasies, desires and anxieties can be explored and expressed' (Petrie 2000a:32). The Scotland of *Local Hero* seems to fit with this analysis of the Kailyard tradition; the village of Ferness—so remote that it is an overnight journey from Aberdeen—is located far from the film's opening city of Houston, which is depicted as a centre of industry and commerce. Located on the west coast of Scotland and far enough north to see the aurora borealis, Ferness seems almost the end of the world, if not another world entirely. Mac and Oldsen are waylaid by dense fog on their drive to the

village, which brings to mind the image of a Brigadoon rising out of the mist. Furthermore, it is a place unusually in touch with nature. Mac is sent there partially to keep an eye on the stars for Happer, his boss, as he says it is a particularly good place for it, and as has been mentioned above, the two featured female characters with whom Mac and Oldsen become enchanted, evoke the heavens and the sea. In the latter case, the enchantment is almost literal as Marina, with her webbed toes, is a human mermaid. And it is this enchantment of place that allows for transformation to occur. Happer's obsession with astrology leads him to connect with Ben Knox, the old beachcomber, and change his mind about destroying the beach, while Mac, through his growing admiration for the locals and the scenery, becomes less and less of the 'Telex man' he was at the beginning of the film. Moving them far from the metropolitan centre gives the characters the sort of 'organic' experience that would only be possible in a land out of touch with the modern world.

However, for earlier films like *I Know Where I'm Going!* or *The Maggie* the desires and fears being explored are those of the metropolis, but, as Scottish cinema became more autonomous, it could use Scotland as a peripheral space to explore its own fantasies as well. It is significant that the oil industry is central to *Local Hero*; the discovery of North Sea oil in the 1960s meant the possibility of Scottish financial independence, and so spurred on the growth of political nationalism in that and the following decade. The film presents a dilemma: the townsfolk will, on the one hand, gain financially, but on the other hand, in selling the town and beach they will lose their connection to tradition.

In addition to tackling contemporary Scottish problems, *Local Hero* shares in *Highlander*'s postmodern moment in that both films play with the traditional signifiers of Scottishness and destabilise national identity in the process. Roddick compares the use of Scotch myths in *Local Hero* to that of earlier films: 'While *Whisky Galore!* could still make contact with a genuine sense of traditional community, *Local Hero* can only

do so self-consciously; no one seems more aware of the roles that are being played than the inhabitants of the village of Ferness' (Roddick 1983:138). The Scottishness in and of the film, then, is performed because one can no longer make claims to any sense of authenticity. However, rather than simply suggesting the inauthenticity of a Scottish identity, Forsyth's destabilisation of national identity is more productive. According to Murray, the recurring jokes about names suggest that the film has 'a sophisticated and knowing engagement with identity politics' (2011:76):

Such apparently inconsequential comic details make the point that public faces which individuals, institutions and communities present to the outside world are not necessarily fixed or singular. Neither are they reliable guides to whatever underlying authentic selves their owners may possess. If *Local Hero* presents—as the Ferness villagers do to Mac—a stereotypical Scottish identity designed for credulous international consumption, this is no more than a paint job. The film and its characters show that there is more than one way to be 'Scottish' and more than one reason for choosing to appear so in different ways and at different times (Murray 2011:77).

Unlike in *Highlander*, for which Scottishness is ultimately a set of empty signifiers, in *Local Hero* we are offered a variety of more tangible Scottish identities.

The Scotland Forsyth constructs in the film is a diverse but inclusive community. In addition to the 'traditional' couthy locals of a remote Scottish village, there are number of punks seen lurking on the edges of the population. This suggests a connection to fashion trends and global youth culture; furthermore, that one of them is played by *Gregory's Girl's* John Gordon Sinclair is a reminder of that film's contemporary milieu, but also of its alternative form of Scottish representation. These punks, though, are the ones who provide the mostly traditional music at the ceilidh put on for Mac's benefit, which suggests that in Ferness, and, by extension, Forsyth's Scotland, traditional and contemporary coexist. It is an internationally inclusive

community as well. Rev MacPherson came from Africa to preach to the Scots, while Soviet sailor Victor Pincochkin visits Ferness to play the stock market. The minister tells Mac that he came to Ferness when he was a student and ‘never got away again’. This suggests something of the traditional ‘enchantment’ Scotland supposedly holds over outsiders, but for Victor Scotland holds an entirely different appeal: capitalism. Victor’s relationship to Ferness is unsentimental. When Mac is starting to regret what he is doing to the townspeople, he reasons with him that ‘you can’t eat scenery’. Victor sees the place pragmatically; in this way, he is like the townspeople who see their home as a business opportunity. With the rather odd cast of characters that make up the community, then, *Local Hero* represents Scotland as a place that is open and inclusive of difference.

Mac, too, finds a place in the community. His name, short for MacIntyre, sounds Scottish, and, indeed, that is why his company sends him to Scotland. But the name was chosen by his Hungarian parents because they thought it sounded American. His name, therefore, has no real cultural connection, and Mac’s search for something meaningful becomes a longing for an identity. What he wants is a place in a community. After Mac and Gordon finalise the agreement to buy the town, the two of them, both intoxicated, leave the ceilidh for a drink in the bar. Mac expresses his desire to have Gordon’s life—all of it, wife included—and Gordon listens passively, even as Mac accidentally wastes quite a lot of Gordon’s beer, and eventually agrees to the swap. But it is not just that Mac *wants* to be Gordon; he would ‘make a good Gordon’. Though Mac’s clumsiness with the tap indicates that he still has a lot to learn about being Gordon, Gordon’s agreement suggests they are, to a certain extent, interchangeable.

As with *Highlander*, national identity in *Local Hero* is in flux, but, unlike the former, where the instability rendered identity empty, here the fluidity means that identity is adaptable. According to David McCrone, it is more appropriate to speak of Scottish *identities* than Scottish identity. He says that ‘There are, of course, competing

versions of Scotland, using distinctions which have a mythological base [...] At any point in history, for example, some versions of Scotland may win out over the others' (McCrone 2001:51). Though some may be more dominant at certain points in time, there is more than one way to identify as Scottish. Furthermore, 'Just as political sovereignty in the modern world is both layered and shared such that powers and responsibilities operate at different levels for different purposes [...] so people appear quite content to attach identity to these levels as and when it suits them. The issue is not which one you are, but which one you choose in different contexts and for different purposes' (McCrone 2001:192). The Scotland Forsyth constructs in *Local Hero* is reflective of McCrone's plural Scottish identities. In being inclusive of the traditional and the modern, the insider and the outsider, *Local Hero* presents a variety of ways of understanding Scottishness.

***Restless Natives*: 'The Scottish renaissance of whimsy'?**

According to Duncan Petrie,

The initial success of Bill Forsyth in the early 1980s had an almost immediate effect on Scottish film-making, marked by the appearance of a number of light comedies clearly attempting to replicate the same kind of wry humour. The perceived popular appeal of 'Forsythian comedy', is signified by the fact that the first examples [...] were backed by mainstream commercial producers [...] (2000a:157).

One of these first films in this trend, *Restless Natives* (Michael Hoffman, 1985), has much in common with Forsyth's first four features. The film concerns the exploits of two under-employed Edinburgh youths—Will (Vincent Friell), who loses his job cleaning parks, and Ronnie (Joe Mullaney), who works in a joke shop—who become latter-day highwaymen, riding a motorbike up into the Highlands where, disguised as a wolfman and a clown, they rob tour buses. The more robberies they commit, the more

famous they become: indeed, tourists *want* to be held-up by them. The plot thickens as a CIA agent (Ned Beatty) tries to track them down to recover his dignity, while Will starts seeing a hostess, Margot (Teri Lally), from one of their early robberies, and Ronnie falls in with Edinburgh's criminal element. Eventually, the pair allow themselves to be caught in order to rescue Margot from one of Ronnie's thug friends, but the Scottish police let them go so that their legend—and the tourism it generates—can live on.

The story is reminiscent of the contemporary urban settings of *Gregory's Girl*, *Comfort and Joy*, and especially *That Sinking Feeling*, which revolves around a rather unlikely and comic crime, while sharing *Local Hero*'s sense of romanticism and use of iconic Highland scenery. Furthermore, it shares, to a certain extent, *Local Hero*'s international ambitions. AIP & Co reported that 'although strictly a regional film' the producers 'hoped that it will do well throughout the UK and Europe' (Anon. 1984:19). The Lloyd's Bank National Screenwriting Competition (run by the Oxford Film Foundation) winning script was by Scottish writer Ninian Dunnett, and the film was produced by the Oxford Film Company with backing of £1.1 million from Thorn EMI. The film's associate producer was Paddy Higson, who had worked with Forsyth on *That Sinking Feeling*, *Gregory's Girl*, and *Comfort and Joy*. And like *Local Hero* with its Mark Knopfler soundtrack, *Restless Natives*'s music is a blend of traditional and pop sounds provided by local band Big Country. But as with Forsyth's film, there is an obvious American element to *Restless Natives*: it was directed by American-born Michael Hoffman, and stars Ned Beatty as the interfering CIA agent, a role not dissimilar to Burt Lancaster's in *Local Hero*. Finally, the film's sense of humour—from the joke shop gags the boys use in their hold-ups to Will's preoccupation with warts and a gang of blackmailing little girls—is very similar to that of Forsyth.

As with *Local Hero*, reviewers of *Restless Natives* immediately picked up on the film's relationship to traditional forms of Scottish representation. In *The Scotsman*,

Michael Wigan describes Will and Ronnie as a pair of ‘latter-day Rob Roys’ (1985:6). Clancy Sigal of *The Listener* further relates the film to the romanticism of Tartanry by saying that they are ‘chasing their Sir Walter Scott fantasy’ (1985:36). But in declaring ‘Ealing comedy lives again!’ (Sigal 1985:36) Sigal also connects *Restless Natives* to the Kailyard tradition as seen in films like *Whisky Galore!* Anne Billson in *Time Out* notes that the film is a ‘tartan-tinted fantasy world’ in which ‘the Scots are a race of faux-naifs with lilting accents’ (1985:43). American reviewers also invoke these traditional forms of representation. Vincent Canby notes that ‘The Scottish scenery is pretty’ (1986:4e); *Variety* agreed, saying that one of the best things about the film was ‘the fine locations in Edinburgh and the country around Fort William’ (Strat. 1985:16). James Harper of the *St. Petersburg Times* declares that the film will ‘leave you with such a sense of Highland pride that you’ll go around for several days talking to yourself in Scottish brogue’ (1987:1). David Sterritt also hones in on language as a marker of the film’s Scottishness, referring to it as a comedy with a ‘lilting’ accent (Sterritt 1986:31).

But what is far more present in both the domestic and international press is the way in which reviewers draw negative comparisons with Bill Forsyth’s films. Paul Taylor calls the film ‘forged Forsythery’ and adds that ‘there’s not concomitant attempt to transfer either the sharp and surreal humour of Forsyth’s Glaswegians or their embattled social context, to Edinburgh and its imaginatively stretched environs’ (1985:226). *Restless Natives* might share Forsyth’s sense of humour, but was regarded by many commentators as conspicuously lacking his substance. Canby is also critical, suggesting that *Restless Natives* ‘has something of the tone of a comedy by Bill Forsyth, though it’s very much in need of the common sense and inspired lunacy that separate Mr. Forsyth’s films [...] from those of would-be imitators’ (1986:4). Canadian Chris Dafoe gives perhaps the harshest criticism of all, saying that *Restless Natives* ‘wishes [...] to follow the path blazed by countryman Bill Forsyth, to be thought of as “charming” and “delightful.” Unfortunately, it tries so hard to endear itself to its

audience that it falls victim to an unfortunate tendency to trip over the latter' (1987). He explains the film's failings:

Forsyth's best efforts display an internal logic that makes the ridiculous seem plausible, even commonplace. It's a strange logic, tinged with magic and a sense of the absurdity of daily life, but he charms us into playing along with it. Hoffman, on the other hand, shoves a stack of oddities toward us, mumbles something about people being funny and grins in a manner he hopes we find endearing (Dafoe 1987).

Again, while Forsyth is held up as the genuine article, *Restless Natives* is declared the poor imitation.

Despite the negative aspects of this comparison, what this close association with Forsyth suggests is that the alternative forms of representation of Scotland and Scottishness provided by films like *Gregory's Girl* and *Local Hero* were starting to become more widely recognised as a distinctive marker of local product. While North American critics do not argue this outright, some of their British colleagues are more direct. Sigal refers to 'the Scottish renaissance of whimsy' (1985:36). It is not just any 'renaissance of whimsy', it is a specifically Scottish one. This suggests a perceived trend of a certain type of Scottish comedies. Taylor also mentions 'allusions to recent Caledonian comedies' (1985:226). That these critics see *Restless Natives* as fitting into, albeit poorly, a trend of Scottish films, suggests that, in Britain at least, a broadening of what is understood to be 'Scottish' on the screen is occurring. The 'whimsical' comedy of Forsyth and his imitators seems to be perceived as a Scottish trait. The films that followed in the wake of *Local Hero* may have copied its use of Tartanry and the Kailyard as a means of copying its success, but in copying Forsyth's humour along with it, they helped promote a version of Scottishness that goes beyond mythic structures. A similar comic sensibility can be discerned in other films of the period including *Heavenly Pursuits* (1986), written and directed by Forsyth's former associate, Charles

Gormley, and in *The Girl in the Picture* (1985), which features John Gordon Sinclair as a Glasgow photographer bearing an uncanny resemblance to Gregory Underwood (Petrie 2000:157-8).

Again, like *Local Hero*, *Restless Natives* makes use of Scotch myths. For one thing, as a comedy about two slightly oddball Scots robbing tourists, it gives us the situation, familiar from the filmic iteration of the Kailyard tradition, of the canny locals getting one up on the outsider. Though their thievery takes place in the Highlands, the rest of the action occurs in Edinburgh: hardly a rural outpost. But though Will and Ronnie might be from a contemporary urban centre, this hardly troubles our understanding of the film as in the Kailyard tradition. The title *Restless Natives* recalls the phrase ‘the natives are restless’ and its associated colonial implications. In this way Will and Ronnie are differentiated from those they rob. They are the ‘natives’, but those they steal from, the tourists, come from places—America most notably—outside Scotland. Their ability to travel implies they are worldly metropolitans, while, urban though they may be, the boys are stuck in Scotland. For another thing, *Restless Natives* plays with a Walter Scott romanticism. Though the boys do wrong, we nevertheless sympathise with them, and the film’s humour lets us know not to take their crime too seriously. Leaving one’s job to go rob tourists is made to seem like a lot of fun. Will falls in love with a stewardess they rob, and, having stolen more than they’ll ever need, the boys start redistributing their wealth. Riding around the Highlands disguised as a werewolf and a clown, Will and Ronnie become folk heroes, Highland rogues like Rob Roy MacGregor. In fact, several direct references are made—Margot, the stewardess, tells Will she thinks Rob Roy is better than Batman, and Will later recites a poem about him.¹⁵ Like *Local Hero*, *Restless Natives* constructs Scotland as both modern and traditional. But while for Forsyth this results in a pluralistic community, here the

¹⁵ Newspaper headlines in the film compare Will and Ronnie to Dick Turpin and Robin Hood—not Scottish figures, but romanticised outlaws in the same vein.

traditional is something to be exploited by the contemporary. *Restless Natives* participates in the 1980s discourse of private enterprise. We can see the Scottish tourist industry upon which Will and Ronnie prey much like English heritage: they both promote a certain 'traditional' image of their country that is highly marketable abroad. In this sense, the nation becomes a commodity that one can use to turn a profit. On the one hand, Will and Ronnie's exploits represent an opposition to this discourse in that they are fighting back against the tourism industry. Though probably not a political statement on their part, using a Margaret Thatcher mask on a pile of dung as a roadblock nevertheless adds a surface element of political satire to the film. And the hardened criminal that befriends Ronnie complains about how talk of enterprise and profit 'gets on my tits' because 'nobody gets their foot in anymore'. Even in the criminal sector, where one would expect an emphasis on profit, the film presents an opposition to this climate. On the other hand, robbing the tour buses could be seen as private enterprise; after all, it is a market that had been previously untapped. Will's father, though he does not know the identity of the robbers, praises the pair for having initiative. Therefore, there is a certain tension at play in *Restless Natives* between a Conservative-led British identity that praises private enterprise and a Scottish identity that sees itself as in opposition to this.

This tension seems to be mainly focused on tourism. In preying on tourists, nearly all of whom seem to be American, Will and Ronnie become modern day folk heroes. While Will and Ronnie themselves seem to be in it for the money and the sense of adventure, other characters express resentment toward tourists. Will's father suggests that those robbed would have just wasted the money anyway, and the police detective calls them stupid for bringing so much cash with them. In targeting the tourist industry, then, the boys get back at the very thing that promotes a certain 'reductive' version of Scotland. In other words, they exploit those who exploit Scotland. However, this undermining of the tourist gaze is not entirely successful. For one thing, Will and

Ronnie themselves become an attraction. As their exploits gain world wide attention, people start riding the tour buses with the hopes of getting robbed, even going so far as to ask to take pictures with them, and a Japanese camera crew films one of their getaways for a television programme. In fact, they become so important to the tourist industry that the Scottish Secretary, reversing his earlier concern that they would drive people away, orders that they be let go so that their legend can continue to bring people to the area. For another thing, with much of the action set in the Highlands, the film plays into the tourist gaze. The many wide shots of the boys motorcycling in the distance afford the viewer time to look at the scenery, recalling travelogues made by the second Films of Scotland Committee for the express purpose of promoting tourism in Scotland. Not only, then, does the viewer participate in the kind of gaze the film at the same time mocks, but it also works to advertise the Highlands as a tourist destination.

Ultimately, *Restless Natives*'s play with traditional signifiers of Scottishness failed to be as productive of effective as that of *Local Hero*. Whereas Forsyth successfully synthesises aspects of traditional and contemporary Scotland, Hoffman does little beyond mocking certain aspects of Scotch myths. Rather than offering a new form of Scottish identity, the film ends up simply reaffirming the old ones. However, instead of dismissing *Restless Natives* as a naïve reproduction of reductive modes of representation, I would like to suggest that the film may point to the ongoing vitality of such cultural myths. Letting Will and Ronnie go may benefit the tourism industry, but it also fulfils a deeper societal function: it allows the legend of the Clown and the Wolfman to live on. To a certain extent, the perpetuation of cultural myths, whether it be folk heroes like Rob Roy or the discourses of Tartantry and the Kailyard, are important. According to Cairns Craig, we should not only look at myth in the Marxist sense of something that perpetuates ideology, but we should also understand it as Nietzsche does, as something that frees us from history:

In Scotland we have moved from the marxian moment—the dissolution of myths in order to become a part of the universal course of class history—to the Nietzschean moment—the construction of new myths that will mobilise our actions—for what else has been the great cultural outpouring of the 1980s and 1990s but the construction of new myths of Scottish identity? Myths not in the marxian ‘Scotch myths’ sense, but myths in the sense of new totalizations, new constructions of our history. [...] The struggle has been to reconstruct a mythic identity that is particular to Scotland and so to redeem us from the banality of a universal economism that would make us indistinguishable from everyone who lives in a modern industrial state. One moment restores our identity by making us identical with everyone else in modern societies, the other restores our identity by re-establishing the real bases of our difference; one moment puts us back into universal history, the other puts our history back into the universe by claiming for it a particular value and significance. On the one hand, we have tried to get back into History, on the other we have tried to give ourselves back our own history (Craig 1996:220).

The creative reinvigoration of existing cultural myths is what establishes a nation as different from all the others. It is an alternative to the homogeneity brought on by increasing globalisation. In both the way it creates folk heroes of its protagonists and in the way it naively plays with Scotch myths, *Restless Natives* therefore makes its own contribution to this Nietzschean moment that Craig identifies of using myth to forge a new sense of Scottish identity.

Conclusion

What a consideration of *Highlander*, *Local Hero* and *Restless Natives* suggests is that in the 1980s there was the beginning of a shift in the way Scottishness was understood.

The critical response to *Local Hero* and *Restless Natives* in reviews and surrounding press suggests that other versions of Scottish identity in cinema were gaining traction. The reviews of *Local Hero*, in their comparison of it to previous cinematic versions of Scotland—particularly *Whisky Galore!* and *The Maggie*—talk about the film in relation to the discourses of Tartantry and the Kailyard, but, at the same time, they discuss Forsyth in auteurist terms, placing emphasis on his humour and how it compares to that of *That Sinking Feeling* and *Gregory's Girl*. In the reviews of *Restless Natives*, Scotch myths discourses were still noticed, but there is far more interest in comparing it to Bill Forsyth's films, suggesting that Forsyth's style was being accepted as a new form of Scottish representation. With *Highlander*, though, emphasis on the film's Scottishness is minimal; far more concern is shown with relating it to contemporary film styles and current genre cycles. This suggests that the film was understood in a global or international cinema context where the nationally specific holds less importance. But what the reaction to all three films shows is that, though academics may have been lamenting the continued presence of Scotch myths in the cinema, these discourses were not the only ways films about or set in Scotland were understood in the 1980s. As *Local Hero* and, to a certain extent, *Restless Natives* suggest, alternative versions of Scottishness were available, but genre, style and authorship could also provide ways to read them. Just as the films offer multiple ways to perform Scottishness, so too do they offer multiple ways for their audiences to understand them.

Filmmakers as well as critics were also starting to contemplate Scottish identity in new ways. Though 'Scotch myths' were still prevalent in representations of Scotland in 1980s cinema, what *Local Hero*, *Restless Natives* and *Highlander* suggest is that there is more going on than the simple reproduction of reductive modes of representation. To a certain extent, all three play with the traditions of Tartantry and the Kailyard. This play with Scottish identity locates the films within the postmodern moment, albeit in different ways. *Highlander's* play with traditional representations of Scotland serves to

destabilise Scottish identity, linking it to Jameson's definition of postmodernism as the linguistic breakdown between signifier and referent. On the other hand, *Local Hero* and *Restless Natives* offers a more positive take on postmodern identity and their representation of Scottishness is open rather than limiting. The national identity they construct is inclusive, especially of both old and new forms. *Local Hero* illustrates David McCrone's argument that identity is partially dependent upon how individuals choose to identify; in the film, Scottish identity is something that is activated as the person sees fit. In *Restless Natives* however, the play with traditional signifiers of Scottishness helps the recreation of Scottish identity. For Cairns Craig, the presence of both the past and the present is essential to how cultural myths form positive counter narratives:

And yet the most banal feature of our ordinary lives is one which is almost impossible to recreate in narrative, and that is simultaneity: not simply that events happen simultaneously in space around us, but are happening simultaneously in the space that is our own bodies. Different significances can be simultaneous in language—as in a pun—but narrative language as to structure events as a before and after even when it wants to assert their simultaneity. The only way that text can give the impression of simultaneity is by establishing a counter-temporality by which we return to earlier events, recalling that they share the same timeframe as the events we have been narrating; or, extravagantly, but putting two narratives side by side with each other on the same page [...] Simultaneity is the defiance of unilinearity and undermines the unity of narrative with the diversity of space, a space in which contiguous events may belong to many different narratives: indeed, in which the *same* event may belong simultaneously to many different narratives that happen to intersect at this point in time (Craig 1996:221).

The overlapping of different times and spaces is important because it offers alternatives to the official version of History. A Scottish identity inclusive of both the modern and the traditional, then, is essential for the creation of the cultural myths relevant to contemporary Scotland.

The role of cultural myth would continue to have importance for Scottish cinema in the 1990s. That decade would see mainstream cinema drawn to the stories of folk heroes like William Wallace or Rob Roy MacGregor. In films like *Braveheart* (Mel Gibson, 1995) and *Rob Roy* (Michael Canton-Jones, 1995), these old myths would be utilised, though sometimes not without updating, to forge a new, devolving Scottish identity. But at the same time, the New Scottish Cinema, which had grown out of the institutional developments of the 1980s, would continue to offer alternative Scottish identities. In films by the likes of Danny Boyle and Peter Mullan, Bill Forsyth's Scotland—plural and inclusive of different forms of identity—would broaden under a range of new Scottish identities created.

Chapter Four

Heroes, Hard Men, and Heroin: 1990s Cinematic

Constructions of Scottish Masculinity

Introduction

The 1990s were a productive period for Scottish film. While the ascent of Tony Blair and New Labour brought with it the promise of political devolution—the end of the decade would see the return of a Scottish Parliament to Edinburgh—there were also substantially increased opportunities for film production in Scotland. Throughout the 1980s and into the 90s, the Scottish Film Production Fund underwent leadership changes (Petrie 2000a:174-75), and eventually in 1997 was centralised along with the Scottish Film Council, Scottish Screen Locations, the Scottish Film Training Trust, and the Scottish Film and Television Archive into Scottish Screen (Petrie 2000a:177). The decade also saw the creation of new sources of funding, such as the Glasgow Film Fund and lottery funding for film-making administered by the Scottish Arts Council (Petrie 2000a:175-77), as well as continued support from Channel 4 and BBC Films (Petrie 2000a:178-79). There were also a number of short film schemes—Tartan Shorts, Prime Cuts, and the Gaelic-language Gear Ghearr—which helped foster new talent (Petrie 2000a:180-82).

The international critical and commercial success of Danny Boyle, John Hodge, and Andrew Macdonald's features *Shallow Grave* (1994) and *Trainspotting* (1995), ushered in a new wave of Scottish feature filmmaking. While the expansion of funding contributed to the nurturing of a new generation of Scottish film-makers, established directors like Ken Loach and Lars von Trier were also attracted to make features in Scotland. The increase in film production, later called the 'New Scottish Cinema', for the most part defied the 'Scotch Myths' stereotypes in constructing a Scotland that was

contemporary, diverse and largely urban. This has been seen by Petrie as constituting not a full national cinema but rather as a devolved cinema in that while distinct, it still receives a great deal of assistance from funding sources located outside Scotland (2000a:185) including Channel 4, the BBC, and others. And while the films of the New Scottish Cinema were generally unable to approach the level of commercial success that *Trainspotting* had found, several features—notably those by Peter Mullan and Lynne Ramsay—received much critical acclaim.

Even though the New Scottish Cinema offered new representations of Scotland and the Scots to international cinema audiences, it should come as no surprise that the most high profile film depicting Scotland of the 1990s was Mel Gibson's *Braveheart* (1995), which grossed over \$200 million at the worldwide box office. Significantly, Hollywood films—and even some Scottish-based productions like *Chasing the Deer* (1995)—stuck to a more traditional form of Scottish representation. It could be argued that 'Scotch Myths' representations have endured because, at a time of political change for Scotland, these myths were ripe for re-appropriation or reimagining.

This chapter examines the ways films were constructed, labelled, and understood as Scottish in the 1990s by looking at the different ways films addressed Scottish masculinity in the decade. R. W. Connell defines masculinity as being part of 'the processes and relationships through which men and women conduct gendered lives. "Masculinity", to the extent the term can be briefly defined at all, is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture' (2001:33-34). Stephen M. Whitehead and Frank J. Barrett also suggest that we see

masculinities as plural, changing, and historically informed around dominant discourses or ideologies of masculinism. In this respect we cannot answer, in an absolute sense, the question 'What is masculinity?' The nearest that

we can get to an “answer” is to state that masculinities are those behaviours, languages and practices, existing in specific cultural and organizational locations, which are commonly associated with males and thus culturally defined as not feminine (2001:15-16).

Given these definitions of masculinity as plural, contingent sets of practices, it is important to consider this dimension of representation for a number of reasons. For one thing, while the previous chapter has shown that in the 1980s Scottish cinema was beginning to construct plural Scottish identities, by the 1990s, the idea of ‘the national’ was beginning to fragment in the sense that identities became markedly more plural and diverse. New constructions of masculinity are another way in which Scottish identities continued to broaden.

Masculinity also provides an important starting point because, according to David McCrone, Scottish identity had traditionally been constructed as masculine:

those identities diagnosed as archetypically Scottish by friend and foe alike—the Kailyard, Tartanry and Clydesidism—have little place for women. There is no analogous ‘lass o’pairs’; the image of Tartanry is a male-military image [...]; and the Clydeside icon was a skilled, male worker who was man enough to care for his womenfolk (2001:142).

Thus, there has long been a strong association with Scottish cultural expression and masculinity. The traditional Scotch myths of Tartanry and the Kailyard imagine Scotland to be a masculine space, and Clydesidism, initially viewed as an alternative to these myths, does not deviate from this imagining. According to Duncan Petrie:

The elision of Scottish identity with working-class masculinity in the sphere of cultural representation frequently resulted in the political and economic tensions of the early 1980s being portrayed as a systematic assault on the values of an indigenous way of life by forces that were coded foreign, hierarchical, bourgeois and feminine. [...] the predominant focus of the

works of Alasdair Gray, John Byrne and Bill Forsyth was still very much on the trials and tribulations of men, with women still primarily consigned to the realm of 'otherness'. This depressingly one-sided tendency seemed to both accept and reflect the broader proposition that Scotland remained a more patriarchal society than England (2004:64).

Despite the advancements made by Scottish film and literature during the 1980s, it still understood Scottish identity as masculine.

For another, cinema in the 1990s reflected a so-called 'crisis of masculinity.' Whitehead and Barrett explain: 'the displays of manhood considered appropriate to, say, the 1950s, are socially stigmatized and debased fifty years on. Many men still yearn to perform and validate their masculinity through "conquering the universe", but the aggressive, dominant, emotionally repressed behaviour that such yearnings engender are increasingly seen as (self)-destructive, if not derisible' (2001:6); however, they also problematize this by pointing out that the 'crisis' assumes that masculinity is stable rather than plural and contingent (2001:8). Nevertheless, for Claire Monk, British cinema of this period reflected anxieties about changing masculinity in the face of the decline of traditional industries and increasing opportunities in the workplace for women:

What was new about this preoccupation with men was its self-consciousness, its confessional and therapeutic impulses (its admission of male neediness and pain) and its attentiveness to men and masculinity as subjects-in-themselves. However, the emergence of this impulse within the mainstream of British cinema at a moment when the fallout of post-industrialism and Thatcherism collided with the gains of feminism, produced a strand of male-focused films whose gender politics were more masculinist than feminist (2000:157)

British cinema of the 1990s was full of interesting constructions of masculinity, reflecting, in films like *The Full Monty* (1997) or *Brassed Off* (1996), a nostalgia for a time of pre-Thatcherite traditional working class male employment. Other films such as *Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* (1998) reflected the misogyny of new laddism as exemplified by the magazine *Loaded* (Monk 2000:162). Scottish films contributed to this trend because the crisis in masculinity had long been one of its concerns: according to Petrie, '[t]he focus on male anxiety that had been so central to the Scottish contribution to serious television drama in the 1970s continued to be an important theme' (2000a:217), though he adds that the New Scottish Cinema also displayed an interest in women's experiences.

Thus I will examine the way male Scottish identities are constructed and contemplated in four key films from this period—*Braveheart*, *Rob Roy* (Michael Caton-Jones 1995), *Orphans* (Peter Mullan 1997), and *Trainspotting*. Moreover, these films arise out of different production contexts and offer a range of representational strategies. *Braveheart* and *Rob Roy* are both big budget, period action/adventure films aimed at an international market. They are essentially Hollywood films (even though *Rob Roy*'s production was originated and developed in Scotland), and could be considered to be contained within the 'Scotch Myths' tradition and the specifically Scottish masculinities they construct are informed by a rigid Scottish/English binary opposition. *Orphans* and *Trainspotting*, on the other hand, are both low budget independent Scottish productions financed by public screen agencies and by Channel 4 and whose international success was due to their appeal to arthouse and specialist audiences. These smaller films offer more plural representations that critique traditional Scottish masculinities and offer alternatives that are informed by and reflect contemporary social change in Scotland.

Men in Kilts: 'Traditional' Scottish Masculinity in the Hollywood Funded Films of the 1990s *Braveheart* and *Rob Roy*

Two productions both released in 1995, *Rob Roy* and *Braveheart*, are seemingly firmly located in the tradition of Tartanry. Though both could be considered Hollywood films, the projects were developed in notably different ways. Produced by 20th Century Fox, written by American screenwriter Randall Wallace, and directed by and starring one of the biggest movie stars of the time, Mel Gibson, *Braveheart* has a thoroughly Hollywood pedigree. *Rob Roy*, on the other hand, has its naissance in Scotland. It was written by Alan Sharp (who though from Greenock had made his reputation as a screenwriter in Hollywood in the early 1970s) and developed by Scottish producer Peter Broughan with funding from the Scottish Film Production Fund. United Artists subsequently agreed to finance the film after Sharp completed the script and Michael Caton-Jones, who had recently directed *This Boy's Life* (1993) and would be bringing Liam Neeson to the project, had signed on to direct.

However, both films fall back on the Hollywood tendency to represent Scotland as a place locked in the past and focus on heavily mythologised folk heroes. Cattle thief-turned-Jacobite Rob Roy MacGregor's story was introduced to a wide audience by Sir Walter Scott in his 1817 novel *Rob Roy*, and it is the literary character, not the 'real' historical figure, that informs the various big screen versions of the story, such as the Gaumont Company's silent *Rob Roy* (1922) and Disney's live-action Technicolor *Rob Roy the Highland Rogue* (1953). And while Gibson's film is the first major cinematic portrayal of William Wallace, who led the Scottish army to victory over the English at the Battle of Stirling Bridge in 1297 and was later captured and executed by the English in London, his life story is, in *Braveheart*, romanticised much in the same way as MacGregor's has been.

Both films also contain other markers of Tartanry. They are set in the distant past, *Braveheart* in the thirteenth and *Rob Roy* in the eighteenth centuries, and both make much use of Highland scenery, having had nearly back-to-back location shoots in Glen Nevis—despite neither historical figures having lived anywhere near there. Similar

to *Highlander* as discussed in the previous chapter, both films contain a great deal of masculine display. Physically, their heroes are allowed to show off their masculine potency and prowess as both lovers and fighters: *Braveheart* has several battle sequences while *Rob Roy* presents several duels, and both Wallace and Rob Roy are shown engaging in intercourse with their wives. While the brutality of the battle sequences in *Braveheart* were much remarked upon at the time¹⁶; *Rob Roy* culminates in a thrilling duel with claymores between Rob Roy and the villainous Archie Cunningham (Tim Roth), which American film critic Roger Ebert describes as ‘the best of its sort ever done’ (1995). Male bodies are also conspicuously displayed through costume; that Gibson and Neeson sport kilts seems to be a particular fascination with the press and there are more than a few ‘what’s underneath?’ jokes made in coverage of both films¹⁷. And again, as with *Highlander*, the nationalities of the films’ respective stars trouble the Scottishness of the film, with an American-born Australian and an Irish actor playing two of Scotland’s most well-known heroes. However, there is also a greater sense of both actors being accepted as Scottish than had been with Christopher Lambert’s portrayal in *Highlander*. Gibson’s attempt at a Scottish accent is generally considered to range between adequate and good by critics both inside and outside Scotland¹⁸, while

¹⁶ For example, John Griffin of *The Gazette* says it ‘is ultimately a wallow in the basic violence that civilization was supposed to erase and all too obviously has not’ (1995 B4).

¹⁷ Neeson’s response to the question in an interview in *USA Today* is that it was ‘about the 6,000th time I’ve been asked that’ (Fine 1995:1D). The *Daily Record* also reported on fans trying to get a look under Gibson’s kilt at *Braveheart*’s Stirling premiere (Millar 1995i:3).

¹⁸ See for example Russell (1995a:5), Marshall (1995a:42), and Tookey (1995a:42).

Neeson is often referred to in reviews as a ‘Celtic’ actor¹⁹, as though stressing the cultural similarities between Ireland and Scotland²⁰.

Both films can be linked to the mythic structure of Tartanry. Cairns Craig explains the reductive nature of this myth which ‘had inscribed upon it the inevitable historical defeat of the identity which it offered for the Scots. It was not an identity existing beyond history which could find its application at any particular moment and through any specific contemporary situation: it was an identity lost and irrecoverable’ (1982:10). Likewise, the Scotland portrayed in *Braveheart* and *Rob Roy* is one firmly situated in the distant past, and for which on the surface there appears to be no future. The world inhabited by Rob Roy McGregor is one that is fast disappearing: political and economic changes are rendering Rob’s clan and his code of honour archaic. And, of course, as *Braveheart* builds toward Wallace’s inevitable execution in London there is no future for him either. Both films therefore construct a Scotland that is removed from the forward movement of progress-based History.

But as with many other texts, the ‘out of History’ qualities of *Braveheart* and *Rob Roy* do not necessarily have to be seen negatively; they can also be redemptive. For Craig, these mythic structures provide a counter narrative to the dominant narrative of History, which allows room for the stories of the margins (1996:81). The two films offer a more Nietzschean version of Tartanry’s mythic structure by offering potential alternative futures. *Rob Roy* places less emphasis on the Jacobite rebellion than other versions of the story, thereby distancing the narrative from the failure of both the 1715 and 1745 uprisings, while using the reunion of the family at the end to posit a different kind of future. In *Braveheart*, the compression of the nine years between Wallace’s

¹⁹ See, for example Lochhead (1995:16), and Kroll (1995a:66).

²⁰ In the Disney version, Rob Roy was also played by an Irish actor, Richard Todd, which suggests the conflation of Irish and Scottish to be a long standing Hollywood practice.

execution in 1305 and the Battle of Bannockburn, in which Edward II's troops were soundly defeated by Robert the Bruce, paving the way for Scottish independence from the English crown, links the two events so that the latter seems to be directly caused by the former. In the way history is rewritten, the film proposes an alternative in which a future for a free Scotland is possible.

Significantly, both films also end with pregnancies in which the parentage is uncertain: in *Rob Roy* Mary MacGregor (Jessica Lange) is unsure of the identity of her baby's father following her rape by Cunningham; in *Braveheart*, Isabelle, the Princess of Wales (Sophie Marceau), strongly implies that Wallace has fathered the future heir to the English throne. In this way both films suggest that Scotland is not a place locked into a certain historical moment but that there is a sense of an imaginable future. For Craig, cultural myths like Tartanry can be useful for the re-establishment of national identities (1996:220). *Braveheart* and *Rob Roy*, then, work toward recreating a Scottish identity, one that is at the same time outside History and within the realm of future possibilities.

However, the Scottish identities the two films construct are for the most part homogeneous, as can be seen by the way Scottish masculinity also suggest more 'traditional' representations of Scotland. Both productions equate Scottish masculinity with virility and honour and this is further confirmed by way of the contrasting portrayal of the English as effeminate and treacherous. Of the two films, *Braveheart* best exemplifies how this binary is used to construct Scottish masculinity as it does this fairly un-ironically. There is a clear distinction drawn between the 'manly' Scots and the non-manly English. Wallace is played by Mel Gibson, who became a sex symbol and action hero through his roles in the *Mad Max* and *Lethal Weapon* franchises, which imbues him with a Hollywoodized heterosexual masculinity. He and the other Scotsmen appear rugged and wild, using the supposedly ancient tradition of painting themselves in blue woad, while the English appear more refined, dressed usually in courtly attire. Wallace

and his men wear their kilts into battle, making it all the more convenient to expose themselves to taunt their opponents, but the English hide their bodies behind armour, the suggestion being that the Scots are ‘real men’ unafraid of bodily injury. The Scots are also made more ‘manly’ through the contrast of their and the English’s sexual relationships with women. Princess Isabelle’s French maid quips that the English do not know how to properly use their tongues in bed. Furthermore, according to Michael D Sharp, Gibson associates the Scots with heteronormative male sexuality and the English with ‘deviant’ sexualities, saying that ‘Within *Braveheart*’s rigorous sexual logic, it is finally the proper use of the penis that provides the clearest mark of distinction between England and Scotland (1998:263). English king Edward Longshanks (Patrick McGoohan), in giving his lords *primae noctis*, the right to claim the ‘first night’ of Scottish peasant brides, essentially legitimises and encourages rape. In addition, his son and heir-to-the-throne, Prince Edward (Peter Hanly), is blatantly and crudely stereotyped as a weak and cowardly homosexual²¹. For James R Keller, the establishment of straight/gay binaries in *Braveheart* (and, indeed, in *Rob Roy* as well), serves to reinforce the film’s other binaries, especially that of Scottish/English: ‘The director constructs Edward as the symbolic antithesis of manhood [...] If Wallace fights for honor, justice, trust, integrity, and freedom, then the future Edward II must signify the negation of all these concepts. The effect of this portrayal is to construct male homosexuality as a representation of all that is repugnant’ (Keller 1997:151).

On both sides of the border, there is also a crisis of lineage. The Scottish king is being held prisoner by Longshanks, leaving the country to be run by complicit nobles. There is no clear successor; Robert the Bruce (Angus Macfadyen), who eventually would become King of Scotland, struggles under the machinations of his plotting father,

²¹ Derek Jarman’s 1991 version of *Edward II*, which uses Marlowe’s play as an allegory for the British government’s treatment of homosexuality, gives a more nuanced exploration of this future king’s alleged sexuality.

his rotting leprous face a mirror of his corrupt and treacherous politics. In England, the crisis is one of the inability of Prince Edward to produce an heir, his sexuality preventing him from impregnating Princess Isabelle, while his father (though the narrator speculates that this may be his intent) is too old and ill to do the job for him. Wallace provides a solution to both problems: he fathers the Princess Isabelle's child and becomes a father figure to the Bruce, who by his example and inspiration will go on to free the Scots at Bannockburn. Thus as the 'father' of both nations, Wallace is the 'manliest' man of all, and the Union of the two nations has been reimagined in terms much more favourable to the Scots.

According to Sid Ray, while *Braveheart* purports to take a post-colonial position—instead of aligning the outsider Scots with Prince Edward's outsider masculinity—through excessive violence it adopts the masculinity of the oppressor, Edward Longshanks (1999). However, the film still distinguishes the Scots from the English by making honour the key to virtuous masculinity. Wallace's quest for freedom is presented as honourable; he wants all Scots to be free of English subjection. We are told—first by Wallace's father, then by his uncle Argyll, and finally by Wallace himself—that a real man favours intelligence over strength. Wallace demonstrates this in the stone throwing contest with his childhood friend Hamish: the latter's lobbed boulder fails to harm Wallace, but Wallace's carefully aimed stone knocks out Hamish. This emphasis of intelligence over strength is echoed later in battle when Wallace's strategy wins over the English's superior numbers. In contrast, the English are depicted as cruel and brutal, almost cartoonish in their villainy. The lords living in Scotland appear to be rapists lured there by the right of *prima noctis*. McGoohan's performance of Edward Longshanks verges on parody in its sneering villainy. His actions seem extreme—defenestrating his son's lover, using non-English troops for the medieval equivalent of cannon fodder, and instituting the passive genocide of the Scots through the intent of mixing Scottish and English blood and thereby make Scotland less Scottish.

It is the right of *primae noctis* that links the traits of honour and virility in the way *Braveheart* constructs Scottish masculinity. 'Freedom' might be an honourable thing to fight for, but the only way in which we see the English oppressing the Scots is in claiming this right. In the scene where an English lord claims a young bride's first night, Wallace's disgust—and, indeed, that of most of the other men of the village, is apparent. This leads him to wed in secret, and his quest for freedom is spurred on out of revenge for the attempted gang rape and murder of his wife. The freedom sought after here is the right of assured paternity; the 'honour' around which Scottish masculinity in the film is constructed is just another part of virility.

In the case of *Rob Roy*, Scottish masculinity is also constructed in terms of honour and virility, but this film is more ambivalent in its presentation of a Scottish/English binary opposition. Casting Liam Neeson, who had just appeared as Oskar Schindler in *Schindler's List* (1993), as Rob Roy MacGregor associates Rob with Neeson's star persona of a man of integrity. In addition, Rob equates honour with manliness, telling his sons: 'Honour... is what no man can give you. And none can take away. Honour is a man's gift to himself', adding that 'It grows in you, and speaks to you. All you need do is listen.' Rob lives by this code, most notably in his refusal to denounce the Duke of Argyll (Andrew Keir) as a Jacobite in order for the treacherous Marquis of Montrose (John Hurt) to forgive his debt. Archie Cunningham (Tim Roth), the film's English villain, does not fit this definition of manliness: his dishonourable acts include lying, murder, theft, and, in direct violation of Rob's code, far from protecting women's honour, he defiles it, impregnating Montrose's maid Betty and raping Mary MacGregor. However, the film also questions the viability of Rob's code of honour. It shows that his honour is a romantic notion that is becoming less relevant in a modernising world, and, ultimately, his 'honourability' risks being little more than foolish pride. Brian Woolland posits that Rob, a man caught between the modern and traditional worlds, is less equipped for survival in either of them than is Archie, who,

positioned as he is on the margins, has the ability to play them both (2000). In so doing, it questions the validity of defining Scottish masculinity on a concept of honour.

Rob Roy also associates this idea of ‘honour’ with virility. Rob is a rugged Highlander in full kilt, has two boys, and seems to enjoy (or, perhaps more importantly, *Mary* seems to enjoy) an active sex life. The dishonourable Archie, by contrast, is feminised. His long curly wig, fashionable clothes and affected mannerisms present him as a camp dandy, and the Duke of Argyll makes a comment about him bugging boys, an accusation to which Archie replies ambiguously. According to Keller, Archie’s ‘language, his mannerisms, and his behavior identify him as homosexual and, in the context of the film, as the antithesis of masculinity, honor, family, and integrity’ (1997:149). However, unlike *Braveheart*’s portrayal of Prince Edward, being effeminate does not necessarily mean that Archie is not virile. After all, he fathered Betty’s child, and it is unclear whether it is he or Rob who is the father of Mary’s²². Thus Archie’s ‘femininity’ is a performance. The removal of his wig before the climatic sword fight suggest that it is all an act, and, that, underneath all those affectations, he is just as much a man as Rob is. The differentiation between feminine and masculine is thus broken down or deconstructed; masculinity is also ultimately a performance rather than an essence.

Just as *Rob Roy* suggests that masculinity is performative, so too does it problematize the binary opposition between Scottish and English. Archie might appear ‘English’, in both opposition to Rob’s masculinity and in his role as ‘typical’ Hollywood villain, but he does not know the identity of his father. Argyll suggests that he might be one of Montrose’s bastards, but Archie cannot be sure. His father may be Scottish, or

²² Claudia Card’s suggestion that one intention of martial rape—rape used as a weapon of war, a category into which we can place Archie’s assault on Mary MacGregor—is to ‘undermine national, political, and cultural solidarity, changing the next generation’s identity, confusing the loyalties of all victimized survivors’ (1996:8) provides us with yet another example of identity being troubled in *Rob Roy*.

English, or neither (his mother's list of possibilities includes a Spanish ambassador). This ambiguity casts doubt on Archie's national identity, and therefore destabilises any clear cut Scottish/English binary.

Mad Macs and Robin McHood: Scotland v. Hollywood in the Critical Reception of *Braveheart* and *Rob Roy*

As seen in the above section, *Braveheart* and *Rob Roy* both construct their Scottishness (though not without criticism in the case of the latter) by way of a dichotomy that opposes manly Scotsmen and effeminate Englishmen. As the representations of Scottish masculinity in these films are rooted in reliance on the familiar structures and signifiers of Tartanry, one might expect film critics to understand their Scottishness in terms of the same binary opposition. But while stereotypes of Tartanry do figure into how reviews tend to identify the films as Scottish, the following analysis reveals that the critics' understandings of the films' Scottishness is more complex.

Braveheart seems to have provoked strongly positive and negative reactions among Scottish film critics. The daily papers seem evenly divided in their responses to the film. On the positive side are the enthusiastic reviews of John Millar (*Daily Record*) and Brian Pendreigh (*The Scotsman*), and on the negative side are William Russell (*The Herald*) and Angus Wolfe Murray (*The Scotsman*)²³. The film inevitably prompted debate about its historical accuracy. Russell calls *Braveheart* 'Balderdash, bunkum, baloney, bad history, and big battles' (1995a:5), accusing the filmmakers of 'changing the facts to suit themselves' (1995a:5). While some other critics do not deny the film's inaccuracies, they claim that is to miss the point: for Millar, 'This isn't a historical documentary, it's entertainment' (1995b:24). These opinions feed into a wider public discussion sparked by the film over the necessity of historical accuracy in films. The

²³ *Scotland on Sunday* and the *Sunday Mail* also provide positive reviews.

historical events depicted do not directly relate to the way these critics identify the films as Scottish however. Nor do they consider the discourse of Tartanry and other Scotch myths in relation to the film, at least not to the extent as will be seen below for *Rob Roy*. Accent here plays an important part in *Braveheart*'s perceived Scottishness, as most reviewers praise Gibson's efforts. Alasdair Marshall, for example, declares in the *Sunday Mail* that 'the star's Glesca accent never slips' (1995a:42). There is also emphasis on the use of Scottish actors for minor roles. For Russell, 'a gaggle of reliable Scots players [...] do their best to provide some authenticity' (1995:5). Wolfe Murray suggests that the film looks more authentically Scottish than *Rob Roy*: 'The lousy weather, dirty plaids and dour locals have a more genuine look about them than the stagey geriatrics and undernourished kids of Rob Roy' (1995:16). However, the film's relevance to expressions of Scottishness seems to be discussed mainly in terms of the nationalistic response it evokes. According to Marshall, 'Braveheart is all about PRIDE, PATRIOTISM and PASSION... and it's got PLENTY' (1995a:42). Some of the critics also seem to buy in to the Scottish/English dichotomy the film offers; for Pendreigh, it 'just gets out there and kicks ass [...] English ass to boot' (1995a:4). Russell on the other hand offers a criticism of the film's nationalistic response, noting that the 'complicated issue of Scottish independence and the emergence of our national identity requires a far more honest approach. Contemporary ideas about nationalism and modern motivations cannot be used to explain the behaviour of thirteenth-century people' (1995b:15). Pendreigh, however, offers a defence of the film as a counter narrative, arguing that *Braveheart* 'provides the Scots with a powerful creation myth which will surely help to focus our national sense of identity' (1995a:4). As the pressure for devolution remained strong in the mid-1990s, it could provide a channel for the nationalist sentiment the film evoked; hence, the SNP's appropriation of *Braveheart*.

While the film may have been appropriated in relations to Scottish politics, sports, and tourism as 'unambiguously "about" Scotland and its history' (McArthur

2003:159), Colin McArthur performs a Barthesian reading on several key moments in *Braveheart*, arguing ‘that its “Scottish” elements are entirely secondary to its enmeshment in the history of Hollywood narrative, generic and performative protocols, but it connects with Scotland sufficiently to make it a kind of *The Name of the Thistle*, albeit considerably less erudite, playful and, certainly, politically progressive than Umberto Eco’s *The Name of the Rose*’ (2003:159). For McArthur, this means that *Braveheart* is as much (if not more so) about the values and vision of contemporary Hollywood than medieval Scotland, something of which the various groups who have appropriated the film are often unaware. As we will see, in the way critics understood the film, there is often a tension present between an identification of it as Scottish and an association of it with other cinemas and contemporary debates.

For example, some Scottish critics also locate *Braveheart* in relation to contemporary Hollywood, discussing the film in terms of genre. For Millar it was ‘a return to movie making on a grand, emotion-packed scale which recalls epics like *Spartacus*’ (1995b:24). Indeed, labelling the film as an epic associates it with what is one of *the* most ‘Hollywood’ of genres, locating it in more of a global cultural commodity than any narrowly Scottish context. Furthermore, *Braveheart* is discussed as a star vehicle for Mel Gibson: Russell suggests that ‘the main reason for going is Mel who, like most ancient monuments, is always worth a look’ (1995a:5), while other critics compare Gibson’s William Wallace to previous roles he has played. Pendreigh calls his performance ‘surprisingly close to his [...] characterisations of Mad Max, Hamlet and the *Lethal Weapon* hero Martin Riggs’ (1995a:4). Stars, as internationally recognisable products of the Hollywood system, can complicate a film’s national context, but *Braveheart*’s close association with Gibson, who, as an American-born Australian, has a complex national identity, further distances the film from any straight-forward ascription of Scottishness.

In the UK national press, discussion of *Braveheart* within the discourses of Tartanry is much less prevalent²⁴. Unsurprisingly, Colin McArthur offers an explanation in his *Sight & Sound* review, noting that ‘Tartanry vestigially informs *Braveheart* [...] but it has been constructed mainly within quite another discourse which might be called Dark Ageism’ (1995:45). In other words, the film’s Tartanry is a subset of Hollywood’s representational strategies for Medieval Europe, transforming that with which we could label the film ‘Scottish’, albeit very stereotypically, into something international. There are, however, other ways critics label the film Scottish: Perry calls it an ‘impressive invocation of Scottish folklore’ (1995a) for example. Once again there is much emphasis placed on the apparent authenticity of Gibson’s accent with Christopher Tookey of the *Daily Mail* describing it as ‘a spirited stab at a 14th-century Scot’s accent’ (1995a:42). But, in a parallel of McArthur’s reading of the film quite a few critics complain about how the film ultimately seems to have nothing really to do with Scotland—certainly in terms of the development of a local industry. *The Guardian*’s Derek Malcolm mentions that *Braveheart* moved production to Ireland due to more advantageous tax breaks before pondering: ‘what do the films say about Scotland? And the answer [...] is not a lot. If history is bunk, goodness knows how you can describe *Braveheart*’ (1995a:10-11). Adam Mars-Jones of *The Independent* offers a similar critique, saying that ‘It’s a mistake, in a film with so little actual Scottish involvement, to pretending in this way to be concerned with a national essence, rather than serving up a Hollywood action adventure in a Scottish source’ (1995a:9). For these critics, there is seemingly not much at all about *Braveheart* that can be regarded as Scottish.

Similarly critics writing for London-based publications are also aware of the film’s greater affinity with classical Hollywood cinema, with many agreeing that Gibson’s performance of Wallace conformed to his familiar movie star persona. For

²⁴ See Andrew (1995:76) and Perry (1995) for examples.

Mars-Jones, Gibson ‘over-indulges in his acting mannerisms, the grins and twinkles of his stardom’ (1995a:9) and seems ‘as if he were still buddy-buddying with Danny Glover from the Lethal Weapon series’ (1995a:9). Many fellow critics similarly refer to Gibson’s other roles—Quentin Falk in the *Sunday Mirror* calls him the ‘maverick Scots warrior’ (1995:32-3), referencing his starring role in the Richard Donner directed Western of 1994—but some also place him in a different national context. Quentin Curtis calls the film ‘Mad Macs v the Poms’ (1995a:13) in *The Independent*, framing the film’s Scottish-English conflict in an Australian context, once again distancing the film from any Scottish identity. In addition, the UK critics also locate the film in terms of Hollywood genres—notably the epic and the adventure film. For *Empire*’s Ian Nathan it has ‘battle scenes on a scale not seen since Spartacus and El Cid’ (1995:32), while Tookey calls it ‘the best of the summer’s action blockbusters’ (1995a:42). A few critics also discuss the film in terms of a Western: John Lyttle of *The Independent* draws comparisons between *Braveheart* and Kevin Costner’s 1990 film *Dances with Wolves* (1995:22) for example.

While traditional stereotypes of Scotland are downplayed in favour of Hollywood stars and genre, a few reviews of *Braveheart* in national publications do comment on how it might impact on a resurgent Scottish nationalism. In *Sight & Sound*, McArthur observes that the film ‘is, in fact, a modern restatement of that “invention of tradition” which has been active since the second half of the nineteenth century and is the key cultural strategy of nationalism’ (1995:45), later adding that ‘if his film has any appeal to Scots it will be to the most regressively xenophobic among us’ (1995:45). However, adding to the film’s closer identification with global Hollywood cinema, a few reviewers also link it to other nationalist movements. Alexander Walker of the *Evening Standard* describes Wallace’s last word as ‘A cry that will make many an Australian separatist cheer to hear—and, for that matter, many an IRA terrorist, too’ (1995:32-33). In one sense, this suggests a version of Scottish nationalism now associated (by virtue of

the film's affinities with classical Hollywood) with a kind of generic international yearning for freedom. But on the other hand, the three national associations invoked by *Braveheart*—Scottish, Irish and Australian—are linked through the film's perceived anti-Englishness. Indeed many reviews comment directly on the negative portrayal of the English. For Curtis, 'Mel's Sassenachs speak in clipped, twittish accents and behave with summary viciousness—like crosses between Monty Python and less sympathetic versions of the Nazis' (1995a:13). In *The Daily Telegraph* the Scottish historian Allan Massie argues that '*Braveheart* can scarcely fail to feed the growing Anglophobia which is, to many Scotsmen, a pernicious feature of our country today' (1995:14). For Massie, the anti-Englishness of the film is relevant to Scottish culture, while for other critics, it is part of a wider trend of Hollywood representation, Leith for example noting that, 'in the Hollywood world of hate-figures, the English seem to be right up there with the Nazis these days' (1995:31). In this way *Braveheart* conforms to the wider Hollywood trend of casting English actors in villainous roles²⁵.

In the UK national publications, there is also some debate about the necessity for greater historical accuracy in *Braveheart*. Geoff Brown explains in *The Times*, 'This is history 1990s style, and film-makers graft our own love of violence, squalor and physical disarray on to whatever period they choose' (1995). Though few deny the film's inaccuracies, there are some critics who defended them. In *The Sunday Telegraph*, Anne Billson declares that 'As history, it may be on dodgy ground, but then when have Hollywood epics ever been models of historical accuracy?' (1995:7), implying that the needs of entertainment outweigh the needs of accurate representation. This is very different to Brian Pendreigh's defence of the film as a counter-myth.

²⁵ Alan Rickman and Jeremy Irons are two notable examples. Rickman played the Sheriff of Nottingham opposite American actor Kevin Costner's Robin Hood in *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (1991), Irons voiced Simba's evil uncle Scar in *The Lion King* (1994), and both featured as villains in the *Die Hard* franchise, Rickman in *Die Hard* (1988) and Irons in *Die Hard With a Vengeance* (1995).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, in the North American press, *Braveheart* was received primarily as a Mel Gibson vehicle. For Mike Clark of *USA Today*, ‘Mel Gibson rallies the Scots’ (1995b:7D), the actor replacing the historical figure, while Caryn James of *The New York Times* writes: ‘Just enough of the typical Gibson persona shows through to make Wallace accessible and likeable in modern terms’ (1995:15). Once again, frequent references are made to Gibson’s previous roles, particularly in *Maverick* and the *Mad Max* and *Lethal Weapon* franchises. The *St Petersburg Times*’s Steve Persall calls him a ‘Medieval Maverick’ (1995a:2B) and says that ‘it may as well be Lethal Weapon’s Riggs picking a fight’ (1995a:2B), while *The Washington Post*’s Desson Howe describes him as ‘McMad Max’ (1995:N42).

That *Braveheart* was understood in North America as primarily a product of Hollywood is further supported by the critics’ discussion of the film in terms of genre. Once again, there is a tendency to both call it an old fashioned epic and to liken it to contemporary action films. For Jay Stone of the *Ottawa Citizen* the film’s battles are ‘throwbacks to the golden age of Hollywood costume epics’ (1995:H9). On the other hand, Robert Fyne, reviewing it in the academic journal *Film & History*, argues that it ‘fuses the rebound qualities of any Bugs Bunny cartoon with the worst shenanigans of every *Die Hard* saga’ (1995:58). Most North American critics see *Braveheart*, then, as both recalling classical Hollywood genres while also appealing to contemporary tastes. There are a few who, as will be seen with *Rob Roy*, understand the film in terms of a Scottish version of the western. Rick Groen of *The Globe and Mail* refers to it as ‘Dances With Kilts’ (1995), and Stone considers ‘Haggis Westerns’ and ‘Oatmeal Burners’ among possible labels for the perceived trend (1995:H9). There are also a few instances where Scotch myths are invoked. For *The Philadelphia Inquirer*’s Desmond

Ryan, ‘the big picture occasionally gets lost in the Highland mists’ (1995:E01), and seemingly everyone must make a reference to the kilt²⁶.

In addition to the downplaying of ‘traditional’ signifiers of Scottishness, what also occurs several times in the critical response to *Braveheart* is a familiar elision of Englishness and Britishness²⁷: Caryn James in *The New York Times* describes him as going on ‘a rampage against the British’ (1995a:15) for example. Surprisingly, the publication to most often make this error is *Film & History* in which Fyne describes ‘a protracted struggle against the existing British rule’ and Dvorak the ‘desperate fight for Scots waged against the British’ (1995:59). Cynically, we could read these as examples of stereotypical American ignorance of geography and history, or, more generously, a tendency to read America’s own colonial history into the film’s conflict²⁸. However, I think that the more important suggestion we can take from this is that these slippages between English and British are made possible because *Braveheart* itself, in presenting Wallace’s struggle as a universal one of freedom and not as the actual historical political conflict, does not make it clear enough that this is *not* the modern world. This is further emphasised by the fact that, while in Britain *Braveheart* was at the centre of public debates on history and, implicitly, representation, in America it seems to be subsumed into the context of different ongoing debates. For example, violence in the media was an issue that often came up in the run-up to the 1996 Presidential election, and is reflected in critics’ interest in the film’s violence. For Fyne ‘*Braveheart* comes off as one of the most violent screenplays ever made and its gratuitous gory scenes are questionable’ (1995:76). Also present in some American and Canadian reviews are criticisms of the

²⁶ See for example Delean and Griffin (1995:F3), Wilner (1995:B3), Howe (1995:N42), James (1995:15), James (1995a:15), Gates (1995:15), and Dauphin (1995:60-62).

²⁷ I have only found one such slip in regards to *Rob Roy*, Wilner (1995:B3).

²⁸ Five years later, Gibson would appear in *The Patriot* (2000), a drama set during the American Revolution, suggesting that the actor may be drawn to stories of the perceived struggles for ‘freedom’ both it and *Braveheart* attempt to tell.

film's perceived homophobia, of which audiences may have been more aware thanks to protests against the film mounted by the organisation Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Discrimination. As Dauphin observes: 'For all of its clichéd prattle about honor and freedom, the movie pushes the homosexual-panic button much more vigorously than any other, making *Braveheart* more about Gibson's idea of manhood than it is about the man he's playing' (1995:60-62). But if North American critics engage with the way the film constructs masculinity, it is significant that they fail to connect this to any aspect of Scottishness.

In comparison to *Braveheart*, the critical reception to *Rob Roy* in Scotland is far less polarised. Scottish reviewers generally accepted the film as being both Scottish and a Hollywood production. Scottish stereotypes are subtly noted, and even used themselves in some of the reviews. John Millar for example notes in the *Daily Record* that the film is a 'Claymore clashing epic adventure' (1995c:26). Others invoke tartan stereotypes: William Russell of *The Herald* tells us that Rob 'lopes off o'er the heather to his little turf-covered bothy by the loch' (1995:11), using stereotypes to describe the film's use of stereotypes. Interestingly, however present such stereotypes may be in *Rob Roy* they do not provoke the same level of outrage as in *Braveheart*; Marshall for example opines that the filmmakers have 'done the auld country proud' (1995b:44). Part of the reason for this wider acceptance could be the real Scottish locations used in *Rob Roy*, as opposed to the *Braveheart*'s widely publicised move to Ireland. Thus Scottish critics conspicuously heap praise on the use of the scenery with Bob Shields declaring in the *Daily Record* that 'the real star of Rob Roy is Scotland itself' (1995:15), and Russell noting the 'scenery to delight the hearts of the Scottish Tourist Board' (1995:11)—an allusion to that organisation's subsequent appropriation of the film. In addition, some of the reviews suggest an understanding of the film as Scottish by directly invoking the Scottish/English binary it dramatizes. Thus Shields calls the film 'a chance to support Scotland... and you're guaranteed to see the English get a good grubbing!' (1995:15).

However, Russell, perhaps picking up on the way the film complicates this binary, disagrees, saying that *Rob Roy* holds no ‘suggestion of what might make Scots different from other races’ (1995:11).

Again as with *Braveheart*, *Rob Roy* is discussed in relation to classical Hollywood, notably the importance of stars and genre. Angus Wolfe Murray in *The Scotsman* draws attention to the film’s ‘multinational cast’, though he also gives the film a certain Scottish credibility, noting that ‘The director [...] is a Scot, albeit not a Highlander’ (1995a:18). Similarly, in referring to ‘Rob Roy O’ Gregor (Liam Neeson, albeit big is no Big Mac, but one of those Ulster Scots)’ (1995:11), Russell complicates the understanding of Neeson’s nationality: he is a bastardised Scotsman. In terms of genre, a few reviewers call *Rob Roy*, an epic, an adventure, a period drama, or a combination of these²⁹, it is most often discussed as a Western. Marshall notes Alan Sharpe’s background in writing Westerns and adds that ‘he’s on the same trail here’ (1995b:44). Wolfe Murray likens the film to a classic Western, saying that ‘In the end, it’s Alan Ladd versus Jack Palance’ (1995a:18). What is interesting, though, is that reviewers do not understand the film as Scottish and as a Western; they see it as a *Scottish* Western. John Millar in the *Daily Record* calls it ‘A western with kilts’ (1995f:46), while for Marshall, it is ‘a quick-on-the-claymore showdown’ (1995b:44). Marshall also describes the cattle thieves Rob Roy encounters in the opening as ‘a band of reivers—that’s coo rustlers’ (1995b:44), framing his explanation simultaneously in the language of the Western. This an understanding of Scottishness that encompasses both the international and the culturally specific.

Likewise, in the UK national press *Rob Roy* is routinely discussed in relation to a Scottish take on traditional Hollywood genres. Many critics see the film as part of a tradition of epic adventure films: Derek Malcom writing in *The Guardian* that it is an

²⁹ For Wolfe Murray the film is ‘a rollocking good adventure’ (1995a:18) while for Russell it is a ‘period epic’ (1995:11).

‘expensive and expansive epic’ (1995:T11) but gives this a Scottish twist the suggestion that Rob Roy ‘seems the kind of character they’d have made a film about in the forties and fifties, perhaps with Errol McFlynn in the lead role’ (1995:T11)—directly invoking Flynn’s role in *The Master of Ballantrae* (1953). *The Observer*’s Philip French, too, continues the comparison to Flynn’s films, calling Rob Roy ‘Scotland’s Robin Hood’ (1995:5). But once again the strongest generic classification of *Rob Roy* is the Western. Alan Sharp’s previous association with the genre³⁰ is mentioned by Mars-Jones (1995:27), while Caton-Jones’s facility with the genre is also likened to John Ford by Curtis (1995:21) and Sergio Leone by Newman (1995:52). Once again, there is a very strong tendency to see *Rob Roy* as essentially a Scottish Western: Christopher Tookey calls it in the *Daily Mail* a ‘McWestern’ and ‘an old-fashioned Western in Highland costume’ (1995:44), and French identifies it as part of a ‘cycle of swashbuckling tartan Westerns’ (1995:5), suggesting that the film is part of a trend, in which ‘actors and actresses are hiring dialect coaches and heading for the Highlands’ (1995:5). Other critics offer more by way of explanation for this genre mixing. For Malcolm, the filmmakers ‘were apparently trying for the authentic feel of a Western’ but ‘they have also made strenuous efforts to hammer some sense of the history of 18th-century Scotland’ (1995:T11). French, too, notes that the Western emerged out of a literary tradition that was heavily influenced by Walter Scott (1995:5), providing a suggestion of why *Rob Roy* seems to work so well as a Western.

However, there is also discussion of *Rob Roy*’s identity beyond generic concerns. There seems to be a particular concern with the Scottishness—or lack thereof—of those involved in making it. In *Sight & Sound* the playwright Liz Lochhead notes that Alan Sharp ‘is one of the very few internationally known Scottish screenwriters’ (1995:15). But most critics are interested in the non-Scottishness of the lead actors: Derek Malcolm

³⁰ Among Sharp’s Westerns are: *The Hired Hand* (1971), *Ulzana’s Raid* (1972), and *Billy Two Hats* (1973), which features a Scottish outlaw in the American West.

argues that the film ‘dares to cast Liam Neeson, an Irishman, as Rob Roy and Jessica Lange, as his wife’ (1995:T11). Many reviewers have a problem with the accents: for Tookey, ‘none of the leading good guys [...] can manage a consistent Scottish accent’ (1995:44). There is also a notable emphasis on Neeson’s Irishness—Tookey dubs him ‘a canny Celt’ (1995:44) and suggests that he is ‘on the way to becoming the new Sean Connery’ (1995:44)—which suggests that, though he is markedly not Scottish, he is still credible in the role of a Scottish hero. Another common issue is the film’s use of the Scottish landscape. For Malcolm, ‘If the landscapes could speak, Mr Sharp might have had the most eloquent of competitors’ (1995:T11). Mars-Jones on the other hand notes that ‘not everything is so picture postcard in sensibility’ (1995:27), while some other critics attribute it a kind of grimy realism: Tookey notes the ‘mud and blood realism’ (1995:44) and Curtis that it is ‘seasoned by the salt of the earth’ (1995:21). This invocation of a certain griminess suggests that some London-based critics based in London understood *Rob Roy* in a less romantic light than their Scottish counterparts.

As in the Scottish press, there is a tendency to talk about the film’s use of ‘traditional’ Scottish stereotypes, with frequent use of the very language of those same stereotypes. Curtis and French use such pithy phrases as ‘Och aye, such noble derring-do!’ (Curtis 1995:21) and “‘The claymore the merrier”” (French 1995:5). However, in her more considered analysis, Liz Lochhead examines how *Rob Roy* utilises Scotch myths while also going beyond them, arguing that the film ‘has the nerve to be a tartan-and-the-helians picture by Clydeside men. These mountains are made with girders’, but adding, ‘I don’t suppose [...] that *Rob Roy* will be immune from criticism that it’s “Kailyard keech”: cabbage-patch trash. Which is exactly inaccurate: a cabbage-patch reductiveness is one thing you cannot justly accuse it of. Rather there is a grandiosity, a swagger, and unconscious blokishness that you might deplore but cannot but enjoy watching, truth be told’ (1995:16).

What appears to save *Rob Roy* from the realm of myths and stereotypes, then, is its invocation of an alternative Scottish masculinity associated with the industrial Lowlands. Interestingly, it is the national press that stresses the film's Tartanry is being used to subvert the myth, not, as one might expect, in Scotland, where its Tartanry seems to have been deemed acceptable largely due to Scots involvement in production.

For most North American critics the main identification of *Rob Roy* as Scottish is also via the filmmakers and actors, notably Sharp and Caton-Jones's Scottish origins³¹. Curiously, critics in North America are more inclined to regard the film as a literary adaptation, and therefore to offer Walter Scott's novel (and other works of Scottish literature) as reasons to see the film. In *Newsweek* Jack Kroll calls it 'a beautiful visualization of those exciting novels by Robert [sic] Louis Stevenson and Walter Scott that boys used to read' (1995a:66). There is also considerable attention paid to the Irish and American actors and, more importantly, whether or not they got the accent right. For Kroll, Neeson is 'the current paragon of Celtic virility' (1995a:66), lending him a certain degree of authenticity, and Jay Stone of the *Ottawa Citizen* declares that 'Neeson makes a wonderful Scottish hero' (1995b:E6). Neeson's accent is both praised and criticized: Craig MacInnis of the *Toronto Star* says that he 'shifts from brogue to burr' (1995:C1), but *The Washington Post* review finds his accent 'genuine' (1995j:N44). Jessica Lange and Eric Stoltz face similar criticism and praise. John Simon in the *National Review* calls Lange 'a spunky Highland lass; she even, more amazingly, manages to sound like one' (1995a:70). On the other hand, *The Washington Post* found both her and Stoltz's accents amusing, and add that Stoltz 'seems to have been cast purely for his red hair' (1995j:N44). Simon is more positive, however, suggesting that 'even Eric Stoltz manages to come across as a proper clansman' (1995a:70).

³¹ See McCarthy (1995) and Salem (1995:D3).

But unlike their British counterparts North American critics tend to dwell on the intelligibility of the accents used, although even here opinions differ widely. Steve Persall of the *St. Petersburg Times* describes the dialogue as ‘heavily brogued conversations’ (1995d:2B), while Jane Horowitz of *The Washington Post* describes the accents as being ‘diluted for American ears’ (1995b:C07), suggesting that the perceived unintelligibility of the Scots accent is not universal to all North Americans. There is also focus on the use of the Scottish landscape³² if less overtly than in Scottish and UK reviews. This is perhaps surprising given the Scottish Tourist Board’s appropriation of the film for an overseas marketing campaign.³³ There also seems to be less emphasis on the use of Scottish stereotypes, though they are still present in some reviews: Horowitz declares of the scenery ‘ach, the light on the lochs!’ (1995b:C07). Verbal stereotypes and quaint imagery are overpowered by a strange obsession with kilts, particularly those worn by Neeson: ‘If the sight of Neeson in a skirt gets your oatmeal bubbling’ (Anon. 1995f) a review in *The Globe and Mail* suggests colourfully. Perhaps the lack of any easy reliance on the discourses of Tartanry has something to do with the subversion of the myth that the UK national publications were so keen to highlight. Or perhaps *Rob Roy* was understood more in the context of British film in the North American markets: Simon describes it as ‘basically a British film; shot on location in Scotland’ (1995a:70), displaying an ignorance of Scottish involvement in the production.

Significantly, *Rob Roy* was more readily associated in North American reviews with traditional movie genres with once again the Western looming large. Stone mentions Sharp’s past work on Westerns (1995b:E6), while Andy Pawelczak of *Film in Review* carries on the idea of a Scottish Western, arguing that ‘Instead of Monument Valley it has the Highlands, dotted with menhir-like rocks that throw a prehistoric,

³² See Stone (1995b:E6) and Salem (1995:D3)

³³ Although in his praise for the scenery, Brownstein sagely notes that the film ‘will likely induce trips to Scotland and increased sales of single malt whiskey’ (1995:D6).

mythical shadow across the action. It also has cattle thieves, a bushwacking, a showdown in a tavern, and an unambiguously noble hero' (1995:60). Most critics tend to see the film as a Western set in Scotland, rather than as a *Scottish* Western. Salem calls it 'just an old-fashioned western, only with cowboys in kilts' (1995:D3). But interestingly *Rob Roy* was more commonly discussed as a period, costume or historical drama, or as an adventure or epic, and often both. For Roger Ebert of the *Chicago Sun-Times* 'the movie itself brings hot red blood to the costume genre' (1995), which suggests a mixing of genres. Several critics see *Rob Roy* as 'an old fashioned epic' (McCarthy 1995) like the films of Errol Flynn³⁴. Kroll calls it 'a return to the epics of yore' and compares it to *Captain Blood* (1995a:66). What *Rob Roy* draws the most comparisons to, however, is Robin Hood, and not just Flynn's version of the legend. Rea compares Tim Roth's performance to that of Alan Rickman's as the Sheriff in *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (1995:05), and for Maslin, "'Rob Roy" is no "Men in Tights" in the making' (1995:1), suggesting that *Rob Roy* is a better version of the story than the Mel Brooks parody. While many critics read American cultural context into *Braveheart*, those who associated *Rob Roy* with the Robin Hood legend—English in origin, but made universally recognisable through Hollywood films—effectively rejected a reading that similarly framed the film within their own cultural specificity.

As *Rob Roy* troubled the binary opposition it used to construct Scottish identity, we might find it unsurprising that critics did not perceive the film's Scottishness along this dichotomy, but what may be surprising is that these critics also understood *Braveheart*'s national identity beyond a Scottish/English binary. Though Scottish and London-based reviewers of *Braveheart* indirectly address this dichotomy through the attention they give to the nationalist responses it evoked, overall, the Scotch myths the

³⁴ Flynn, of course, is remembered for swashbucklers like *Captain Blood* (1935) and *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938), but also starred in the Jacobite romance *The Master of Ballantrae* (1953).

film evokes and accents used proved more important to how critics labelled the film as Scottish. Instead, the film was primarily understood, particularly outside of Scotland, along the lines of its affinities with Hollywood cinema. *Rob Roy*, too, was understood in terms of Hollywood genres, and we could easily make a similar assessment of the film to the one McArthur makes about *Braveheart*—chiefly, that its structure has more to do with Hollywood than Scotland. However, the Scottish basis of its production, personnel, and locations in particular mentioned in all three markets suggests that, for critics, *Rob Roy* has a tangible connection to Scotland. Furthermore, the ways in which film reviews in Scotland and Britain discuss its use of the conventions of the Western suggests that they understood *Rob Roy* as a Scottish-Hollywood hybrid rather than a strictly Scottish or Hollywood film.

***Trainspotting*: New Masculinities for a New Scottish Cinema**

One of—if not *the*—most successful Scottish films of all time, *Trainspotting*, was also hailed as one of the most significant British films of the 1990s. Made by the production team of director Danny Boyle, writer John Hodge, and producer Andrew Macdonald, who had previously found success with the thriller *Shallow Grave*, *Trainspotting* was financed entirely by Channel Four for £1.8 million. The film achieved something that British films seldom do: becoming a commercial hit in the UK domestic market before being successful abroad. The film is based on the 1993 cult novel by Edinburgh writer Irvine Welsh, which found itself popular among both literary audiences and those who were drawn more toward its zeitgeist appeal (Smith 2002:8), and had also spawned a successful theatrical adaptation. It features an ensemble cast of relatively young and at the time unknown Scottish actors including: Ewan McGregor (previously cast in *Shallow Grave*), Robert Carlyle, Ewen Bremner, Kevin McKidd, Kelly Macdonald, as

well as English actor Johnny Lee Miller³⁵. The film is a highly stylised account of the lives of a group Edinburgh junkies with heroin addict Mark Renton (McGregor) the main protagonist around whose experiences the narrative is organised. *Trainspotting* also features a distinctive soundtrack packed with club music, Brit Pop and its antecedents, and classic ‘cool’ artists like Iggy Pop and Lou Reed. Building on the film’s pop cultural appeal and contributing greatly to its box office success was the vigorous marketing campaigns by Polygram and Miramax, the film’s respective British and American distributors. Inspired by music album promotion (Smith 2002:10), the film’s posters featured black and white photos of five of the principle cast members—both together and separate—and a bright orange banner with the title. Tie-in paperbacks of the novel and the film’s two soundtrack albums have packaging that recalls this iconic-by-design imagery. For Murray Smith, *Trainspotting* was popular because it ‘emerged at a moment when not only British cinema, but Scottish cinema, as a distinct entity, possessed an unusual degree of visibility, activity and momentum’ (2002:8). The film tapped into several aspects of 1990s British popular culture—music, most notably—that had gained global appeal in the middle of the decade (Smith 2002:9-10).

Though both film and novel are situated in the same social milieu—the disillusioned Edinburgh underclass of the 1980s—the novel focuses less specifically on heroin addiction and examines more broadly the effects of poverty and consumer culture on its characters and their families. More a collection of closely related short stories, the novel is narrated from multiple perspectives, often in heavy dialect that does not shy away from the crudities of everyday language. But the film adopts a very different approach in foregrounding Mark Renton as the main protagonist and structuring the narrative around his personal struggle with heroin addiction. While the plot is at times

³⁵ Carlyle would have been familiar to British television audiences as Hamish Macbeth while Bremner was in the theatrical *Trainspotting*, playing the role that would be McGregor’s on screen.

episodic and elliptical, it is Renton's narrative trajectory that we follow. Deliberately adapted this way by Hodge to make the film accessible to a wider audience (Smith 2002:10), this is a more conventional method of storytelling while Boyle's direction drawn more upon New Hollywood or American independent cinema than European art cinema (Smith 2002:9). However, that is not to suggest that the film is limited its discursive power in relation to questions of contemporary Scottish identity. For Petrie, 'it is the ensemble playing that gives *Trainspotting* its dynamism' (2000a:195). Part of the appeal of the film is the camaraderie of Renton's group of friends—gormless Spud, Sean Connery-obsessed Sick Boy, clean-living Tommy, psychotic Begbie—and the strong performances of the actors who play them (respectively: Bremner, Miller, McKidd, Carlyle).

Through the use of the ensemble, the film also explores multiple forms of Scottish masculinity. The variants of Scottish masculinity *Trainspotting* offers differs widely from more 'traditional' forms, as Andrew O'Hagan observes,

Renton is a different sort of man from the fictional men who have gone before him. Renton's father, his grandfather, would have taken to drink, they might have been bad to women but they would have talked a lot about responsibility, about decency, about getting on. They would, perhaps, have been religious bigots—they would certainly have had strong feelings about Scotland. Earlier Scottish fictions, and some films, have given breath to characters like the older Rentons. But we haven't had much of Renton himself, or his scaggy, thieving mates. Their fight—with drugs, with boredom, with who they are—might be harder, it might not be, But bravery is not what it used to be (2001:225-26).

While some of the less acceptable aspects of traditional Scottish masculinity are present in *Trainspotting*, different attitudes towards these are offered including overt critique.

There is also a wider variety of masculine identities available in *Trainspotting*, some of

which are criticisms or parodies of the hard man myth, others of which are new constructions. Begbie and Tommy represent different aspects of the working class masculinity found in Clydesidism. Begbie is portrayed by Robert Carlyle as image of the traditional Scottish hard man pushed to ultra-violent, almost comic extremes. According to Renton, Begbie didn't do drugs, 'he did people'; he gets his kicks out of perpetrating violence. The viewer first gets a taste of Begbie's psychotic personality when he throws a pint glass off a pub balcony, injuring a woman, and then, feigning righteous indignation, proceeds to start a brawl because no one will admit to having done it. His behaviour is extreme and unjustified; the hard man's chip on his shoulder is revealed as posturing to excuse violent tendencies and maintain a 'masculine' image.

Tommy (Kevin McKidd) also reflects universally recognisable male stereotypes: he starts out healthy—lifting weights and avoiding drugs—and is interested in sports, sex, and Iggy Pop. But Tommy is also the closest the film gets to the traditional Scottish masculinities of *Braveheart* and *Rob Roy*. He drags Spud, Sick Boy and Renton out to the countryside for rejuvenation. The other three are hardly enthused, so Tommy asks, 'Doesn't it make you proud to be Scottish?' to which Renton replies with the oft quoted 'It's shite being Scottish' speech. Tommy's patriotic pride in Scotland and reverence for its landscape, especially in contrast with the others' indifference or disdain, associates him, albeit indirectly, with a form of Scottish masculinity based on Tartanry. The film, though, does not leave this version of virile masculinity unquestioned. There are parallel conversations in the nightclub scene between Tommy and Spud and their girlfriends Lizzy and Gail. In a reverse of gender expectations, the men discuss relationship problems while the women talk about sex, Lizzy admitting that the only reason she has not broken up with Tommy is the sexual pleasure she gets from him. To her, Tommy is first and foremost a sexual object, reversing the usual portrayal of 'typical' gendered behaviour.

Moreover, such traditional masculinities cannot survive in the post-industrial, drug dependent Scotland *Trainspotting* constructs. Tommy dies because he cannot move on after Lizzy dumps him. Driven to heroin use, he contracts HIV, and then, his immune system fatally weakened, he dies of toxoplasmosis caught from the faeces of the kitten he bought Lizzy as a gift. Tommy's unwillingness to accept his relationship is over proves his undoing. He cannot change and therefore cannot survive. Begbie, too, insists on maintaining the inflexible image of the hard man in the face of a changing world of new drugs, new music and new gender roles. When he discovers that the 'woman' he picked up in a London club is transexual, he is so freaked out that even the usual recourse to violence is undermined. Only later, when Renton suggests that 'it could have been wonderful' does Begbie resort to typical behaviour, threatening his 'friend' with castration. According to Bonnie Blackwell, he threatens Renton because the encounter 'effectively makes Begbie feel castrated by illuminating a side of his character that he does not want revealed. In truth, Begbie's male-centered homosocial subjectivity is just inches from fully realized homosexuality [...] (2004:13). Begbie cannot accept a form of masculinity that is open to other sexual possibilities. He resists adaptation, and this leaves him vulnerable. Ultimately Renton steals the drug money and Sick Boy and Spud leave the hapless Begbie behind to be arrested.

In addition to questioning 'traditional' manifestations of Scottish masculinity, *Trainspotting* also constructs alternative possibilities for identity. For Christine Harold, the prevalence of faeces and a shot in which heroin and blood mix in the syringe suggest a blurring of the distinction between internal and external, therefore destabilising identity (2000). Similarly, the alternative masculinities the film offers are more fluid. The film's heroin addicts—Renton, Sick Boy, Spud and, later, Tommy—all take the drug intravenously. On a very basic Freudian level, they are feminised by this act of penetration. Of the users, Spud (Ewen Bremner) is the least 'masculine'. He kisses Sick Boy (Jonny Lee Miller) in the opening drug-taking sequence, and generally seems to be

the feeblest member of the group. He is not very bright, needing help to fail his job interview in the right way and unable to talk his way out of a jail sentence. Without Renton in Edinburgh to help him, Diane finds him in the gutter.

Sick Boy, by contrast, maintains a veneer of traditional masculine dominance while not quite fitting the mould. In switching from using to dealing drugs, he regains control of penetration, and therefore reclaims his masculinity. Furthermore, he compensates for the de-masculinising effects of heroin use by appropriating the masculine images of pop culture figures. His hair is bleached in the style of punk rockers like Billy Idol, but most prominent is his obsession with Sean Connery. Sick Boy imitates the actor's distinct accent, and most of his dialogue is an extrapolation on Connery's career: even a conversation he has with Renton in the park that seems to be about how 'we all get old and then we can't hack it anymore', is really about *The Name of the Rose*. Sick Boy modifies his appearance to become more like Connery, switching from punk fashions to the sharp suit of the Hollywood version of an international spy. He even carries his gear in the heel of his shoe, much like Bond's *Goldfinger* homing beacon. For Blackwell, Sick Boy's obsession with Connery lets him maintain a masculine image while engaged in feminising behaviour (2004:20). Furthermore in imitating Connery, Sick Boy adopts a version of masculinity that is at the same time Scottish and not Scottish.

Renton's masculinity, like that of Spud and Sick Boy, is also characterised by his habit and by global pop culture. The heroine use and his nickname—Rent Boy, which implies both prostitution and homosexuality—feminise him. His intellect differentiates him from more 'traditional' gender constructions in which action is seen as masculine and reflecting as feminine. We see him reading books by William S. Burroughs and about Montgomery Clift, and his voice-over narration is in the past tense, so we hear him reflecting on the images. More importantly, he also reflects upon gender roles. When Begbie mistakenly picks up the trans woman, Renton narrates: 'The world is

changing [...] Even men and women are changing. One thousand years from now, there'll be no guys and girls, just wankers [...] If you ask me we're heterosexual by default, not by decision. It's just a question of who you fancy. It's all about aesthetics. And it's fuck all to do with morality.' Renton seems to be particularly aware there are alternative masculinities on offer, alternatives that are linked to a world beyond Scotland. As he says this, we see him and Begbie in a club the patrons of which could fit in easily to 1990s rave culture and also hear house music, Beckrock's 'For What You Dream Of', on the soundtrack. This not only suggests that Renton's thoughts are 'modern' and in touch with youth culture, but also that they are global—club culture and its associated musical genres were an international scene, particularly as the growth of the internet allowed people across the globe greater access to artists and DJs.

However, we can, in a way, understand Renton in terms of 'traditional' Scottish identity, particularly the 'lad o'pairts', a male figure who, usually by means of education, leaves the parochial Lowlands behind to seek his fortune elsewhere, often leaving Scotland for England or America. Like this figure, Renton must get away from Scotland and his friends in order to be successful. But he cannot simply leave; when he tries to move to London, Begbie and Sick Boy follow him. Renton has to betray his friends in order to truly be free of them. In this sense, we can see him as a corruption of the 'lad o'pairts'. Instead of earning the right to participate in all the consumer pleasures he lists through education³⁶, he has done so by some rather dubious methods, stealing drug money from his friends. Furthermore, there is considerable uncertainty of whether or not he can truly escape his past life. As Renton says as he shoots up for the last time in the film, 'There are final hits and final hits. What kind was this to be?' There is no guarantee that this change will last. But in Renton, we can see the changing of this

³⁶ It should be noted that Renton in the novel has attended university; this is not mentioned in the film, however.

character for a new historical context. His masculinity is therefore hybrid: traditional and modern, distinctly Scottish yet also global.

Unlike Tommy and Begbie, Sick Boy's and Renton's alternative masculine identities are better suited for survival in *Trainspotting*'s Scotland. Their associations with global youth culture connect them to consumerism; heroin addiction here is less an alternative *to* consumer culture than it is *an* alternative consumer culture. They are well adapted to the neoliberal paradigm. David Harvey defines neoliberalism as: 'a theory of political economic practices that propose human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade' (Harvey 2005:2). Sick Boy in particular is enterprising—especially in his own self-interest, and they are not above betraying each other and their other friends if it serves their own self interests. However, there is a subtle difference between the two of them. Sick Boy's enterprise takes the form of pimping and drug dealing. It is exploitative, especially in the case of the latter, as he is preying upon the people he used to be. He is inward-looking, especially compared to Renton, who betrays his friends so that he can move on and seek the wider world³⁷. In addition, Renton's betrayal is not a complete betrayal—he still leaves Spud his share. Renton does so out of guilt, guilt that he has once again abandoned his friend who seems to rely on him, but also that, of the four, Spud is the most naïve and therefore least deserving of betrayal. In giving Spud the money, Renton can compensate for a sense of guilt by helping him. On the one hand, we can read this politically as a shift from Thatcherite neoliberalism to the neoliberalism of New Labour, which would come to power the year following *Trainspotting*'s release and would combine neoliberalism's emphasis on free markets, individual enterprise, etc.,

³⁷ The film does not specify Renton's destination, but Welsh sends him to Amsterdam—prescient, considering Scotland's, and, indeed, Britain as a whole's, increasing involvement with the continent.

with left-wing political ideals of social progress (Steger and Roy 2010:50). McCrone's analysis of election data suggests that by the 1990s Scotland had become more politically left-leaning than Britain as a whole (2001:124); in this way, we can see Renton as a hybrid of Scottish socialism and British neo-liberalism. On the other hand, Renton has the ability to reflect on the images we see, and so knows that what he does is not right—he says, 'The truth is I'm a bad person.' Because his masculinity allows room for reflection, Renton is able to adapt his behaviour accordingly. Moreover, as *Trainspotting* privileges Renton's point of view, it judges the different masculinities it constructs. Begbie, Tommy and Spud are presented as inadequate because they cannot survive a changing world, at least, in Spud's case, not without help, and Sick Boy exploits others. Renton's masculinity, then, is the favoured form because it is adapted to a changing world, yet still holds something of the value of the old.

The Scottish reviews of *Trainspotting* pick up on the film's unorthodox comic tone and griminess. For *The Scotsman*'s Lynn Cochran, 'The blackest of humour comes at the bleakest of points' (1996:7). There are ways in which the film's humour is understood as Scottish: Kirsty Scott suggests in *The Herald* that the humour is 'occasionally whimsical in a Gregory's Girl kind of way' (qtd. in Laing et al 1996:11). *Trainspotting* is also frequently compared to Boyle, Hodge and Macdonald's previous film; Russell suggests that those who enjoyed *Shallow Grave* will find much to like about *Trainspotting* (1996:11), although *The Herald*'s George Birrell found the former film more enjoyable (1996:19). Birrell also gives *Trainspotting* a negative comparison to *Braveheart* and the like, commenting on the lack of nationalist response as had been felt for that film and saying 'it is absurd to dismiss our glorious scenery, the tartan, and our bloody history as too stereotypical' (1996:19).

Several reviewers identify a wider trend in Scottish film production. Anvar Khan suggests in *The Scotsman* that 'It has been billed as a one-off but, like so many other contemporary Scottish films, *Trainspotting* falls into the trap of elevating the low-

life as philosopher, putting a smart, sophisticated mouth into a resolutely thick head' (qtd in Laing et al 1996:11); this suggests that *Trainspotting*'s representation of Scotland is part of a wider trend. For Kerr, it is one of many recent Scottish successes: she states that 'this trendy world of ours will acclaim, justifiable, *Trainspotting* as another victory for the emerging Scottish film industry' (qtd in Laing et al 1996:11). But some reviewers express concern over the impact *Trainspotting* will have on the Scottish film industry—Kerr noting that it: 'will have to be careful it doesn't get itself bogged down (if you'll pardon the expression) in an obsession with the bleak, the ugly, the violently depressing side of life' (qtd in Laing et al 1996:11).

While most critics appear to accept at face value that *Trainspotting* is a Scottish film, there are some who understand it in different national frameworks. *The Scotsman*'s Angus Wolfe Murray also assesses the film's Scottishness thus: 'There are so many ways this could have come a cropper—too dark, too light, too Hollywood, too provincial. It is certainly the best Scottish film since *Silent Screem* [...] In fact, to go on about its Scottishness weakens its strength and becomes a nationalist argument of limited interest' (1996:20). On the one hand, he labels the film as Scottish, but on the other, suggests that it has the right balance of local and global. Furthermore, in arguing that we should not speak of *Trainspotting* as a Scottish film, Wolfe Murray recalls an older debate: how when something Scottish is successful it becomes British or even international, leaving Scotland with a kitschy pop culture. Despite the efforts of Cairns Craig and others to reclaim Scottish culture, and the increase in Scottish film production, it seems that old fears continued to linger. Moreover, Wolfe Murray suggestion implies that there is an international dimension to the film; however, unlike *Trainspotting*'s globalised Scottishness, it is one that ultimately would make the film less Scottish.

London-based critics also tend to focus on humour and production trends, though there is less entanglement in policy debate. There is an attempt by reviewers in the national press to link *Trainspotting* back to its production team's success a year earlier

with *Shallow Grave*³⁸ and to highlight its dark humour and visceral qualities. Liese Spencer notes in *The Independent* that the film ‘mines a rich vein of black humour’ (1996:19), while others found it to be ‘a gruesome and gritty film’ (Rose 1996a:5) and ‘close-to-unwatchably revolting’ (Anon. 1996a:19). Only a few reviewers explicitly labelled the film and its sense of humour as ‘Scottish’: for example, *Sight & Sound*’s Philip Kemp argues that ‘*Trainspotting* [...] is thoroughly Scottish in its caustic tone and gallows humour. Not that there’s the least hint of tartan nationalism; on the contrary’ (1996:52-3). It is perhaps this lack of perceived ‘Scotch myths’ stereotypes that has led most of the UK reviewers to label the film as ‘British’. For example, in an echo of Colin Welland’s 1981 Oscar acceptance speech, Ryan Gilbey declares in *Premiere*, ‘The British are coming. Or rather, the British are mainlining’ (1996a:8); while a reviewer for *What’s On* calls it ‘the most exhilarating British motion picture in a generation’ (Anon. 1996d:33). Comparisons and contrasts are made to other British filmmakers such as Stanley Kubrick, Richard Lester and Mike Leigh³⁹, but the general trend is to call it a British film unlike any other British film. Lizzie Francke declares in *New Statesman and Society* that ‘there is nothing kitchen sink about it. In fact, it’s more of a toilet sort of film’ (1996:35), while *The Guardian*’s Derek Malcolm calls it almost ‘an anti-heritage British movie, except you can see a bit of Hogarth in it’ (1996:T8). This difference from other styles of British filmmaking, particularly heritage films, is particularly clear in the comparisons made between *Trainspotting* and *Sense and Sensibility* (1995), which had their wide release on the same day. Philip French notes in *The Observer* that *Trainspotting* has ‘Scottish working-class milieu about as far as you can get from *Sense and Sensibility*’ (1996:11). There is a tendency to hold the two films

³⁸ For examples, see Bamigboye 1995; Curtis 1996; Rose 1996a.

³⁹ To cite a few examples—Kubrick: Curtis 1996, Benedict 1996, Nathan 1996; Lester: Francke 1996; Leigh: Malcolm 1996. It should also be noted that Kubrick and Lester were both Americans who made most of their films in Britain.

as examples of the different poles of British culture. A reviewer from the *Financial Times* adds, 'If you are really brave, you could try to see it [*Trainspotting*] straight after *Sense and Sensibility* and come away with a special understanding of the gulfs in British culture [...]' (Anon. 1996:19).

Another way the critics in the UK national press frame *Trainspotting* as British is to associate it with other contemporary cultural trends, notably Britpop. The *Daily Mirror*'s Simon Rose calls it 'The first agit-Britpop movie' (1996b:5), and others allude to the soundtrack: Gilbey claims 'there's more Britpop in the movie than drugs' (1996a:9). The emphasis on the film's Britpop affinities seems to be part of a wider trend of commentary on its appeal to youth culture. Francke declares that it is 'the first British feature to speak to and about the 1990s generation' (1996:35). In associating the film with youth culture, these reviewers open up *Trainspotting* to a global understanding. Likewise, it is linked to global pop culture through comparisons with Hollywood and other cinemas. *Trainspotting* is compared to films by American directors: Johnston says that Sick Boy's monologues about Sean Connery 'could have come from a Quentin Tarantino movie' (1996:11). *Trainspotting* is also evaluated for its place among drug films. For Malcolm it 'has little in common with *The Man with the Golden Arm*, or even the harder, greyer *Christiane F.* Its nearest equivalent is the French *La Haine*, which was not about drugs at all but tried to identify present discontents on a housing estate near Paris' (1996:T8). *Trainspotting* is an atypical drug film that has much in common with other cinemas' explorations of youth.

In North American English-language publications, there is also a great deal of emphasis on *Trainspotting*'s humour and relation to other Scottish films. *The Gazette*'s critic referred to it as 'the most deliriously entertaining, defiantly alive and rigorously lyric black comedy to come out of Britain in ages' (1996f:C1). More so than in the London-based press, this humour is sometimes identified as Scottish: *Daily Variety*'s Derek Elley calls it a 'rough, self-deprecating Scottish humor' (1996). Unsurprisingly,

the way *Trainspotting* is most commonly flagged as Scottish is through language, often the incomprehensibility thereof. The accents are called ‘haggis-thick’ (Wloszczyna 1996:1D) and ‘intermittently decipherable’ (Simon 1996:95), among other things. Robert Dominguez of the *New York Daily News* warns: ‘The characters’ burrs are thicker than a morning fog over the Scottish moors’ (1996:28), a rare instance of trying to associate *Trainspotting* with Scotch myths stereotypes. What is more common is to see the film contrasted with *Braveheart*. Hal Hinson, of *The Washington Post*, makes the astute observation that “‘Trainspotting’ is to ‘Braveheart’ what ‘Lord of the Flies’ was to ‘Swiss Family Robinson’”. Its grit and realism serve as a brash response to the romanticism of Hollywood’s recent Scottish epics’ (1996:26). Hinson seems to pick up on the cultural resistance *Trainspotting* offers, noting that ‘In this Scotland, the successors to hero William Wallace are anything but proud of their heritage’ (1996:26).

Though while a handful of critics identify the film as Scottish beyond the usual superficial fare, more locate *Trainspotting* within other aspects of British film culture. It is frequently contrasted with other styles of British cinema, particularly the ‘kitchen sink realism’ of the British new wave and *Four Weddings and a Funeral*’s contemporary heritage. According to Rea, ‘Trainspotting offers anything but the kitchen-sink realism of ‘60s British cinema (and Ken Loach in perpetuity). Call it toilet seat surrealism instead’ (1996:03); Taubin calls it ‘an antidote to the vaporous charm of *Four Weddings and a Funeral* on one hand and the cranky social realism of Ken Loach on the other’ (1996:66). This is a different kind of British cinema, one that, as other reviewers highlight, has closer affinities with a tradition of British pop music. Here, too, there is emphasis on the film’s use of Britpop. Rea notes that it is ‘buoyed by a great Brit Pop soundtrack’ (1996:03), while others⁴⁰ list the numerous British bands featured in the film. What is perhaps surprising is the tendency to compare *Trainspotting* to The

⁴⁰ Griffin 1996:D1; Kehr 1996:50; Taubin 1996:66.

Beatles, particularly as imagined by Richard Lester in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964). Janet Maslin describes the performers as 'cavorting Beatle-like for the camera' (1996:C1). This connection is not quite as odd as it may seem; for one thing, Britpop often channelled the popular music of the 1960s and 1970s⁴¹. For another, The Beatles are a globally recognisable image of Britain different from the image of heritage Britain. It is an alternative form of 'Britishness', one in keeping with the constructed 'Cool Britannia'.

The emphasis on *Trainspotting's* soundtrack also serves to connect it with global youth culture. Again there are comparisons made with Stanley Kubrick. Hinson describes Renton as 'the most distressing symbol of antiheroic nihilism since Malcolm McDowell starred in "A Clockwork Orange"' (1996). Whereas many of the comparisons made between the two films in the British press tended to focus on style, here there is a tendency to connect them based on their spirits of youthful rebellion; Taubin, for example, links *Trainspotting* to Larry Clark's *Kids* (1995) and the Sex Pistols as well as to *A Clockwork Orange* (1971). Indeed, there is a general emphasis on the film's appeal to youth culture. Howe calls it 'an inspired tribute to wasted youths' (1996b:N31), For *The Gazette's* John Griffin, the protagonists are 'perfect poster children for the post-Blank generation', (1996:D1).

In Scotland, reviewers labelled *Trainspotting* as a Scottish film, though critics were aware of problems with the act of labelling it as such. Reviewers in the UK national press mostly saw it as a British film, though their construction of 'Britishness' embraces identities that transcend national boundaries. Beside the preoccupation with accent, most North American reviews seem to label it in terms of this 'Cool Britannia' construction of Britishness, reinforcing the way *Trainspotting* can be understood in an

⁴¹ Oasis paid frequent homage to The Beatles, from their haircuts, to Liam Gallagher's vocal style, to some of the harmonies found on their 1995 album *What's the Story Morning Glory?*

international context. While the film constructs a Scotland that is in step with global trends, reviews have overall seen its Scottishness and globalism as two distinct things.

Orphans: Rethinking the Scottish Hardman

Peter Mullan's debut feature *Orphans* (1998) provides another interesting reflection on questions of masculinity, including the limitations of traditional modes of behaviour. The film opens as the Flynn family—oldest brother Thomas (Gary Lewis), working man Michael (Douglas Henshall), wheelchair bound Sheila (Rosemary Stevenson) and college boy John (Stephen McCole)—bid their dead mother a final goodbye on the eve of her funeral. What seems like the set-up for a social realist exploration of a grieving family soon turns to dark comedy and melodramatic excess. Thomas's shambolic performance of their mother's favourite song and subsequent emotional breakdown spurs Michael into a pub brawl in which he is stabbed. Thomas spends the rest of the night locked in the church with the casket, but the rest of the family is out on the Glaswegian streets. John has vowed revenge on the guy who stabbed Michael and teams up with his unhinged delivery man cousin Tanga (Frank Gallagher). Michael refuses medical treatment and tries to wait out the night to pass off his stab wound as a workplace injury for which he can claim compensation. Sheila's attempt to get home on her own fails when her wheelchair breaks down and a little girl takes her in like a stray dog. Even Thomas is not spared from the elements as a storm blows the roof off the church.

Before writing and directing *Orphans*, Mullan, who won Best Actor at the 1998 Cannes Festival for his performance in Ken Loach's *My Name Is Joe* (also set in Glasgow)⁴², had written a sitcom pilot⁴³ and made three short films—*Close* (1994),

⁴² He also appears as a soldier in *Braveheart* and as drug dealer Mother Superior in *Trainspotting*.

Good Day for the Bad Guys (1995), and *Fridge* (1995), the latter with the Tartan Shorts funding scheme. His debut feature was to be a very personal project with Mullan noting *Orphans* was inspired by his own reactions to the death of his mother (Spencer 1999:12-14). The film was produced by Frances Higson, daughter of Paddy Higson, who was also executive producer on the film and had previously worked with Bill Forsyth. It received much acclaim at Cannes and won awards at the 1998 Venice Festival⁴⁴. However, *Orphans* was not widely released until 1999 as Channel 4, its financial backers, initially refused to distribute it.

Like *Trainspotting*, *Orphans* challenges traditional constructions of Scottish masculinity in several important ways. Firstly, it offers a critique of the myth of Clydesidism. Mullan critiques this construction of Scottish masculinity through the characters John and Michael, who are quick to temper and violence and thus represent different aspects of the hard man. Michael, as a shipyard worker, is the more traditional version of the stereotype, whereas John, in rejecting a potential future in higher education and the possibilities it would bring suggests an attitude that reflects a more contemporary version of the hard man, one that has been changed by economic and industrial decline to be filled with anger and violence. In the opening scene, we can see the differences between the two brothers: John's face conveys a range of warring emotions, while Michael remains impassive throughout. Their subsequent journeys—Michael's, to try to stay alive until morning, when he can attempt to claim compensation for his injuries, is pragmatic; John's, to prove his toughness by seeking vengeance on the guy who stabbed Michael, is passion-driven—are extensions of this. Mullan's critique works on two levels. First of all, their masculine posturing nearly destroys them both.

⁴³ The Glasgow-set *Miles Better* was co-written by Mullan and Peter Arnott and was shown as part of Channel 4's *Bunch of Five* in 1992.

⁴⁴ Though screened out of competition, Mullan won the Cult Network Italia prize, the Isvema Award, the Kodak Award, and the Prix Pierrot. He was also awarded the 1999 Paris Film Festival Grand Prix for *Orphans*.

In his stubborn attempt to provide for his family, Michael almost bleeds to death; while John only turns away from his destructive path when he realises he has almost killed a baby. Second, their actions are so excessive that it verges on parody, making it difficult to take them seriously. When Michael tries to pass his stab wound off as a workplace injury, his demands ‘I want compensation!’ turn to cries of ‘I want my mammy!’ and he falls, ghostly white with blood loss, onto a pallet in the river. The scene is as funny as it is sad. Mullan critiques the ‘hard man’ character by pushing it to the point of ridiculousness and allowing it to become an object of bleak laughter.

Another way in which *Orphans* challenges representations of ‘traditional’ Scottish masculinity is by offering alternative possibilities for being ‘Scottish’ and ‘male’. Like *Trainspotting*, Mullan presents us with an ensemble cast. Each of the four characters handles the loss of the mother in his or her own self-defeating way. Thomas relies on piety to give him the sense that he is fulfilling her wishes. John channels his anger into his revenge quest, while Michael bottles up his emotions. Sheila’s reactions are stubborn, but perhaps the most practical: she realises that, with her mother gone, they will have to fend for themselves. However, Mullan does not present one sibling’s manner of grieving as better than any other’s. They are all equally poor. As mentioned above, John and Michael’s paths nearly have disastrous consequences. Limited by her disability, Sheila is unable to take care of herself, and Thomas, who through his misguided sense of duty fails to respond to Michael’s need when the latter requests help, literally collapses under the weight of filial piety as he attempts to be his mother’s sole pallbearer. Later he returns to the grave to plant flowers, and, with great difficulty, the others convince him to leave the cemetery and join them in a curry, and so the family manages to stay together, symbolically leaving the past behind and moving on.

There are other ways in which *Orphans* offers the possibility of alternative and more sustaining modes of response and of masculine identity, however. David Martin-Jones suggests that the film can be understood as a work of Deleuzian minor cinema,

‘taking a major voice and making it speak in a minor way’ (2004:229). Martin-Jones further explains that a key characteristic of minor cinema is that it ‘is a collective enunciation. The individual enunciation of directorial authority is here filtered through a series of intercessors, characters who create a collective voice that speaks for the filmmaker’ (2004:229-30). The minority voice in which minor cinema speaks is plural. According to Martin-Jones, *Orphans* fits the criteria for a work of minor cinema in three ways: it serves as an allegory for how the Scots reimagined themselves as a people post-devolution, it re-examines national myths and stereotypes, and it is

a collective enunciation through Mullan’s allegorical conflation of personal grief with the (national) reawakening of the film’s characters, the intercessors through which his minor voice speaks. To create this effect the film places the British documentary realist tradition in, as it were, stylistic, or perhaps, aesthetic quotation marks [...] through its deconstruction of elegiac myths of Scottish identity, its use of distancing effects, and the injection of a self-conscious, European art cinema stylistic eclecticism (2004:230).

What emerges, then, is a Scottish identity that is not fixed but developing, and, in placing the aesthetic of British social realism in quotation marks alongside European and other styles, suggesting other possible identities.

Reviews of *Orphans* seem to support Martin-Jones’s understanding of it as a work of minor cinema in that they see it as an unusual hybrid of genres and styles. In Scotland, Allan Laing of *The Herald* calls it a ‘painful tragedy and black-as-coal comedy’ (1998:15). It is quite common to see *Orphans* read as both a comedy and a melodrama. In the UK national press, Peter Bradshaw writes in *The Guardian* that it is a ‘black blast of horror and scandalised laughter and un-appealingly angry despair’ that is also ‘excessive in so many senses’ (1999:6) suggesting that the film is both a dark comedy and, in his mention of excess, a melodrama. In North America, too, *Orphans* is

read as both a comedy and melodrama. Justine Elias of *Film Comment* refers to it as an ‘uneasy mix of farce and fury’ (2000:76). A few reviews even support Martin-Jones’s suggestions that *Orphans* puts British documentary realism into aesthetic quotation marks and offers new stylistic possibilities. Trevor Johnston of *The Scotsman* observes that ‘the degree of stylisation allows the film-maker to push the emotional parameters of the piece beyond documentary observation’ (1998:12). This would suggest that there is something—in Martin-Jones’s reading, Scottishness—added to the film’s social realism. In *The Sunday Telegraph*, Anne Billson argues that *Orphans* is ‘not so much social realist à la Loach, as social surrealist à la Alasdair Gray’ (1999:8). She adds that it is ‘a film for those who gravitate toward, say, Scorsese rather than Merchant Ivory’ (1999:8). Not only does the film have a unique spin on the British realist tradition, crucially it also has been influenced by non-British film styles.

Most reviews are fairly straightforward in labelling *Orphans* as Scottish, perhaps due to the allegorical reading it presents. Jonathan Murray explains:

Mullan’s film reconceives the model of childhood experience as national-allegorical trope as a nascent state, characterized to a degree by possibility and fluidity, not by a retrospective and elegiac acknowledgment of inevitable closure and trauma. The childhood model here maps the potential developmental process of individual protagonists and therefore also of the national culture which they are constructed to represent. As well, it locates responsibility for the directions that such development will take *within* the creative and political agency of the national culture, making representation of the culture a constituent part of that culture, rather than conceiving it as imposed wholly from elsewhere (2001:84).

Orphans is therefore a film addressed directly to a Scottish audience. Mullan’s own comments support this reading: ‘In my country Mother Socialism is supposedly gone—there isn’t the big protector any more—and I wanted to ask fundamental questions: what

do we do now we're alone; do we help each other or do we come up with ludicrous notions like the characters in the film' (qtd. in Spencer 1999:12-14).

While the press does not openly suggest *Orphans* be read as a national allegory, it does tend to label it in relatively straightforward terms. Instead of using Tartan stereotypes or evoking Bill Forsyth through terms like 'whimsy', most find other ways of labelling its localism Scottish. Laing calls *Orphans* a 'raw slice of Glaswegian reality' (1998:15), and Mullan is described as 'Scotland's one-man film industry' by Hunter (1998:18). Many of these Scottish labels take on a celebratory tone. Allan Hunter suggests in *Scotland on Sunday* that Mullan is 'one of the most distinctive voices in Scottish cinema' (1999:4) and that the film is 'one of the best Scottish features of the past decade' (1999:4). As with *Trainspotting*, there is particular emphasis on the film's dark humour. *The Herald's* William Russell calls it a 'very funny black comedy' (1998:15) and 'a black farce' (1998:15), and Hunter describes the film's comedy as 'bruising gallows humour' (1999:4). Indeed, for many critics, this gallows humour is what makes *Orphans* particularly Scottish. For Alastair Mckay of *The Scotsman* it is 'a masterclass in Glaswegian humour; a brand of comedy that is at once boastful and self-effacing' (1999:19). While, films like *Local Hero* and *Restless Natives* were also defined as Scottish based on their style of humour, in the case of *Orphans*, the 'Scottish humour' seems more self-defined, relying more on an already established comic tradition.

There is also a tendency in reviews to invoke other Scottish films and traditions, though usually to point out how *Orphans* differs from them. *The Sunday Mail's* Alasdair Marshall says it 'makes *Trainspotting* seem like a trendy sham' (1999:8), but mostly it is seen in the context of Clydesidism. For example, in the *Daily Record* Siobhan Synnot explicitly says that it serves to 'debunk much of the usual myth making about Glasgow hardmen having knives of steel and hearts of gold' (1999:50). For these reviewers, the evocation of the Scotch myth Clydesidism in *Orphans* serves not to

promote such myths but to demystify them. The strategies discussed above that Mullan uses to critique various ‘traditional’ figures of Scottish masculinity were therefore very obvious to Scots reviewing the film. This relates to Murray’s suggestion that the film works as a Scottish national allegory: both cases suggest that the film is directed to Scottish viewers. The way accent is discussed in Scottish reviews of *Orphans* also suggests that the film was made for Scots. Russell explains why Scots, but potentially not others, will be able to understand the film; he says the ‘Edinburgh audience was able to understand the dialogue [...] English audiences, not to mention American ones, will require subtitles, and with good reason’ (1999:12). The film’s intended audience must therefore be the Scots, as it is incomprehensible to outside audiences.

Though with less of a sense that *Orphans* is targeted toward a Scottish audience, we can also see the UK press labelling the film as ‘Scottish’ without referring to stereotypes. Again, a sense of authenticity and accuracy in its depiction of Scotland is expressed: *The Guardian*’s Derek Malcolm calls it ‘as typically Scottish as anything I’ve ever seen’ (1998:11), while for Geoff Andrew of *Time Out* it is, ‘arguably *the* Glasgow movie’ (1999:69). Mullan is here, too, referred to by such terms as ‘Scottish writer-director’⁴⁵ There is also, as with the Scottish papers, emphasis on *Orphans*’s dark humour, which is seen as something particularly Scottish. In *The Times* James Christopher refers to the film as having ‘Glaswegian wit’ (1999), and Nigel Andrews calls it ‘a bleak, funny very Scottish black comedy: Calvinism on celluloid’ (1999:20).

And in common with the Scottish reviews, there is also a tendency to compare *Orphans* to other Scottish works and traditions. Some of these are simple: Lawrenson compares the film to the ‘determinedly dour sensibility’ of Bill Douglas (1999:54), and Trevor Lewis of *Empire* magazine likens the film to the ‘lopsided reality’ of Danny Boyle (1999:30), suggesting something of the surrealism of *Trainspotting*. But again

⁴⁵ See Anon. (1999c:18) and French (1999:7).

others are meant to show how *Orphans* differs. By contrast Bradshaw describes it as ‘light years away from *Trainspotting*, it doesn’t have stylistic accessories or a happening soundtrack or cool twangy voiceovers’ (1999:6). Furthermore, the only place where the recognition of the film’s Scottish address is in London-based reviewers’ efforts to distance the film from the myth of Clydesidism. Lawrenson argues that ‘*Orphans* quietly assured surrealist slant places it in a Scottish tradition diametrically opposed to the hard boiled realism’ and ‘that tradition’s insistently masculine bias—and the last stereotypes of the Glasgow hardman it has perpetuated—is slyly subverted throughout *Orphans*’ (1999:54). *Orphans*’s ‘Scottishness’ as understood in the UK national press is one that not only eschews Scotch myths stereotypes, but also actively attempts to deconstruct them. As with the Scottish reviews, this suggests *Orphans* was understood by some critics to be primarily addressed to a Scottish audience.

However, a *Sunday Herald* review sums how we can also understand the film in an international context, arguing that *Orphans* ‘gives the local full due and then raises it to a universal high’ (Colin, Sandar and Jamieson 1999:11). *Orphans* may be very ‘Scottish’ but there is enough about it that could be understood in other contexts and by other cultures. For example, American critics did not associate the film very strongly with Scottishness. Rooney refers to Mullan as a ‘Scottish actor’ (1998:57) and says that the ‘thick Glaswegian accents [...] make great chunks of the dialogue all but unintelligible’ (1998:57).

In the United States while many reviews also focus on the film’s dark humour⁴⁶, this is not connected to a perceived sense of ‘Scottishness’. Thus *Orphans* is less ‘Scottish’ for American critics than for their Scottish and British counterparts. Perhaps this could be partially due to its success at festivals which create an association with international art cinema. But Justine Elias suggests another explanation in the journal

⁴⁶ See Holden (1999:24).

Film Comment: poor subtitles, which result in ‘not a translation but a rewritten, sanitized, de-Scottishized film’ (2000:76). This attempt to make *Orphans* more accessible to an international audience could possibly have diminished those audiences’ ability to understand it in a Scottish context.

Other critics associate *Orphans* with British cinema. Synnot, one of the few Scottish critics to label the film ‘British’, calls it ‘Four Kinfolk and a Funeral’ (1999:50), invoking the popular British film *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (1994). However, there is a much stronger tendency in the London-based press to see *Orphans* as a British film, albeit a kind of ‘Britishness’ that does not efface the film’s ‘Scottishness’. Bradshaw contrasts it to the ‘Cool Britannia’ phenomenon, calling it ‘a film from the dour heart of uncool Britannia, closer to Edward Bond than Liam Gallagher’ (1999:6). It is the darker side (dour here being code for ‘Scottish’) of 1990s British pop culture. But the more common—and, ironically, more complicated—way the national press discusses *Orphans* as a British film is to compare it to the works of Ken Loach. Loach is a filmmaker in the tradition of British documentary realism, but since the 1990s he has made a number of films in Scotland, including *Carla’s Song* (1996), *My Name Is Joe* (1998), *Ae Fond Kiss* (2004), and, most recently, *The Angel’s Share* (2012). Some focus on Loachian politics rather than realist style: *The Observer*’s Philip French observes that the film is ‘not political all unless you define politics (as Loach would) as the dominant force that shapes our world’ (1999:7). Others compare it directly to *My Name Is Joe*. For example, Quirke says that Mullan ‘examine the same kind of emotional material in *Orphans*’ (1999:3) as Loach had in *My Name Is Joe*, and French says that the films have a ‘similar working class Glasgow milieu’ (1999:7). Comparing *Orphans* to the work of Ken Loach complicates the understanding of its national identity. While placing it within the tradition of a certain type of British filmmaking, this tradition’s national identity is itself troubled by changing production contexts in which more films are being made with regional and international funding. Thus if the national papers are trying to

promote *Orphans* as a British film, it is a definition of 'Britishness' that accommodates these changes, one that includes 'Scottish' as one of many British identities.

In general the reviews of *Orphans* tend to locate the film's Scottishness in terms of its production context, location, and distinctive sense of humour, as well as the accents used in it. While critics' understandings do not directly reflect the way in which the film problematizes identity, they do, in a way, relate to it. For one thing, the way critics' reading of the film as a blend of genres and styles relates back to the multiple addresses of a minor cinema. For another, the ways in which Mullan's address to his Scottish audience seems to be so transparent suggests that, while some critics may be missing the specific identities he is constructing, they do at least understand his intention to critique stereotypical aspects of Scottish masculinity.

Conclusion

The four films considered in this chapter present a number of ways in which Scottish identity—and particularly Scottish masculinity—were constructed and explored in 1990s cinema. It seems like the more Scottish involvement in a film's production there was, the more likely a film was to question, and even push beyond the boundaries of, traditional ideas and images of Scottish masculine identity. *Braveheart* and *Rob Roy* both play with discourses of Tartanry by way of a Scottish/English binary opposition which defines masculinity in terms of a sense of honour related to virility. But while *Braveheart* treated this binary largely straight-faced, the Scottish-originated production of *Rob Roy* destabilises masculinity by subtly troubling the distinction between Scottish and English. It breaks down this dichotomy through the figure of its villain, Archie Cunningham, who, on the one hand, reveals the construction of masculinity on which it relies to be a performance, and, on the other, troubles the rigid boundary between the two nationalities with his uncertain parentage. *Orphans* and *Trainspotting*, both films of the New Scottish Cinema, work in different ways to critique and parody the myth of the

traditional hard man and at the same time offer multiple ways to be Scottish and male. *Trainspotting* offers a vision of hybrid Scottish masculinity—one that is both traditional and modern, Scottish and global and so better suited for a changing world; whereas *Orphans*, through its explorations of male grief, presents a range of masculine responses that prove equally incapable of dealing with loss—whether that of a beloved mother or of a way of life underpinned by socialist politics and the welfare state.

Reviews of the four films suggest that, while national labels may have been important, there are other kinds of identifications that held as much if not more importance. *Braveheart* was labelled a ‘Scottish’ film due to the nationalistic response it evoked, its anti-English sentiments, although this is problematic as there are other—notably Australian and American—cultures with strains of anti-English sentiments relevant to the film, and, to a lesser extent and evidenced by the North American critics’ seeming obsession with kilts, in terms of Scotch myths representations. However, what is clear is that everywhere the film was received first and foremost in terms of its genre and as a Mel Gibson vehicle. The Scotch myths discourses are far more prevalent in critical discussions of *Rob Roy*, perhaps due to the fact that the film seems to be knowingly subverting them. Genre was an important way in which the film was labelled, but, given that the film was received as a Scottish variant of the Western, the genre reading does not serve to make the film less Scottish. In both of these Hollywood-financed films, one of the key markers of Scottishness was the accuracy of the Scottish accents used by the Australian, Irish and American stars.

For the two UK-funded independent films, accent was important, with unintelligibility often indicating authenticity. In the case of *Orphans*, the film’s Scottishness was linked to the authenticity of its Glasgow milieu and to its ‘Scottish’ sense of humour, and, as well as for *Trainspotting*, in their relationship to other Scottish film. However, both productions are also labelled as British, although the Britishness constructed by the critics seems to be an alternative one that allows for plural identities.

With perhaps the exception of protest against the way homosexuality was portrayed in *Braveheart*, in all four cases, the way critics tend to understand the films as Scottish ignores that they construct Scotland as essentially masculine. This may suggest that the idea of a masculine Scotland is so deeply ingrained that, even for films that attempt to challenge stereotypes, the basic masculine associations of Scottish culture remain largely unquestioned.

So while Hollywood continued to construct Scottish masculinity according to traditional representational strategies, some of the key works of the New Scottish Cinema were more likely to question the familiar repertoire of masculine identities and even offered new and multiple ways of being Scottish and male. In terms of representation, however, two seemingly contradictory things were happening. On the one hand, there continued to be a growth in the way films were labelled as Scottish in both traditional and contemporary ways. On the other hand, there is also an increasing tendency to view them in 'global' terms like stars, genres, and international debates and movements. We must ask ourselves, though, if this is really a contradiction, or if this more accurately indicates a shift in the way we define the national. The response to *Orphans* and *Trainspotting* shows changing definitions of both Scottishness and Britishness, which suggests that more open, inclusive identities is not just a product of growing political nationalism in Scotland and the emerging Scottish film industry, but that it represents a shift in the way we understand national identities in an increasingly transnational or even globalised world.

In the next decade, Scottish films would further open up and explore the question of identity as multi-faceted and plural. And even during the 1990s we can see examples of films such as *The Winter Guest* (1998) and *Stella Does Tricks* (1998) that feature female protagonists and explore female experiences and perspectives. But in the films in considered in this chapter, women are either marginalised—such as Diane in *Trainspotting* or Sheila in *Orphans*—or are constructed as 'traditional' wives and

mothers. In *Braveheart* both Wallace's wife Murrion and the French Princess Isabelle merely function as objects that drive the quest for legitimate paternity in *Braveheart*. It is tempting to say the same of Mary MacGregor in *Rob Roy*; for one thing, she is represented as something to be violated or protected, or with her ginger hair and feisty personality she is very much the stereotype of a Scotswoman. Yet her relationship with Rob—they view their marriage as a partnership of equals—seems very contemporary, suggesting a construction of femininity that is both traditional and modern.

In this way, we can see Scottish film of the 1990s carrying on from Scottish films from the previous decade. As we have seen, Scottish films of the 1980s played with Scotch myths to create Scotlands that were pluralistic, encompassing both the traditional and the modern. In the 1990s, this widening of the range of Scottish identities continued, with the focus in Scottish film now being on masculinity. Traditional forms of Scottish masculinity were present, though not unquestioned, and alternative forms were explored in the films of the New Scottish Cinema. The next chapters will examine how considerations of ethnicity, race and gender continued to broaden the Scottish identities on offer in films of the 2000s and 2010s.

Chapter Five

Of Mobsters and Masala: Ethnic Difference and Postcolonial Identities in Scottish Film of the 2000s

Introduction

Of the 5,295,403 respondents to the 2011 census in Scotland, approximately⁴⁷ 96% identified as having a white ethnicity, the most common being white Scottish, white other British, Irish, and Polish (Scotland's Census 2011, 2013a). Of the remaining 4% of the population, the biggest minority ethnic group were Asians at 2.7%, the majority of whom reported being Pakistani, Indian, and Chinese (Scotland's Census 2011, 2013a). Approximately 0.9% reported as being African, Caribbean or Black, or Arab, and 0.4% were of mixed ethnicities. While the overall proportion may be small, the number of people in Scotland identifying as a minority ethnicity has doubled since the 2001 census (Scotland's Census 2011, 2013). By comparison, 14% of the population in England and Wales identified themselves as non-white in the census (Office for National Statistics, 2012).

While Scotland's population may have been diversifying, in terms of felt national identity, the 2011 census also demonstrated a heavy identification as Scottish rather than British. Approximately 62.4% of the respondents to the census identified as Scottish only; a further 18.3% responded as being equally Scottish and British, while 1.9% responded as being Scottish and another national identity (Scotland's Census 2011, 2013b). Only 8.4% of the respondents identified as British only, and 4.4% reported a nationality other than Scottish or British (Scotland's Census 2011, 2013b). Furthermore, more than 30% of those identifying as a minority ethnicity also identified their

⁴⁷ Figures have been rounded to the nearest tenth of a percent.

nationality as Scottish (Scotland's Census 2011, 2013b). It would therefore seem that, regardless of ethnic background, more people are finding ways in which to identify as Scottish. For David McCrone this arises out of people's everyday experiences living in Scotland (2001:174), echoing Michael Billig's definition of banal nationalism: 'the ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced. It is argued that these habits are not removed from everyday life [...] Daily, the nation is indicated, or "flagged", in the lives of its citizenry' (1995:6). However, McCrone also offers a caution: 'The evidence [...] indicates that being Scottish has become much stronger and more culturally diverse [...] To say this is not to imply that we know what people mean when they say they are Scottish, or that it is like a badge pinned to the lapel, there for everyone to read' (2001:174). In other words, while nearly 83% of people living in Scotland in 2011 felt themselves in some way to be Scottish, the census data does not tell us how these people were defining this identity.

While we may not know what was in the minds of those who filled out the 2011 census, we can consider the ways in which films produced during the 2000s—and their reception in the press—constructed Scotland. Film production in Scotland underwent several changes during the decade. There was a major institutional development in 2006 when Scottish Screen, the Lottery-funded organisation that had been formed by the merger of several film bodies in 1997, was dissolved. But it would be a further four years before responsibility for the public support of film eventually transferred to a new body, Creative Scotland. While active, Scottish Screen had drawn criticism for favouring American independent-style productions such as *The Near Room* (1995), *The Slab Boys* (1997), and *The Debt Collector* (1999) that subsequently had trouble competing in an international market (Murray 2015:48-49). The perceived failure of Scottish film post-*Trainspotting* was blamed on a mimicry of American film, and, as a consequence, filmmakers shifted away from making films of this style (Murray 2015:50), with some turning toward international co-production as an alternative. At the

same time there was an increase in other kinds of transnational collaboration, particularly with Scandinavian partners and exemplified by films involving the Glasgow-based independent Sigma Films and Danish director Lars von Trier's production company, Zentropa, such as *Wilbur Wants to Kill Himself* (2002), *Dogville* (2003), and *Red Road* (2006). Furthermore, Scotland was also increasingly becoming a global film location for Bollywood productions such as *Pyaar Ishq aur Mohabbat* (2001).

During the decade, Scottish films began to turn away from the familiar representational tropes, Scotch myths and national allegories to explore more transnational or global concerns and identities. Whereas the cinematic treatment of Scottish identities during the 1990s had been dominated by representations of masculinity, the beginning of the twenty-first century witnessed new constructions in which questions of difference—racial, ethnic, gender, sexuality—began to emerge. For some commentators, these identities were also essentially transnational or global, stressing ties beyond the nation's borders. David Martin-Jones for example defines Scottish cinema of the 2000s as a 'global cinema', the product of

[...] both a youthful film industry with a global impact and a small nation in which the global film industry makes films [...] Scotland is understood as a country that exists in the midst of, and interjects in various ways with, the increasingly decentralised flows of film production and distribution that circulate the globe (2009:11).

Thus as Scottish film production was becoming part of an increasingly globalised industry, so Scottish filmmakers began offering a more plural, diverse and inclusive representation of Scotland.

The overarching concept of 'Scotland' is, on the one hand, what holds different identities together, and on the other hand, what differentiates them from similar (compound) identities elsewhere. The nation can absorb new identities and be

transformed by this inclusion, but there is nevertheless a stable structure present that marks the nation to both insiders and outsiders. Viewing the nation as such will allow us to understand Scottish films' global identities in a Scottish context.

In this chapter, I will consider the ways in which ethnic and post-colonial identities can complicate our understanding of the 'Scottishness' of Scottish film. I will focus on four Glasgow-set, independently produced, genre films (in a broad sense of the term). Two are located amongst the city's Scots-Italian community and draw on the conventions of the Hollywood gangster film combined with comedy: *Strictly Sinatra* (Peter Capaldi 2001) and *American Cousins* (Don Coutts 2003). The other two—Ken Loach's social realist melodrama *Ae Fond Kiss* (2004) and the Bollywood-inspired romantic comedy *Nina's Heavenly Delights* (Pratibha Parmar 2006), engage with Scots-Asian identities.

Keeping It in 'The Family': Global Identities in the Scots-Italian Gangster Films

Strictly Sinatra and American Cousins

Italians began emigrating to Scotland in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, around the same time other countries such as the United States also experienced Italian immigration. Though there were large enclaves of Italians in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen, Italians settled throughout Scotland, opening fish and chip shops and ice cream parlours⁴⁸, for which they often sponsored family and others to join them as employees. A self-contained community at first, after hostilities they were met with during the Second World War, they began to assimilate more into Scottish society, though historian T M Devine asserts that the community still retains a sense of Italian identity (2012:517). In the 2011 Scottish census, 2,225 of respondents reported their

⁴⁸ Bill Forsyth's *Comfort and Joy* (1984) plays on this and the stereotype of the Italian Americans gangster by reimagining the competition between family-run Glaswegian ice cream businesses as a comical mob war.

national identity as both Scottish and Italian (Scotland's Census 2011, 2013b). Peter Capaldi's 2001 feature film, *Strictly Sinatra*, offers an interesting view of Scots-Italian identity. It tells the story of a mediocre Glaswegian Frank Sinatra impersonator, Tony Coccozza (Ian Hart), who dreams of making it big just like his hero, and is given the opportunity to do so by local gangsters. Despite the warnings of his accompanist and father figure Bill (Alun Armstrong), Tony succumbs to the Faustian temptations offered by Chisolm (Brian Cox), a gangster who claims to have worked with the mob in Las Vegas. Chisolm rigs a local talent show to get Tony on television; to return the favour, Tony starts working for him. But before he gets in too deep, Tony escapes by running away to New York City with his girlfriend, Irene (Kelly Macdonald).

Capaldi made his feature film debut as an actor in Bill Forsyth's *Local Hero* and in more recent times has become a familiar face on British television through his roles in *The Thick of It* (2005-2012) and *Doctor Who* (2013-present). But earlier in his career he harboured other ambitions, penning the script for the feature film *Soft Top, Hard Shoulder* (1993) before writing and directing the Oscar winning *Franz Kafka's It's a Wonderful Life* (1993), a film made under the Tartan Shorts funding scheme that combined Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* with Frank Capra's perennial Christmas favourite starring James Stewart. According to David Martin-Jones, 'A Scots-Italian, Capaldi places his hybrid identity at the forefront of his movies' (2009:3), and significantly both *Soft Top Hard Shoulder* and *Strictly Sinatra* feature similar stories of Italian immigration while also evidencing a sense of humour clearly reminiscent of Forsyth. In this case, we can identify *Strictly Sinatra* as a hybrid of Scottish and transnational Italian cultural antecedents.

Jonathan Murray offers an allegorical reading that provides another way of understanding *Strictly Sinatra* as a Scottish film. He points out that many of the Scottish films that emulated the success of *Shallow Grave* and *Trainspotting* by using a blend of Hollywood genres and American independent styles, had failed to achieve either

commercial or cultural success. Moreover this resulted in ‘Scottish-American developmental agendas losing most of their impetus and authority by the time the 2000s dawned’ (Murray 2015:50). *Strictly Sinatra* was an example of this disappointing trend. The film received poor reviews and did badly at the box office. In addition DNA films, which had been established by the government to receive Lottery funding and was run by producers Andrew Macdonald (*Trainspotting*) and Duncan Kenworthy (*Four Weddings and a Funeral*), would be partnered with Fox Searchlight soon after it released *Strictly Sinatra*. More importantly, it is Tony’s failure as a performer that provides the parallel for Murray: ‘*Strictly Sinatra* [...] materially reproduces the terms of Tony’s fictional misfortune: a purportedly characteristic Scottish inability to do anything other than bowdlerise American popular cultural traditions and achievements unimaginatively and on the cheap’ (Murray 2015:66).

While Martin-Jones and Murray identify *Strictly Sinatra* in terms of either its positive representation of a more hybrid sense of Scottish identity or in relation to negative trends in Scottish film production, Capaldi’s film has arguably more to offer in the way it problematizes a stable sense of identity through an emphasis on performance and imitation. Tony’s fantasy is of inhabiting Frank Sinatra’s world—the seedy yet glamorous Las Vegas of the mid-twentieth century—and in the opening sequence Capaldi uses grainy black and white and shots of Tony smoking and watching the rain, suggesting that he is about to perform to a large, important audience. However, it is subsequently revealed that he is merely singing at a small Glaswegian club, establishing the forlorn gap between his dream and reality. Tony’s clothes and hair—a horribly unfashionable perm—suggest that he is essentially living in the past, and allusions to classical Hollywood cinema—such as when an American sailor asks him for a light (a reference to *On the Town* and Sinatra’s own film career)—feeds into this fantasy. But the image of him staring out at the rain after performing ‘Nice and Easy’ suggests that

Tony longs for something more, establishing the possibility of change and development in his life.

The gangster Chisolm's stories about meeting the likes of Sinatra and Kim Novak in Vegas feed into this nostalgic atmosphere. Chisolm tells Tony about the Sinatra film, *Pal Joey* (1957), the plot of which is about a singer who starts out in dives then moves up to playing big clubs. Tony is encouraged to see the parallels between Sinatra, the character he plays, and himself as a way of luring him into criminal activities. In this way a further parallel between Tony and Sinatra is implied in the connection with the mob (the mafia allegedly getting Sinatra out of a contract with band leader Tommy Dorsey, for which the singer later repaid them by bringing his famous friends to their Las Vegas clubs). There is also a suggestion that the Scottish gangsters share aspects of this fantasy of cool crooners working for mobsters. When they kidnap Tony and force him to sing 'The Lady Is a Tramp', at first, Tony sounds nervous, but then a non-diegetic orchestra kicks in and the lights come up, revealing a swinging party in a retro living room. But Tony Coccoza's fantasy of *being* Frank Sinatra is far from the reality of working with the Glasgow mob. The repayment for their 'favours'—making the drop offs for drug deals—is far from bringing people in to their clubs and casinos. This fantasy helps Tony escape, but in so doing he must close his eyes to the criminality with which he has become entangled. This dualism between the reality of Tony's Glasgow and his fantasy is recurrent in Scottish film. For example, in *Restless Natives* Will and Ronnie escape the drudgery of their lives by acting out a romantic fantasy of being highway men and Highland rouges.

Furthermore, this career trajectory that supposedly parallels Sinatra's has itself become mythical, one popularised by Mario Puzo and Francis Ford Coppola in *The Godfather* novel and films (though in this case it is a movie producer who wakes up to find a horse's head in his bed). The stories of Sinatra's involvement in the mob may be

pervasive, but as they are based only on his association with known gangsters and remain otherwise unproven, they can be considered myths, not reality.

In ways reminiscent of the postmodern identities created in *Highlander*, *Strictly Sinatra* destabilises identity by revealing it to be dependent on performance and influenced by representations from popular culture. It is telling that Tony is an impersonator rather than a singer in his own right, because it implies that his professional identity is essentially performative. That his career is an unsuccessful one—both diegetically and in that Hart does not sound much like Sinatra—reveals and exposes the workings of this performance. The overtness of this makes it clear that Tony, as well as the ‘gangsters’ in the film, bases his construction of identity on heavily mythologised media stereotypes of Italian Americans as mobsters and Vegas crooners, stereotypes that have been imported from Hollywood. The film contrasts the Hollywoodized construction of Italian-ness with that of Aldo, the café owner who, thinking his boat from Italy was heading to New York, settled in Glasgow instead. Grounded in the immigrant experience, Aldo offers an authentic hybrid Scots-Italian identity. But in rejecting this in favour of a performance of pop culture Italian-ness, Tony confirms the inferiority of Scottishness at the same time he tries to resist it. Thus identity in *Strictly Sinatra* is doubly-destabilised: first, in its performativity, and second, in the way the performances are based on myth. Rather than creating the hybrid Scots-Italian Martin-Jones sees in Capaldi, the vision of identity presented in the film is ultimately insubstantial, without a basis in something concrete.

American Cousins offers a very different perspective on the question of national identity, however. Directed by Don Coutts and written by Sergio Casci, a Scotsman of Italian decent, the film was produced by Margaret Matheson for the London-based Little Wings Films with financing from Scottish Screen and the Glasgow Film Fund. As a genre hybrid merging the gangster film with romantic comedy, much of *American Cousins*’s humour stems from the direct culture clash it sets up between Scots-Italians

and Italian-Americans. Shy, unassuming Roberto (Gerald Lepkowski) runs his family's Glasgow ice cream parlour/chip shop with his grandfather Nonno (Russell Hunter) and Alice (Shirley Henderson), the girl he wants to marry but hasn't the nerve to propose to. Meanwhile, when a deal with the Ukrainian mob goes awry, distant cousin Gino (Danny Nucci) and his associate Settimo (Dan Hedaya)—who work for an entirely different sort of 'family business'—come to Scotland to lay low for a while. While Roberto and Gino compete for Alice's affections, Settimo takes care of a local loan shark for Roberto, who later returns the favour by setting fire to his own shop to save his cousins from the Ukrainians. Roberto finally proposes to Alice, and the New Jersey outfit moves to Scotland, helping Roberto fulfil his father's dream of opening a restaurant while also moving into the (presumably) more legitimate wine business.

The film brings together well-known Scottish actors like Henderson and Hunter, with Americans known for portraying gangsters—mob-boss Tony, for example, is played by *The Sopranos*'s Vincent Pastore. *American Cousins* appears to establish a stark contrast between the Scots-Italian and Italian-American characters. The opening scenes intercut images of Roberto at work in his ice cream parlour with Gino and Settimo conducting what we assume is a drug deal (it is actually grape cuttings they are after). Close-ups show the intricate details of Roberto's sundae-making process, whereas Gino and Settimo's actions display the kind of masculine violence one would expect from a gangster film. Moreover, Roberto is no seasoned businessman: he is easily cowed by a little girl into giving her extra Flakes with her ice cream. His cousins, however, demonstrate their own kind of ruthless acumen, killing the Ukrainians when they prove too tough a group of customers. In this way the contrast is established largely through the use of stereotypes. As Gino and Settimo enter the UK, the Glaswegian border agent asks Gino, 'Fish and chips or ice cream?' Gino replies, 'Mainly organised crime, some catering. You know, Cosa Nostra. Maybe you've seen

it on TV?’ His ironic joke suggests that both of these sets of ‘national’ characteristics are little more than media-based stereotypes.

But as the film develops it begins to suggest that these Scots-Italians and Italian-Americans may not be so different after all. Visiting Nonno in the hospital after Settimo has scared away the local loan shark, Roberto bemoans the fact that he cannot be both a tough guy and a fish fryer. Nonno tells him that he has to be tough, and reminds him that ‘we’re family from a tough place’: before Nonno was a fish fryer, he too was a tough guy. Of course, Roberto eventually does find his courage, sacrificing his shop to save his family and finally confessing to Alice how he feels about her. Furthermore, the story Robert tells about Nonno and his own cousin’s migration serves to reinforce what the different branches of the family have in common. Apparently, the two men flipped a coin to see who would go to America and who to Scotland and then subsequently competed to see who could make the most money. For one thing, this shows the family rivalry—Roberto challenges Gino at frying fish and chips, Gino bets on how long Roberto can last in icy Loch Lomond—may be deeper rooted than both men’s interest in Alice. For another, it renders their respective nationalities—Scottish and American—as random, little more than an act of chance. Gino marvels at the idea that he could be the one frying the chips, while Roberto reminds him that, ‘You ended up here anyway.’ In a similar way, the differences between Roberto and Gino and Settimo are minor because they share the same ethnic Italian background.

The film therefore seems to suggest an essentialist concept of identity, established literally through the characters’ family connection and symbolically through the grape cuttings, which for David Martin-Jones serve as a metaphor for the Italian diaspora in general (2009:160). For Anthony Smith, nations are made up of ‘*ethnies*’, groups of people with a shared culture and history (1995:57). According to Smith, feelings of nationhood are created through *ethnies*’ mythologizing of their own past (1995:65). However, it is important to remember that the beginnings of the modern

nation-state roughly coincide with the beginnings of mass migration. Italy, for example, unified throughout the nineteenth century while large numbers of Italians emigrated to America, Britain and elsewhere at the end of that century and the beginning of the next. Because *ethnies* bring their shared history and culture with them into diaspora, what therefore draws the Scots-Italians and Italian-Americans together in the film has more to do with the diasporic experience than it does with national identity. According to Martin-Jones, ‘It is from this comparable diasporic experience that this section of the Scottish-Italian community draws its strength, pooling its reserves of geographically displaced toughness, rather than from the host nation of Scotland, or indeed, from Italy itself’ (2009:160).

In many ways then, *American Cousins* is about the mixing of cultures facilitated by extended family members learning about each other’s respective cultures. The film also represents this cultural blending through juxtaposition of sound and image. When Roberto, Alice, Settimo and Gino go to Loch Lomond, shots of the Highlands and lochs are accompanied not, as one might expect, by traditional Scottish music, but by Italian pop songs. Furthermore, as noted above, the film blends two genres: the gangster film and the romantic comedy. The links to the former are fairly obvious. Settimo and Gino are in the mafia, there is violence, the casting alludes to other gangster film and television programmes. According to Martin-Jones, ‘The US gangster film depicts aspirational characters who follow their dreams of success, and these characters [...] are often immigrants’; the focus on the immigration experience, then, likens *American Cousins* to the gangster genre (2009:158). So, too, does the emphasis on family. *The Godfather* films (1972, 1974, 1990) blend the gangster film with the family melodrama, and many other post-classical gangster films and television series such as *Goodfellas* (1990) or *The Sopranos* (1999-2007) have followed suit. While much of the humour of *American Cousins* is derived from a culture clash and the clever use of gangster genre conventions, the film also has affinities with the romantic comedy, notably via the

subplot in which Roberto has to win Alice and faces competition from the seemingly more attractive Gino. For Martin-Jones, Roberto's identity as a man falls somewhere in between traditional notions of British and Italian masculinity. It is outwardly softer, hiding the harsher aspects of the immigrant experience under a contemporary British masculinity not dissimilar to one performed by the likes of Hugh Grant (Martin-Jones 2009:164). In this way, Roberto's persona connects the film to other British romantic comedies of the 1990s and early 2000s, differentiating it in the process from more familiar forms of Scottish masculinity such as those explored in the previous chapter, as well as from the boyishness of Bill Forsyth's male characters. Grant's performances of masculinity also entails a performance of Englishness; comparing this with Roberto's appears to suggest there is something un-Scottish about his masculinity, associating the film with a wider sense of British cinema in the process.

The genre-mixing in *American Cousins* serves as a metaphor for cultural hybridity. Like the film's Chianti grapes that are able to grow in any climate, the Italian identity it constructs is adaptable to other cultures. The emphasis here is on diasporic ethnicity rather than national identity. Scotland is not constructed as a place inclusive and accepting of cultural difference, rather the film suggests that it is the adaptability of his diasporic Italian identity that enables Roberto to become part of Scotland. While *Strictly Sinatra* destabilises national identity by showing it to be performative, *American Cousins* does so by privileging the adaptability of diasporic identities.

Imagining Scotland as a Space of Cultural Intersection in the Scottish-Asian Films *Ae Fond Kiss* and *Nina's Heavenly Delights*

In the films discussed above, Scotland remains somewhat coincidental: as the focus is more on the immigrant experience, there is less of a sense of Scotland shaping identity. However, in the films to be considered below, *Ae Fond Kiss* and *Nina's Heavenly Delights*, set in Glasgow's Pakistani and Indian communities respectively, Scotland is

central to the formation of the various identities the films portray. While the Italian presence in Scotland is long-established and has become part of the prevailing cultural landscape, Asian immigration is a more recent phenomenon. People from India and Pakistan first began arriving in to Scotland in the 1960s. Recruited from Asians already living in England to work in public transport and a variety of other semi-skilled jobs, many went on to open grocery stores, which echoes the way Scots-Italians became associated with the food industry. Although Asian immigrants faced prejudice, according to T M Devine, in Scotland racial tensions never reached the levels they did in England (2012:564). In the 2011 Scottish census, 2,220 of respondents reported their national identities as both Scottish and Pakistani, while 1,899 declared themselves to be both Scottish and Indian (Scotland's Census 2011, 2013b).

Both of these Scots-Asian films construct Glasgow as a place of intercultural exchange though the use of interracial romantic couplings in the forms of melodrama and romantic comedy genres. *Ae Fond Kiss* is director Ken Loach's fifth feature collaboration with Glaswegian screenwriter Paul Laverty, and the third in their 'Glasgow Trilogy' following *My Name Is Joe* (1998) and *Sweet Sixteen* (2002). Loach, who has been a mainstay of British realism since his film and television works of the 1960s like *Cathy Come Home* (1966) and *Kes* (1969), first worked with Laverty in 1996 *On Carla's Song*, and has since made several films set in Scotland and/or with Scottish funding, the latest being *The Angel's Share* (2012). As has been discussed in the previous chapter, labelling Loach's Scottish films as Scottish is complicated both by his central position in the tradition of British social realism and by his left-wing 'internationalist' engagement with the politics of class.

Ae Fond Kiss has much in common with Loach's other Scottish films: it received funding from Scottish Screen and the Glasgow Film Fund, in addition to German, Spanish and French sources, making it, like many of Loach's films, a European co-production as well. It is also set and filmed in and around Glasgow, features local

professional and non-professional actors, and, of course, is filmed in a realist style. But it differs from the 'typical' Loach film in two regards. First, it is more upbeat and hopeful than the majority of his productions. Indeed, the previous two films in Loach's Scottish 'trilogy' share notably bleak outcomes. For example, in *My Name Is Joe*, we are left with the realisation that Joe will never be able to escape being an alcoholic, while *Sweet Sixteen* culminates with its rebellious protagonist caught between the forces of the law and the sea. Second, instead of focusing on matters of class, Loach and Lavery focus here on issues of ethnicity and culture. Lavery has stated that they made *Ae Fond Kiss* in order to explore the problems facing Western Muslims in a post-9/11 world (Mottram 2004:22-23). Interestingly, this is pursued through a melodramatic love story between Casim (Atta Yaqub), a Pakistani Muslim, and Roisin (Eva Birthistle), an Irish Catholic. Casim works in his father's convenience store by day and is a club DJ by night; while Roisin teaches music in the Catholic school attended by Tahara (Shabana Bakhsh), Casim's younger sister. The two meet after Casim chases after some boys who had been racially abusing his sister, and they begin an affair that must be kept secret because, for one thing, Casim's family would not approve of him dating a white woman and, for another, he is already engaged to a cousin from Pakistan. On holiday in Spain, Casim admits to his engagement; Roisin's reactions to this makes him realise he does not love his cousin the way he does Roisin, so when he gets home he calls off the wedding and moves out of the family home. This causes turmoil in the family and wider Asian community: due to the loss of honour, Casim's older sister's fiancé's parents call off their wedding. Roisin, too, has problems in that her parish priest will not give his approval to her permanent teaching post because she is living out of wedlock with a non-Catholic. Roisin's inability to understand Casim's conflicted emotions nearly causes them to break up, but then, after his family brings his betrothed over in a last-ditch effort to make him come home, he breaks off ties with them, and he and Roisin live happily, if not for ever after, at least for the time being.

Most critical analyses of *Ae Fond Kiss* have focused on the way it explores racial tensions. According to Jonathan Murray, Loach uses Roisin's inability to understand Casim's family to show how race is a problematic (though one not without the possibility for progress) issue in Scotland: 'On the one hand, the film openly acknowledges the existence of racial prejudice and tension within present-day Scotland. But on the other, it also outlines a tentatively optimistic analysis of the progressive social and cultural possibilities inherent within an increasingly multicultural national sphere' (2015:119). Steve Blandford goes further, suggesting that the film reveals that it is not just England that is multicultural; there are multiple ethnic and national identities in Celtic Britain. Race is problematic throughout Britain, not just in England, and the film 'seeks [...] to expose the causes of suspicion and division between communities which define themselves partly via reference to Scottishness' (Blandford 2008:102-03). However, Blandford also suggests that while the national community constructed in *Ae Fond Kiss* may be divided along racial and religious lines, it nevertheless still defines itself as Scottish. By contrast, David Martin-Jones suggests that 'Loach depicts this hyphenated Scottish-Pakistani identity as a global/local, as opposed to national, phenomenon (2009:184).

What I would like to suggest, however, is that the film indicates that there are multiple ways by which immigrants can understand themselves as Scottish, but to identify as such is easier for some than for others. As David McCrone reminds us, posing the question of who is constructing 'Scotland' reveals that there are competing versions of the nation (2001:51). Scotland is thus conceptualised as a plural entity; there are many different ways in which an individual can understand themselves to be 'Scottish'.

For Roisin, however, national identity is not an issue. The Irish may have faced persecution in the past, but as a white minority she is not confronted with racism in the same way that Casim is. Ireland and Scotland have common Celtic origins, there is an

established Irish Catholic community in Glasgow, one that found common religious ground with displaced Highland Catholics, and, moreover, as a European citizen Roisin has free movement across borders. She is therefore able to hold the romantic belief that she and Casim should be together because they love each other. Though Roisin's minority identity throws up some barriers to her and Casim's relationship in the form of the traditionalist priest, it does not do so in a way that challenges her sense of belonging in Scotland.

Within the Khan family, however, we see a variety of ways people relate to the nation they inhabit⁴⁹. First, three members of the family, Casim's mother, Sadia (Shamshad Akhtar), his father, Tariq (Ahmad Riaz), and his sister, Rukhsana (Ghizala Avan), have strong Pakistani identities. Sadia is the most traditional of the three; she is always in traditional dress, we never hear her speaking English, though she obviously understands it, nor does she appear outside of the domestic sphere of the house and its environs. She is therefore strongly associated with the old country. Tariq is also traditional, though less so than his wife. He wears both a mix of traditional and Western clothes, speaks both English and Punjabi at home, and is shown to be strongly paternalistic in his reactions to both Casim and Roisin's relationship and Tahara's decision to attend university away from home. In his treatment of Roisin, Tariq may appear to be bigoted, but he also seems to be on friendly terms with the white Glaswegians builders who construct the extension meant for Casim and his fiancée: the way they jokingly interact with Casim suggests they are family friends. If Tariq is hostile toward whites it is because they have given him reason to be. In this case, the scene at the beginning of the film in which Tariq connects a battery to his shop's sign to keep dogs from urinating on it serves a metaphoric function: he reacts with cruelty because he has been continuously mistreated.

⁴⁹ The idea of a range of ways in which British-Asians relate to the nation has been explored previously in films such as Gurinder Chadha's *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993).

Rukhsana also seems to have a somewhat traditional Pakistani identity. She is willing to go along with an arranged marriage, as well as with her future in-law's decision to call it off after Casim dishonours them, and she agrees with her parents that Casim is in the wrong. However, Rukhsana also seems more modern than either of her parents; she is university-educated, wears Western clothing, and speaks mostly in English. Tahara tells us that Rukhsana identifies as a Black Muslim, suggesting that she understands herself in essentially political terms: she identifies more as a minority, not one specified by national origin, but as a collective of all peoples oppressed by race and/or religion.

Tahara for her part identifies herself as both Pakistani and Scottish. At the beginning of the film she gives a speech to her class in which, after describing the way other members of her family identify, she declares that she is 'a Glaswegian Pakistani woman teenager who supports Glasgow Rangers in a Catholic school.' This overtly postmodern expression of identity suggests that she is able to identify as both at the same time. But Tahara seems to have embraced a more Western than traditional Pakistani way of life. She goes clubbing with her white friends, wearing what her brother thinks is provocative clothing, and applies to study journalism at the University of Edinburgh rather than medicine in Glasgow as her family wants. Casim, too, seems to identify as both Scottish and Pakistani. He wants what the West has to offer: to choose whom he wants for a partner, and, in terms of business, to open a club where all people can mix without judgement. But on the other hand, he struggles with a desire to uphold his parents' culture. Before he meets Roisin, he seems not to mind an arranged marriage, which suggests that it's not the idea of an arranged marriage that bothers him. It is difficult for him to dishonour and disobey his family. Furthermore, his attitude toward Tahara—telling her to go home when he runs into her in a club and siding with his parents when she wants to go to Edinburgh—indicates the same kind of paternalism

that his father shows to him. Casim may want to be Scottish, but he also adheres to the patriarchal structure of his Pakistani family.

Casim's inner conflict, then, is not his Scottish identity versus his family's Pakistani identity, but rather comes from his liminal or hybrid state of inbetweenness⁵⁰. Unlike Tahara whose plural understanding of identity allows for both, Casim does not fully identify as Scottish or as Pakistani. It is because he cannot learn how to balance both identities that he must eventually choose Roisin over his family. By contrast, Tahara's identity allows for a more hopefully solution to her own rebellion. After Casim has left home for good, Tahara tells her parents that she will be going to Edinburgh, and that she will not be breaking off contact with Casim. However, she then follows this announcement by thanking them—in Punjabi, not English—for all they've done for her and promising, in her own way, to make them proud of her. That her father does not react with anger suggests that this act of defiance will be far less disruptive to the family. Unlike Casim, who sees his Scottish and Pakistani identities in conflict with each other, Tahara has embraced them both and is therefore able to offer a solution acceptable to all parties.

Whereas *Ae Fond Kiss* exposes the problems of a racially divided Scotland, *Nina's Heavenly Delights* seeks to celebrate contemporary Scottish diversity. The film features a variety of characters representing different ethnicities, genders, sexualities and ages. The eponymous protagonist, Nina (Shelley Conn), is a Scots-Indian lesbian who has just returned home to Glasgow from England for her father's funeral. Nina hasn't been home in four years because she and her father, who owned the curry restaurant The New Tahj, fell out when she refused to marry the son of Raj (Art Malik), owner of rival restaurant The Jewel in the Crown. Nina discovers that, due to her father's gambling

⁵⁰ The liminality of British Asians has long been explored by filmmakers like Hanif Kureshi, Gurinder Chadha and Isaac Julien; *Ae Fond Kiss* is the first film to do so in a Scottish context.

debts, the Tahj is now part-owned by the father of her former classmate Lisa (Laura Fraser), who plans to sell to Raj. In order to make her own father proud (and raise the selling price of the restaurant), Nina enters in a curry cooking competition. As they prepare for the televised final, attraction between Nina and Lisa grows. However, Nina worries about her family finding out, as only Bobbi (Ronnie Jhutti), her gay transvestite friend who leads a mixed race troupe of male dancers called the Chutney Queens, knows she is a lesbian. It transpires, though, that other members of her family are also keeping secrets: her sister, Priya (Zoe Henretty), competes at traditional Scottish dancing, her brother Kary (Atta Yaqub) has married a white woman, and even Nina's mother has long harboured affection for Raj. These various revelations embolden Nina to come out and, at their moment of triumph, Nina and Lisa kiss on national television. The cast then join the Chutney Queens for a Bollywood-style musical number against a Highland backdrop.

Written by Scottish screenwriter Andrea Gibb, whose credits include the feature *Dear Frankie* (2003), and directed by Kenyan-English documentarian Pratibha Parmar, *Nina's Heavenly Delights* received financing from Scottish Screen and was produced by Parmar, Chris Atkins, and Marion Pilowsky for Scion Films. With Scottish and hyphenated English identities involved, the film's production therefore reflects its fundamental attitude toward diversity. The film also reflects a hybrid sense of identity in the way it plays with genres. The primary influence here is the romantic comedy, one associated with many internationally successful British films such as *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (1993) and *Notting Hill* (1999) and, as we have seen, traces of which are discernible in *American Cousins*. Given that *Nina's Heavenly Delights* is a Glasgow-set comedy, we can also (albeit loosely) connect it to Bill Forsyth's films *That Sinking Feeling* and *Comfort and Joy*. And although the film adheres to the structure of the romantic comedy, there are nevertheless also direct references to Bollywood: Bobbi performs a well-known musical number for a group of children, and Nina's mother

watches a Bollywood film as she ponders the nature of her daughter and Lisa's relationship. On the one hand, this associates *Nina's Heavenly Delights* with a distinctive mode of Indian cinema whose audience spans the globe, but on the other it also places it within the tradition of other British-Asian films such as Gurinder Chadha's *Bride & Prejudice* (2004) which also make frequent references to Bollywood.

Nina's Heavenly Delights takes a much more positive view of race in Scotland than *Ae Fond Kiss* does. According to David Martin-Jones, the film 'constructs a fantasy Glasgow in which all cross- or intercultural desires are not only permitted, but also provide the recipe for financial success' (2009:80). Likewise, for Jonathan Murray, it represents Scotland as a space of positive cultural exchange: '*Nina's*... utopian worldview involves the film's celebratory depiction of Glasgow/Scotland as an increasingly multicultural society. Immigrant India influences are understood to have augmented the native culture into which they have settled' (Murray 2015:122). Moreover, the film's 'untrammelled multicultural optimism also leads the film to argue that Indian characters and culture have benefitted from the influence of the Scottish social sphere which they have relocated themselves within' (Murray 2015:122). While Murray argues that the alternatives to patriarchal structures the film offers ultimately fail, we can still see the diversity on offer as the formation of a positive hybrid Scottish identity. All of the three couples formed during the film—one gay male, one lesbian, one heterosexual—are racially mixed, and we also see Asians working with whites at both the New Tahj and the flower shop where Nina's mother works. There are various other instances of cross-cultural adaptation. In wearing a sari to the curry competition, Kary's wife appropriates her husband's culture, and in her Highland dancing, complete with tartan and bagpipes, Priya has embraced a traditional construction of Scottish identity. The Chutney Queens dancing troupe is perhaps the best example of the way the cultures merge in the film. The dancers are both white and Asian, they dance Bollywood-style to western pop music in rehearsal, and in performance they wear kilts

made out of either Indian material or, in Bobbi's case, leather. At the film's end they all perform in traditional Indian garments against a Highland backdrop. The Chutney Queens therefore offer a striking hybrid of not only Indian and Scottish culture, but also drag culture.

It might seem easy to argue that with so many identities on offer, *Nina's Heavenly Delights* undermines any veracity of an overarching Scottishness. But I would like to suggest that all of these identities—post-colonial, gender, sexual orientation—are understood in the framework of the national. For Daniela Berghahn, 'the theme of "coming out" in the diasporic family articulates a critique of fantasies of purity, which simultaneously underpin certain traditional models of the family (based on bloodline and descent, gender hierarchies and heteronormativity) and nationalist ideologies (based on ethnic absolutism and other essentializing concepts)' (Berghahn 2011:130). Nina's acceptance by her family represents the acceptance of other races into a Scottish national identity (Berghahn 2011:141). Therefore, we can understand *Nina's* sexual identities not as fragmenting Scottish identity, but as supporting the inclusive Scottish national identity the film tries to construct.

Furthermore, the film also uses a rather obvious—and familiar—cooking metaphor to underline its approach to identity. With much of the action set in a curry restaurant and culminating in a nationally televised—to Scotland and India, we are told—curry competition, food holds much symbolic value in this film. As Nina prepares for the competition, there are cooking montages in which the printed recipes dissolve to the simmering dishes, the written names of ingredients lingering over the pot. Like the curries Nina serves—made of distinct ingredients that are blended to make a dish—the Scotland *Nina's Heavenly Delights* constructs is made up of a variety of identities which may be divided by race, gender, sexuality, etc., but that, when they come together, are what make up the nation.

In this way, over the course of the 2000s, we can see a shift in the way Scottish films understand the relationship between Scottish and ethnic and racial identities. The films dealing with Scots-Italian identities from the earlier part of the decade destabilise a sense of national identity. In the case of *Strictly Sinatra* this is through a focus on the performative nature of identity, and in *American Cousins* an emphasis of the diasporic experience. Generally speaking, *American Cousins*, in common with both *Ae Fond Kiss* and *Nina's Heavenly Delights*, constructs what are effectively hybrid Scottish identities. In *American Cousins* this is possible because of the diasporic Italian identity, and when the focus shifts away from white minorities to racial others, Scotland becomes an inclusive space that enables this kind of identification. *Ae Fond Kiss* suggests that there are multiple ways in which Asians can identify as Scottish, while in *Nina's Heavenly Delights* 'Scottish' is always a hyphenated identity. Thus what these four films collectively demonstrate is that there has been a greater understanding of 'Scottish' as a plural identity since the turn of the millennium.

Reception: Toward the Understanding of Hybrid Scottish Identities

I will now turn my attention to the reception of the films analysed above to consider how the Scottish identities they construct were received and conveyed by critics. As *Strictly Sinatra* and *American Cousins* differ from *Nina's Heavenly Delights* and *Ae Fond Kiss* in terms of ethnic identities, and since there are six major genres—gangster films, melodrama, art cinema, Bollywood musical, and both dark and romantic comedy—used across the four films, one would expect them to have provoked widely different critical responses.

In all three markets considered, critics identified *Strictly Sinatra* as Scottish in broadly similar ways with Scottish, London-based British, and American critics all drawing attention to the Scottish talent in front of and behind the camera. Scottish and London critics alike noted that Kelly MacDonald seemed to have been typecast in

Strictly Sinatra: Steve Grant writes in *The Scotsman* that she ‘is still stuck with being the weird, constant, electrifying type she played in *Trainspotting*’ (2001:7), while David Gritten observes in *The Sunday Telegraph* that ‘MacDonald has done this mouthy, knowing routine before’ (2001:11). Peter Capaldi’s earlier achievements—and his nationality—are also heavily emphasised in various reviews. For Hannah McGill and Miles Fiedler of *The Herald*, Capaldi ‘draws on his Italian-Scottish roots’ (2001:42), while the *Daily Record* critic both refers to his earlier appearance in *Local Hero* and his work as writer of *Soft Top, Hard Shoulder*, a film with a Scottish subject, and as writer and director of *Franz Kafka’s It’s a Wonderful Life* (2001a:56-57), thereby marking him as a Scottish filmmaker. In addition, both Trevor Johnston of *Time Out* (2001:76) and Mike Goodridge of *Screen International* (2001) mention Capaldi’s direction of *Franz Kafka’s It’s a Wonderful Life*, and *Variety*’s Ken Eisner emphasised both that Capaldi was an actor and is Scottish (2001:22). However, in Scotland, there is far more specific emphasis on Capaldi as a Scottish actor and director⁵¹, which suggests a recognition by Scottish critics of him as one of their own.

The film’s Glasgow setting was an important signifier of its Scottishness to Scottish and London-based critics alike. Andy Dougan of *The Evening Times* observed that ‘Glasgow has seldom been seen more realistically or more affectionately on screen’ (2001:34), for Johnston, the film is a ‘seriocomic slice of Glaswegian low-life’ (2001:76). But if these aspects gave the film a sense of authenticity, for Scottish critics the accents of the film’s English actors strained credibility: Richard Jobson claiming that ‘there are moments here when Hart sounds like a Glaswegian Scouser, which can be disarming if not confusing’ (2001:7). On the other hand, Mike Goodridge predicts that ‘its performance in English-speaking markets could suffer from Scottish accent

⁵¹ Four Scottish reviews (McGill and Fielder 2001, Grant 2001, Jobson 2001; and Jobson 2001a) explicitly label Capaldi Scottish, compared to only one American (Eisner 2001) and no London-based reviews.

syndrome' (2001). Interestingly, there is no mention of accent at all in American reviews, which is unusual given the preoccupation with accent that previous case studies have revealed. Perhaps, as an independent film coming out of the UK, American critics assumed that *Strictly Sinatra* would appeal more to a specialist audience for whom the accent would not matter rather than a general one that might be put off by being unable to comprehend the dialogue.

The invocation of Bill Forsyth is key to how Scottish and London critics label *Strictly Sinatra* as a Scottish film, with several noting the influence Forsyth appears to have had on Capaldi and his filmmaking style. For *Scotland on Sunday*'s Richard Jobson, Capaldi 'is from a similar mould as Bill Forsyth, using charm and gentle comedy rather than looking to bludgeon you with comedy historicisms' (2001:7), while Nicholas Barber, writing in *The Independent* suggests that the film 'could easily have been made by Forsyth in 1984' (2001:11). Both Scottish and London-based critics discussed the film in the same kind of language that was used to describe Forsyth's comedies: a *Daily Record* critic says that the film 'relies on charm rather than hype, personality rather than costly effects. And that's nice and sweet' (2001a:56-57). Jobson also differentiates the film from other British gangster offerings by noting it is 'more in the oddball comedy zone of Bill Forsyth than the recent deluge of bad mockney movies' (2001a:10). Allan Hunter, a long standing champion of Forsyth, argues in *The Express* that the film has 'a sweet humanity in its favour' (2001:49). But for Athos Kyriakides of *ScriptWriter*, 'Though Capaldi is aiming for "quirky" in these dialogue exchanges, it's really more like "stale"' (2002:52), implying that Capaldi tries, and fails, to imitate Forsyth.

What this suggests is that perception of Scottish film was becoming increasingly based on a combination of home grown film-making talent (i.e. Forsyth) and the new images of Scotland people were seeing at the cinema alongside the familiar clichés based on 'Scotch myths'. Forsyth had long been a point of comparison as his films

presented a more contemporary view of Scotland to an international audience, and, furthermore, he has arguably created, alongside Bill Douglas, one of the most resonant markers of Scottishness beyond Scotch Myths representations. The references to films made by Capaldi and MacDonald in the previous decade further suggests that audiences had more reference points for locating and understanding ‘Scottish’ on-screen; while the distinctiveness of Glasgow as a setting—propagated also on television by the long running police drama *Taggart*—implies a greater familiarity with Scotland as a contemporary place.

However, there were a number of ways in which critics also understood *Strictly Sinatra* outside of its Scottish context. Both Scottish and London-based reviewers located it primarily as a gangster film: while Dougan draws on Sinatra’s alleged mob ties to mark the film in this way (2001:34), most critics reference other films with Italian-American Mafia elements. A few Scottish critics even echo lines of dialogue from *The Godfather* trilogy: the *Daily Record*’s declares, ‘Every time he tries to get out, he’s drawn further into the criminal underworld’ (2001a:56-57), which has a similar ring to the oft-quoted line from *Part III*, ‘Just when I thought I was out, they pull me back in.’ London critics also reference *The Godfather*, as well as other mob movies: Alexander Walker refers to ‘severed horse-heads in the beds of selected movie moguls’ (2001:31), while for Allan Hunter, the film ‘seems to tip its hat to the world of Martin Scorsese’s *Goodfellas*’ (2001:49). The gangster film thus places *Strictly Sinatra* outside of a Scottish cultural context and aligns it more closely with a diasporic Italian community. Though Eisner refers to the film as a ‘cliché-ridden crime story’ (2001:22), there is surprisingly no other mention of the film’s affinities with either the Hollywood gangster film or the Italian American community in the American press.

On the other hand, for some of the London-based critics, instead of seeing this affinity as detracting from a sense of ‘Scottishness’, focus instead on how the film links a global Italian community with Scotland. Barber suggests that the ‘love affair that

Capaldi is really interested in is the one between the west of Scotland and American pop culture' (2001:11). Jane Simon of *The People*, in saying of Toni Coccozza 'HALF-Italian and half-Scottish (now there's an even-tempered combination)' (2001:39), draws parallels between the two cultures through similar stereotypes.

Where the London-based papers differ is in their identification of *Strictly Sinatra* as a British film, something that occurs in neither the Scottish nor American publications. Some London-based critics define the film by associating it with current trends in British filmmaking, particularly as part of a streak of unsuccessful Lottery-funded films. Trevor Johnston calls it 'another British disappointment' (2001:76), while other critics specifically identify these failed films as Lottery-funded, thereby labelling them British by the use of public funds. According to Alexander Walker of the *Evening Standard*, the film is 'one more victim of a British film industry still tempted by its own big-time fantasies of Lottery-funded production without possessing even the routine Hollywood skills for developing small stories into international hits' (2001:31). Others label the film as British by placing it within the local tradition of crime films. For Philip French it is 'another disappointing British gangster movie' (2001:39); however, Martin Hoyle of the *Financial Times* calls it 'a British gangster film neither laddish nor gory but Scottish, which implies homage to Bill Forsyth rather than Guy Ritchie' (2001:18), suggesting that *Strictly Sinatra* offers a distinctively Scottish take on the broader British gangster film. What the press coverage suggests is that the branding of the film as Scottish was significant. Indeed, it was only in the London-based British national papers where *Strictly Sinatra* was identified as a British film. Elsewhere critics reflected the way the film constructs a Scots-Italian identity based on popular culture stereotypes of Italian-Americans.

Critics in all of the markets labelled *American Cousins* Scottish in similar ways. Once again, the influence of Bill Forsyth is crucial to how the 'Scottishness' of the film was understood. For Alan Morrison of the *Daily Record* it 'revived a quirky Scottish

humour not seen since *Gregory's Girl*' (2003a:50-51). Nicholas Barber of *The Independent on Sunday* suggests it is 'a film Bill Forsyth might be proud of: American Cousins would fit snugly in between *Local Hero* and *Comfort and Joy*' (2003:90). While Allan Hunter calls it 'a whimsical Scottish comedy' (2003:51) in *The Express*, using the same term that was oft used to describe Forsyth's films. Eddie Cockrell, too, notes in *Daily Variety* that it 'captured some Bill Forsyth magic' (2003:16).

But critics writing in London-based papers located *American Cousins* outside of a Scottish context in a similar manner to *Strictly Sinatra*, with some preferring to label it a British film. Others place it in a more international context by comparing it to American gangster films and television shows. Bacon advises that 'fans of *The Sopranos* will enjoy an appearance by Vincent Pastore, who used to play Pussy in the TV series. Regrettably [...] he ended up sleeping with the very things Roberto now serves' (2003:39), referencing both the HBO mob drama and *The Godfather*.

Where the reception of *American Cousins* diverges more noticeably from that of *Strictly Sinatra* is in the diverse ways in which it is identified as Scottish. For local critics, the use of Scottish stereotypes was important in this regard with Andy Dougan of *The Evening Times* pointing out the use of familiar Scotch myths, saying 'No cliché is left unturned—haggis, ceilidhs, pokey hats, they're all here!' (2003:2). Other London critics saw this as part of trends and traditions in Scottish filmmaking. *The People's* Bacon claims that it was 'being heralded as one of several films spearheading renaissance in Scottish film-making' (2003:39), while Ed Lawrenson writes in *Sight & Sound* that 'it won't come as any surprise to viewers of films about Scotland that the Americans here are agents of brash modernity who are mellowed by the oldworld charms of Scottish hospitality' (2004:36-37), a trope familiar to Scotland's cinematic representation from such films as *The Maggie* and *Local Hero*. In America, Eddie Cockrell from *Daily Variety* also suggests that it 'compares favorably well with such quirky regional gems as Forsyth's "Local Hero" and "Comfort and Joy," as well as

“Waking Ned Devine” (2003:16), suggesting the film is equally at home in relation to an emerging canon of Scottish as well as a more international category of Celtic—i.e. regional—film.

The key difference, however, between the way *Strictly Sinatra* and *American Cousins* seem to have been received is that critics in all markets understood it as playing with the clash of two cultures. In Scotland, Morrison uses ethnicity-specific stereotypes to highlight the conflict: ‘Scottish-Italian stereotypes fish ‘n’ chips and ice cream. Italian American stereotypes mobsters and Chianti’ (2003:59); while London critic Neil Norman of the *Evening Standard* calls it an ‘agreeable culture-clash comedy’ (2003:51), and *The Mail on Sunday*’s Jason Solomons ‘The Sopranos meets Bill Forsyth’s film *Comfort and Joy*’ (2003:66). Likewise, in North America Cockrell highlights in *Daily Variety* the way *American Cousins* plays the Scots Italian and Italian American cultures off each other: ‘Sergio Casci’s script leaves each of the principals plenty of room to create characters of depth and eccentricity as they comedically explore the differences between the two cultures’ (2003:16). That so much emphasis is placed on the cultural intersection displayed in the film suggests that *American Cousins* is more widely understood to cross categories; being Scottish while also embracing trans-national elements at the same time.

The emphasis on the legacy of Bill Forsyth in reviews of both *Strictly Sinatra* and *American Cousins*, as well as a focus on Scottish talent and production trends, suggests that in the first decade of the twenty-first century, there continued to be a development—and a wider recognition—of the kind of ‘alternative’ constructions of Scotland in the cinema Forsyth helped initiate in the 1980s. However, other comments made about cultural stereotypes in reviews of *American Cousins* suggest that more traditional representational tropes continued to hold sway. The reception of the two films differs in their specific associations with the gangster genre. For *Strictly Sinatra*, this served to complicate any simple national reading of the film, while in the case of

American Cousins, it seems to have served the redefining of the nation as inclusive of global identities. The discernible lack of interest in either production as a gangster film in the American papers is curious and worth exploring. On the one hand, the most straightforward explanation is that the papers which reviewed the films, including *Variety* and *The New York Times*, suggest they were marketed toward a limited and niche audience that is more interested in international art cinema than commercial genres. On the other hand, it may be the case that the films' foreign (i.e. Scottish) national identities coming through much stronger for American critics. This represents an interesting shift from what has been seen in previous case studies where genre functioned as a stronger marker than nation. Moreover, this would seem to repudiate the claim that cinema is moving away from the nationally specific and more toward the global.

As a Ken Loach film, *Ae Fond Kiss* differs markedly from *Strictly Sinatra* and *American Cousins*, and we can expect it to provoke different responses from the critics who reviewed it. However, the general response is remarkably similar to the above two films, particularly to *American Cousins*. In both Scottish and London-based papers, the Glasgow setting was once again important to how critics understood the film as Scottish. For Andy Dougan of *The Evening Times* it is a 'Glasgow-based romance' (2004b:23), and Thomas Quinn of *The Mirror* found it 'surprising that it offers such an attractive view of Glasgow' (2004:15). This continues to suggest that as images of contemporary Scotland on screen increase, so too does the familiarity with these images. For both some London-based and American critics, accent was key to the 'Scottishness' of the film: Lee Marshall writing in *Screen International* notes that 'the broad Glaswegian accents [...] may cause problems for those who have not spent much time on Clydeside' (2004); while *Variety*'s Leslie Felperin⁵², suggests that, with the Glaswegian dialect

⁵² Though writing for an American publication, Felperin is based in Britain.

difficult for even English audiences to understand, the film might fare better subtitled (2004:38).

The question of vocal intelligibility is not unexpected as it has occurred in many of the case studies discussed so far, but it seems a bit strange that it does not appear to have been an issue with the Scottish-Italian films noted above. Perhaps it comes down to a difference in aesthetics in that Loach's realist aesthetic may necessitate the use of more 'authentic' sounding Scottish accents, helped by the use of local, non-professional actors. *Strictly Sinatra* and *American Cousins*, on the other hand, are aimed at a more mainstream audience and therefore intelligibility would be more important, especially due to the familiar terrain of the gangster genre.

Once again, reviewers use similar elements to identify *Ae Fond Kiss* outside of a Scottish context. In both Scottish and London papers, the film is labelled a romance: McGill describes it as a 'post-9/11 take on Romeo and Juliet' (2004:8), whereas *Time Out*'s reviewer calls it a 'Glaswegian update of the "Romeo and Juliet" theme' (2004:69). Some London and American papers also label *Ae Fond Kiss* as British, and notably one way in which they both do so is by comparing it to other representations of Asians in British media. Christopher Tookey writes in the *Daily Mail* that, 'This scenario has been played out in many a TV soap opera and in hit movies such as *East Is East* and *Bend It Like Beckham*' (2004:54). Felperin also observes: 'Subject of mixed-race relationships has been handled with more humour and crowd-pleasing lightness in "East Is East," "Bend It Like Beckham," no end of Blighty soap operas such as "Eastenders" and "Coronation Street," and even in comedy programs such as the all-Asian starrer 'Goodness Gracious Me' (2004:38). Some London-based critics, however, preferred to see the film in terms of working out questions of race in British society. Derek Malcolm in the *Evening Standard* describes the film's conflict as 'a cultural clash that can neither be denied nor satisfactorily settled' (2004:32), while *The Guardian*'s Peter Bradshaw sees it as 'a reminder that racial and cultural differences in Britain, so

far from dying out with the older generations, is in some communities stronger and fiercer than ever' (2004:14-15).

Other reviewers see the film in the context of a changing global political climate. Henry Fitzherbert of the *Sunday Express* suggests that 'conceived after 9/11 and the shock of the new world order appears to have persuaded Loach and regular collaborator Lavery to ditch class obsessions and focus on the more pertinent theme of cultural identity' (2004:65). That London-based critics are so engaged with the film's perspectives on race suggests a wider cultural engagement with these questions in light of violence in the Middle East and Asia. The apparent lack of American engagement with this connection suggests a certain discomfort with the subject matter. During the early years of the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars, there was a climate intolerant of dissent in the United States, and so critics may have been wary of confronting the racial issues brought to the surface by the 11 September terrorist attacks.

While critics do not seem to reflect the film's pluralistic approach to Scots-Asian identities, they nevertheless understand *Ae Fond Kiss*'s Scottishness in complex ways. In all markets they identified it as simultaneously Scottish and not-Scottish. In Scotland, issues of race were handled differently than in London-based reviews; for them, the Glasgow constructed in the film is one in which cultures blend. For example, Dougan argues that 'this film tries to explore the relationship between the city's various ethnic populations' (2004:19), and that it 'evokes a picture of a Glasgow which is slowly coming to terms with its melting pot culture' (2004:19).

Unsurprisingly in all three markets, *Ae Fond Kiss* is discussed as a Ken Loach film. Indeed, many critics' chief concern seems to be identifying where the film fits into the Loach canon as it is seen as somewhat of a departure from his usual realist fare. For example McGill asks, 'You'd expect an uncompromising message from Loach—and you get one—but who would have thought he'd deliver it with such lightness and charm?' (2004c:15). Loach's reputation as the chief proponent of British realism who

has lately taken to producing film in Scotland complicates the way those films are labelled with a national identity, and this tension is reflected in the way critics responded to *Ae Fond Kiss*. Some critics, particularly London-based and American ones, use Loach to locate *Ae Fond Kiss* as a British film. For Mark Kermode, the film ‘reaffirms his [Loach’s] reputation as one of Britain’s most reliably honest, insightful and entertaining film-makers’ (2004), and *The New York Times*’s Choire Sicha calls Loach ‘the contrarian British filmmaker’ (2004:35).

However, once again there was a significant tendency for reviewers to identify the film as Scottish. Quinn describes Loach and Laverty as ‘Scotland’s most successful directing and writing team’ (2004:15), while Felperin mentions that it is ‘their [Loach and Laverty’s] third set in Scotland’s Strathclyde region’ (2004:38). Scottish critics like *The Herald*’s James Mottram Berlin and Alan Macdermid (2004:7) and the *Sunday Herald*’s Barry Didcock (2004:6) also identify the film as the third in a trilogy⁵³ of Loach films made in Scotland. Alastair McKay of *The Scotsman* goes further in labelling the film Scottish; he says, ‘Loach is not a Scot, but he has made a significant contribution to our culture’ (2004:12). McKay here makes Loach and *Ae Fond Kiss* honorarily Scottish. Likewise, other critics see no contradiction in regarding *Ae Fond Kiss* as both Scottish and British. Colin Fox of *The Mirror* first calls Loach ‘a British national institution’ and then ‘a Scottish treasure given his enduring work with Glaswegian screenwriter Paul Laverty’ (2004:17). This strengthens the argument that critics are beginning to understand film in a more transnational way, when it comes to ascribing national identity.

The reception of *Nina’s Heavenly Delights* confirms the trend with reviews in all three markets labelling the film Scottish in by now familiar ways. Across the board the film’s setting was key: Henry Fitzherbert of the *Sunday Express*, for example, calls it ‘a

⁵³ *Ae Fond Kiss* is Loach’s fourth Scottish-set film. *Carla’s Song* seems not to be included in the ‘trilogy’, probably due to its Nicaraguan content.

lacklustre Glasgow-set comedy' (2006a:60), and *Variety*'s Lisa Nesselson calls it 'a Glasgow-set quasi-fairy tale' (2006). In addition, in both the Scottish and London-based papers, *Nina's Heavenly Delights* was labelled Scottish based on its relation to other productions. Both Morrison (2006:51) of the *Daily Record* and *Sight & Sound*'s Geoffrey Macnab (2006:74, 76) highlight the involvement of *Dear Frankie* writer Andrea Gibb. London-based critics once again liken the film to those of Bill Forsyth; Rowat suggests that nothing 'can save the screenplay [...] from seeming like a stale blend of *Bend It Like Beckham* and *Comfort and Joy*' (2006a:2). Macnab adds that 'There is a deadpan and self mocking quality to the storytelling, which, at its best, evokes memories of Bill Forsyth. As in Forsyth's Glasgow set films like *Gregory's Girl* and *Comfort and Joy*, the characterisation is affectionate without ever being patronising' (2006:74, 76). Though the similarities between Parmar's film and Forsyth's are tenuous—despite the shared Glasgow setting the style of humour is very different—this is an attempt to locate the film among a discernible tradition of Scottish comedies.

But once again there is some emphasis on wider international genres and styles with the film's ties to Indian cinema being stressed. Alison Rowat of *The Herald* claims that the film brings 'Bollywood cliché to the Clyde' (2006a:2). For Malcolm, 'If YOU can imagine a Bollywood film made in Glasgow [...] you will know what to expect from Pratibha Parmar's good-hearted but fairly dire movie' (2006a:25), and for Lisa Nesselson, 'Silly musical numbers, courtesy of Nina's flamboyant Bollywood-obsessed drag queen friend Bobbi [...] add to the good-natured ambiance of the non-threatening transgressions' (2006). The generic links made by these critics assign the film an Asian identity.

As with *Ae Fond Kiss*, critics in both Scotland and London compare *Nina's Heavenly Delights* to other British-Asian films and filmmakers. Quoted above, Alison Rowat compares the film to *Bend It Like Beckham* (2006a:2), while Andy Dougan writes in *The Evening Times*, 'Although the film covers some of the same territory as *My*

Beautiful Laundrette, there are worlds apart in attitude and quality' (2006a:4). The London-based critics draw on the same films: *The Observer's* Philip French suggests that 'The film might well have been called "My Beautiful Balti House"' (2006a:17), evoking *My Beautiful Laundrette*, while Macnab compares Parmar to a more successful female British-Asian filmmaker: 'like Gurinder Chadha, Parma [sic] has a flair for making an embroiled family drama both cheery and accessible' (2006:74, 76). These critics identify *Nina's Heavenly Delights* as British by placing it within a tradition of British-Asian filmmaking. Of course, this construction of the film's British identity is one also complicated by its Asian identity. This can equally apply to *Ae Fond Kiss*, but I would argue that the hyphenation of British identity is much stronger in the reviews of *Nina's Heavenly Delights* with the emphasis on the film's Bollywood elements suggesting a greater understanding of the film as part of the culture of the Asian diaspora.

While some American critics had related *Ae Fond Kiss* to other examples of British-Asian cinema, others seem more interested in how *Nina's Heavenly Delights* represents sexuality. Nesselson suggests that the film's Bollywood elements are supplementary to its queerness (2006), noting that 'The food is hotter than the implied sex, but gay fests may still be tempted' (2006). Though American critics chose to focus on matters of sexuality over race and nationality in regards to *Nina's Heavenly Delights*, it is important to note that, diverging from other critics in not highlighting the film's Asian identities, in emphasising its sexualities, Nesselson still links it with a community that supersedes international borders.

Though less prominent than with *American Cousins* and *Ae Fond Kiss*, the identification of *Nina's Heavenly Delights* as projecting a hybridised culture reinforces a more diverse sense of identity in Scotland. Though Nesselson seems preoccupied with sexuality, she does describe Nina as 'Indo-Scottish' (2006). Unsurprisingly, most of the critics who describe the film in terms of both its Scottish and Asian identities are from

Scottish papers. Quoted above, Alison Rowat suggests it has affinities with both British-Asian cinema and a tradition of Scottish comedy films (2006a:2). Others note that the multiculturalism the film promotes is representative of a diverse Glasgow: the *Daily Record*'s Alan Morrison writes that, 'Everyone with taste buds knows Glasgow is home to the best curries in the country' (2006:51), suggesting this particular bit of Asian culture has been adopted as part of the Glaswegian identity. What this suggests is that, for a diverse city like Glasgow, Scottish identity is increasingly understood to be a multi-faceted or hybrid identity. For these critics, the Asian identities in the film are part of what makes *Nina's Heavenly Delights* Scottish.

Conclusion

Considering the reception of all four of these films together, two main issues become clear. While in case studies discussed in the previous chapters, there was some consistency in how films were being located, this was much more variable. By the 2000s there seems to be a stronger sense of a distinctively Scottish film industry with many reviews picking up on the Scottish talent involved in production and with the contemporary representations of the nation they appeared to offer. What this also suggests is that new constructions of Scotland were becoming familiar to more audiences, and therefore had a wider recognition as 'Scottish'. Moreover, we see a greater recognition of national identities as hybrid. On the one hand, this may be due to a greater understanding of the transnational realities of contemporary cinema. On the other, critics could be seeing Scotland as a more diverse or hybrid place or culture because of the wider availability of contemporary Scottish representations. In this sense the films may also be reflecting the changing reality of life in Scotland whose population is defined and defines itself in relation to a variety of identities.

Thus in the four films examined in this chapter, Scotland is constructed as a place of intercultural exchange. This is most apparent in the two films which deal with

Scots-Asian identities: *Ae Fond Kiss* and *Nina's Heavenly Delights*. The former suggests that, rather than identifying as either Scottish or Asian, post-colonial subjects have come to inhabit and understand national identity in a variety of ways. For the latter, national identities are already hybrid identities: one is always Scottish and something else, and 'nation' is what binds all these separate identities together. And while the examples foregrounding Scots-Italian identity also destabilise the concept of the national, they do contribute to this notion of greater pluralism and possibility in terms of Scottishness. *American Cousins* may privilege a diasporic identity over a national one, through juxtaposition of sound and image and use of genre, but it nevertheless constructs a culturally hybrid Scotland. And while *Strictly Sinatra* destabilises national identity by suggesting identities to be performative, in a way this can be liberating by creating new possibilities. In tearing down part of the structure for homologous understandings of national identities, there is room for newer, more inclusive ones to be constructed.

Furthermore, all four films explicitly mix genres, confirming Rick Altman's assertion that, all films, not just those engaged in postmodern genre play, are genre hybrids. First of all, it is in producers' best interest to leave films' generic classification open in order to attract wider audiences (Altman 1999:129). Second, genres are 'cued' by a variety of things, many of which can be present in a given film. Altman explains:

each genre was not only constructed out of found materials, which may be introduced into any film at virtually any time (in conjunction with any other genre), but in the popular mind genres are so tightly identified with certain readily recognizable semantic traits that they may easily be represented by no more than a suggestive element here or there. The history of Hollywood genre evolution might easily have followed the model of neoclassical genre specificity and separation; instead, Hollywood has throughout its history

developed techniques that make genre mixing not only easy, but virtually obligatory (1999:132).

Both *Strictly Sinatra* and *American Cousins* most noticeably blend the gangster film with comedy—dark and romantic respectively; *Ae Fond Kiss* offers a blend of Loachean social realism with melodrama, while *Nina's Heavenly Delights* is a romantic comedy with Bollywood elements. Moreover, the genre-mixing in these four films compliment their cultural hybridity, especially as three of these films use genres associated with the ethnic groups portrayed—the gangster film in the case of diasporic Italians and Bollywood for Asians. For Altman, genres function much in the same way as nations:

Genres are not only formal arrangements of textual characteristics; they are also social devices that use semantics and syntax to assure simultaneous satisfaction on the part of multiple users with apparently contradictory purposes. That is, genres are regulatory schemes facilitating the integration of diverse factions into a single unified social fabric. As such, genres operate like nations and other complex communities (1999:195).

Furthermore, Altman sees a link between the role of hyphenated genres and hyphenated identities in the development of both genres and nations: just as the hyphenated early form becomes accepted as the canonical genre, so too does the hyphenated identity become assimilated into the national identity. Therefore, the multiple genre readings available to these films help us to understand how their hyphenated labels can still be considered 'Scottish'.

Genre also provides an important tool in understanding how these for post-millennial films are identified as Scottish by critics. Both *Strictly Sinatra* and *American Cousins* are strongly labelled gangster films, associating them with Hollywood cinema and Italian diaspora, but are also compared to the comedies of Bill Forsyth, suggesting they are part of a tradition of Scottish film. *Ae Fond Kiss* is identified as Scottish by the way it constructs multi-cultural Glasgow and also somewhat problematically by its place

in Ken Loach's oeuvre. The Asian identities in the film are not so much seen as being 'global' but as part of a larger body of British Asian films. Likewise, *Nina's Heavenly Delights* was seen in the context of British Asian films but also by its multi-cultural Glasgow. In addition, like the two films dealing with Scots-Italian identities, or even earlier films such as *Restless Natives*, it is also placed into the tradition of Scottish comedy associated with Bill Forsyth. Generally speaking, Scottish films dealing with complex multi-faceted identities are labelled accordingly: instead of being identified as reflecting one nationality over another, or, indeed, made 'global' by being a genre beyond nation, critics seem to understand them as hybrid Scottish films.

On the one hand, this construction of Scottish cinema as hybrid might suggest a shift away from the understanding of a defining national context to a more transnational view similar to those of theorists like Andrew Higson or Tim Bergfelder⁵⁴. *Strictly Sinatra*, *American Cousins*, and *Nina's Heavenly Delights* are all commercial films in a domestic context. They may have nationally-specific content, but because of their use of genre and focus on entertainment, they are accessible to audiences across borders. *Ae Fond Kiss*, however, is located more firmly in the art cinema category due to Loach's auteurist credentials and socially realist associations. The designation 'art cinema' may be diverse, but it is still fundamentally international. For Steve Neale, art cinema is international in the way it circulates and in 'an appeal to the "universal" values of culture and art', but he adds that 'Art films tend nearly always to retain a mark which serves simultaneously as a sign of their cultural status and a sign of their national origin' (1981:35). Like the other three films in this chapter, *Ae Fond Kiss* retains something culturally specific to Scotland while appealing to an international audience. Yet in this case Loach goes beyond his trademark social realism to utilise aspects of melodrama to

⁵⁴ See Higson, A. (2000a) 'The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema', pp. 63-74 in Hjort, M., and MacKenzie, S. (Eds.) *Cinema and Nation*. London: Routledge; and Bergfelder, T. (2005) 'National, transnational, or supranational cinema? Rethinking European film studies', *Media, Culture and Society* 27 (3): 315-31.

explore the issue of race in society, in similar ways to Douglas Sirk with *Imitation of Life* (1959) or Rainier Werner Fassbinder with *Angst Essen Seele Auf* (1974). But whereas Sirk and Fassbinder use formalism to provide alternative readings of the film text, Loach relies on his trademark realism so that different readings of *Ae Fond Kiss* are in tension with one another, providing no easy answer.

But we can also see this as a reaffirmation of the national in the way it redefines the concept of Scotland as a nation to make it more inclusive of ‘other’ identities. Cinema that engages with ethnic and racial ‘others’ can challenge and destabilise understandings of national identity as a homogenising category. For Isaac Julien and Kobena Mercer,

One issue at stake, we suggest, is the potential break-up or deconstruction of structures that determine what is regarded as culturally central and what is regarded as culturally marginal. Ethnicity has emerged as a key issue as various ‘marginal’ practices [...] are becoming de-marginalised at a time when ‘centred’ discourses of cultural authority and legitimations [...] are becoming increasingly de-centred and destabilised, called into question from within (1988:2).

This breakdown of the binary relationships between centre and margin, black and white, etc. deconstructs the idea that ethnicity belongs to the ‘other’; whiteness, too, is made up of various ethnic identities (Julien and Mercer 1988:5-6). Therefore, rather than merely locating Scotland along interconnected lines of transnational identities, the presence of racial and ethnic minority identities in early twenty-first century Scottish films reveals ‘Scottish’ to be an already plural identity, which accords with David McCrone’s assertion that Scotland exists in multiple, competing versions (2001:51).

Chapter 6

Brave Girls and Strong Women: Feminine Scotlands in Twenty-first Century Film

Introduction

During the same decade in which films were opening up the construction of Scottish identity to embrace hybrid ethnic and racial identities, they were also broadening the range of representations of women and female experiences. As David McCrone argues, Scottish national identity has traditionally been constructed as masculine:

[...] those identities diagnosed as archetypically Scottish by friend and foe alike—the Kailyard, Tartanry and Clydesidism—have little place for women. There is no analogous ‘lass o’pairts’; the image of Tartanry is a male-military image (and kilts were not a female form of dress); and the Clydeside icon was a skilled, male worker who was man enough to care for his womenfolk. Even the opponents of these identities took them over as their own images of social life (2001:142).

Likewise, representations of Scotland in the cinema have generally constructed Scottish identity as masculine. Of the eleven films considered so far in this thesis, only one—*Nina’s Heavenly Delights*—features a female leading protagonist; while only one other film—*Ae Fond Kiss*—has significant narrative weight given to a female character. The productions considered from the 1980s may have been playing with ‘Scotch myths’ and constructions of Scottishness, but they still assumed an underlying masculinity or male dominance. Moreover, those films in which ethnic and racial identities were considered also fell into line with traditionally gendered genre expectations: male leads for the ‘masculine’ gangster films and female ones for the ‘feminine’ romances.

With very few exceptions such as *Stella Does Tricks* (1996), *The Winter Guest* (1996), and experimental filmmaker Margaret Tait's *Blue Black Permanent* (1992), Scottish films of the 1990s may have explored the question of gender, but only in terms of questioning traditional and alternative Scottish masculinities. According to Jane Sillars and Myra Macdonald, the crisis of masculinity that marked the decade served as a metaphor for Scotland as a stateless nation, in that both were 'haunted by anxieties about identity and a secure "place" in the world' (2008:187). In the 2000s, however, there would be a shift away from this emphasis on masculinity. For one thing, a politically devolved Scotland was no longer a stateless nation, and so the link between masculinity in crisis and questions of Scottish nationhood began to break down. For another, as discussed in the last chapter, changes in funding opportunities increasingly led Scottish filmmakers into co-production deals with European partners, which often resulted in films that were less overtly concerned with themes of nation and national identity.

As much as films were indicative of a change in the way Scottish identity was understood, elements of traditional 'Scotch myths' representations were still present, especially in mainstream commercial cinema. The most prominent example of this from the early part of the twenty-first century is the Disney/Pixar film *Brave* (Brenda Chapman and Mark Andrews 2012), a computer animated fairy tale set in an ancient Highland kingdom. However if *Brave* is any indication, stereotypical representations of Scotland were no longer being taken at face value, and even Hollywood was beginning to provide space for a wide range of alternative Scottish identities.

In this chapter I will consider how *Brave*, along with two independent films, Lynne Ramsay's *Morvern Callar* (2002), and Andrea Arnold's debut feature *Red Road* (2006), foreground and explore Scottish female identities and experiences. In addition to sharing female protagonists, these films are all directed by women, which also sets them apart from the other case studies in this thesis. But in other ways they also have

some significant differences. *Morvern Callar* and *Red Road* can be classified as ‘art cinema’ whereas *Brave* is a Hollywood film⁵⁵. While *Red Road* was shot entirely on location in Glasgow, much of *Morvern Callar* is set in Spain, while *Brave*’s Scotland is entirely a CGI-generated fantasy space. Despite their differences, however, what these films have in common is that they reimagine Scottish identity as female, whether by troubling commonly-held assumptions about national identity or by constructing Scotland—both its urban centres and its rural peripheries—as female spaces. For Sillars and Macdonald, such re-imaginings can draw ‘attention to the porousness of both place and identity in the new globalised economy’ (2008:194). In this way, the films considered here facilitate a more open and fluid approach to the construction of (Scottish) identity than those analysed in the previous chapters.

Big Sister Is Watching You: *Red Road*, the Gaze and National Identity

Red Road is the first feature for director Andrea Arnold, whose previous film *Wasp* had won the Academy Award for Best Live-Action Short in 2004. It was the first production made under the Advance Party scheme, a three-film co-production agreement between the Glasgow-based Sigma Films and the Danish Zentropa Entertainments⁵⁶. Along with having to be shot on digital video in six weeks on a fixed budget, Advance Party films would all be made in Scotland by first-time feature directors and had to feature the same set of characters created by the Danish filmmakers Lone Scherfig and Anders Thomas Jensen. The resulting films, however, were not required to interrelate as if they were three parts of a drama series.

Red Road focuses on the character of Jackie (Kate Dickie), a CCTV operator who seems disconnected from the world around her. Nothing—not even a family

⁵⁵ It should be noted that all three of these films have screened at Cannes and/or the Edinburgh International Film Festival.

⁵⁶ Only two Advance Party films have been released, *Red Road* and *Donkeys* (2010).

wedding or an affair with a co-worker—gives her pleasure and her only positive engagement with the world seems to be watching her fellow Glaswegians, who regularly appear on her monitors going about their daily business. One evening, while watching a couple fornicating behind a garage, Jackie is shocked to recognise the man's face. We learn few details: his name is Clyde and he has recently served time in prison for an unnamed offence. Jackie begins stalking Clyde (Tony Curran), first on CCTV, and then by following him in person. She sneaks into a party at his flat in the notorious Red Road tower blocks, and later turns up at the pub when he is there, going back to his place for sex, after which Jackie accuses Clyde of rape. We then learn that Jackie has framed him because, while he was on drugs, Clyde had killed Jackie's husband and daughter in a car accident. But Jackie subsequently withdraws her accusation; she meets with Clyde and they talk about their guilt. Jackie is finally able to let go—she agrees with her in-laws to have her family's ashes spread—and engage with life again.

With its grimy depiction of Glasgow housing estates and their undertones of seedy criminality, *Red Road* seems to fit directly into the Scotch myth of Clydesidism. One of the key ways in which *Red Road* diverges from the tradition, however, is in having a female protagonist, particularly one who actively holds the power of the gaze. Jackie's life revolves around the act of looking. In the very first scene, Arnold cuts from a bank of monitors to an extreme close-up of Jackie, and then back to a montage of close-ups of the individual monitors. This is a frequently recurring visual pattern throughout the film. Even away from work, Jackie continues to watch the world around her. At her sister-in-law's wedding, there is a similar shot pattern when the couple comes out of the church. The bride and groom are presented in a shaky, hand-held style whereas the shots of Jackie are more static. This makes it seem as if she is watching a wedding video, detached rather than being actively part of the event. Jackie cannot connect to people in the real world, though she gets pleasure from observing them on her monitors. Jackie smiles when watching the man and his sick dog on CCTV, yet when

she runs into him on the street she clearly wants to say something to him, but cannot bring herself to do so. In addition, Jackie seems equally detached from the affair she and a co-worker are having. During their tryst, she stares blankly out the car window; when he asks her if she climaxed, she unconvincingly tells him she did. By contrast, when Jackie watches Clyde and the girl's outdoor coupling (before she recognises him), she becomes aroused, breathing heavier and suggestively caressing her joystick. Jackie takes vicarious pleasure in those she watches.

The cinematic gaze, too, is a vicarious pleasure, but one reserved for men. Women in the cinema are rendered as objects on display for both the men in the films who look at them, and by the patriarchal cinematic apparatus that watches them watching. According to Laura Mulvey, 'Traditionally, the woman displayed has functioned on two levels: as erotic object for the characters within the screen story, and as erotic object for the spectator within the auditorium, with a shifting tension between the looks on either side of the screen' (1975:11-12). While there has been much debate in the decades that have followed the publication of Mulvey's seminal work of feminist film theory as to just how totalising the gaze is⁵⁷, *Red Road* subverts the gaze by making it female. Arnold constructs Glasgow as a space in which women do the looking—and possess scopic power.

According to Jessica Lake, *Red Road* provides an example of sub-veillance: as opposed to sousveillance, in which the surveilled look back at the surveillers, sub-veillance is when the watching is done by the subaltern (2010:235). For Lake, '*Red Road* presents "sub-veillance" as a way of inhabiting spaces, rather than merely a practice of looking. It re-presents the practice of sub-veillance as a process of traversing

⁵⁷ For example, B. Ruby Rich criticises Mulvey's conception of the gaze for ignoring the actual experiences of women as cinema spectators (Rich 1990:278). Mary Ann Doane addresses female spectatorship by conceptualising it as a masquerade which gives female filmgoers the distance necessary to identify with both male and female gazes present onscreen (Doane 1990:48-49).

multiple screens and creating new geographies and lines of motion' (2010:238). It is not just about watching, then, it is about inhabiting and interacting with the observed space.

Thus Jackie goes from being a passive viewer to an active participant. When she first sees Clyde on her monitor, he also figuratively arouses her into taking action against him. But her initial attempts to stalk him with CCTV cameras prove ineffective; she cannot get her revenge from where she watches above, and so she must come down and enter his world. Overall, leaving her perch has a positive effect on Jackie in that she ultimately derives pleasure or benefit from the experience. For one thing, whereas she took no joy in her co-worker, her sexual encounter with Clyde brings her to enthusiastic climax, despite the fact that this was initiated as an act of revenge. For another thing, confronting and then forgiving Clyde brings Jackie closure and allows her to move on from the deaths of her husband and child. Jackie is finally ready to be a part of the world again, and when she meets the man with the (now new) dog on the street once more, she is able to talk to him.

More importantly, however, becoming an active participant causes Jackie to rethink her act of looking. For one thing, it causes her to change her mind about some things she assumed before. When she sees Clyde talking to a teenage girl outside a school, Jackie assumes the worst, but later she learns that this is Clyde's daughter. When Jackie observes the girl, over CCTV, going to the Red Road flats to talk to her father, she decides to drop the charges against him. Here Jackie sees Clyde as another parent and realises, as someone who did not get to experience her own daughter growing up, how cruel it would be to send him back to prison. For another, it causes her to look at herself. After Clyde's roommate relates the comments Clyde made about her attractiveness, Jackie looks at her own body. At first, we see her reflection as she looks at her naked body in the bathroom mirror—she is still shown in the act of looking—but then she is framed in the doorway as she twists around to look at her backside. She is simultaneously looking and being looked at—both by herself and by the viewer. She

looks at herself literally and metaphorically, why she is doing what she is, but also as a spectator or object.

In the end, as Jackie talks to the man with the dog, the camera zooms out to show the whole street from above, as if on surveillance camera. Jackie here becomes part of the scene on view for a nameless spectator—another possible CCTV operator, but also the film's viewer. In moving from a passive to an active viewer, Jackie becomes both the watcher and the watched. In doing so, she inhabits this particular space, Glasgow. Jackie's act of sub-veillance, then, transforms Glasgow into a site of female spectatorship and pleasure.

Though *Red Road* was filmed entirely on location in Glasgow and features some of its most iconic buildings⁵⁸, some film scholars have argued that it downplays any sense of national identity. According to Jonathan Murray, *Red Road* privileges the interior and the personal over the national and political. He argues that:

[...] the location that most interests *Red Road* is not the 'real place', but rather, an alternative location intensely private and psychological in nature. It is certainly true that local socio-cultural specificity—most notably, the endemic deprivation that blights many of Glasgow's dilapidated public housing schemes—plays an important role within Arnold's movie. But that milieu is not depicted as a self-sufficient end in itself. Instead, it functions as a means to make visible—and thus, understandable—the complex and unspoken individual trauma that lies at *Red Road's* (broken) heart (Murray 2015:98-99).

It follows that, Glasgow and its Red Road estate could be any tower block in any city in the world.

⁵⁸ The Red Road estate has since been scheduled for demolition.

For David Martin-Jones, *Red Road*'s deliberate avoidance of engagement with the national is what made it successful in an international art cinema market: 'In this new, global arena of world cinema [...] it is not self-othering that is needed so much as a greater eradication of the self/nation, a process which creates films that literally anyone can engage with' (2009:229). Universal appeal has become of greater importance than national concerns. Given this, as well as the Danish involvement in the project, academics have understood *Red Road* as fitting more into the traditions of European cinema than of Scottish or British. Murray explains its Europeanness:

it [*Red Road*] attempts to find a visual language capable of representing the most extreme aspects of grief, not to mention the (self-)destructive actions the experience of such pain propels individuals towards. Both in its decision to subjugate narrative coherence and variety of incident to a psychological exploration of female interiority and sexuality and in its determination to inhabit rather than explain an especially intolerable individual experience of loss, *Red Road* accords generally with the aims of the European art cinema tradition as conventionally defined (2007:86).

Because it seems to fit so well into the aesthetic and thematic preoccupations of European art cinema, *Red Road* can be perceived as a more international than a nationally specific film.

Some of the critical reception of *Red Road* supports this idea. For instance, across the board critics perceive the film as art cinema which as I have indicated is itself an international category. In Glasgow's *The Herald* Alison Rowat writes that the film 'arrives already garlanded with the jury prize at Cannes' (2006:2), establishing its arthouse credentials. *Film Comment*'s Graham Fuller argues that *Red Road* 'shares enough tropes with *Wasp* to suggest Arnold is a burgeoning auteur' (2007:71), while in *Variety* Leslie Felperin defines it as art cinema based on its exhibition: *Red Road* 'looks headed down a specialist release path, albeit with numerous fest [festival] detours'

(2006a:34). Philip French of *The Observer* links it to other European art films: ‘some people will find it irritating, the way some people found Michael Haneke’s *Hidden* deliberately obscure’ (2006:14). Likewise, the most common way to associate the film with art cinema is to compare it to Danish film, particularly Lars von Trier and the Dogme movement. Scottish reviewers such as Rowat note the involvement of von Trier in the project (2006:2). Similarly, Liam Lacey of the Canadian paper *The Globe and Mail* notes that Arnold was ‘obliged to abide by the Dogme 95 restrictions’ (2007:R5), but Felperin looks at other ways it seems Danish; she says ‘Danish influence is palpable in the plot’s muted but still melodramatic climax’ (2006a:34). Comparisons to Danish film seem much more prevalent in the London-based papers. The *Daily Mail*’s Christopher Tookey notes the film’s style is similar to Dogme 95 films (2006:58), in *Screen International*, Alan Hunter compares *Red Road* to von Trier’s *Breaking the Waves* (2006), and Philip French describes the coproduction arrangement as ‘a rather Danish way of going about things’ (2006:14).

However, many film critics seem more inclined to talk more about *Red Road* as a genre film rather than as an art film. For Melanie Reid of Glasgow’s *The Herald* it is ‘a thriller set amid the tough realities of life in underprivileged Glasgow’ (2006:16). Dave Calhoun in *Time Out* describes it as ‘incredibly tense’ (2006:64), and the *Toronto Star*’s Peter Howell says that it is ‘Like the Peeping Tom-paranoia of similar recent films *Disturbia* and *Civic Duty*’ (2007:E06). By far, the film *Red Road* is most frequently compare to is Alfred Hitchcock’s *Rear Window* (1954), a murder-mystery thriller about a photographer (James Stewart) who spies on his neighbours after being confined to a wheelchair. Rowat calls *Red Road* Arnold’s ‘Rear Window-style story’ (2006:2), and Hunter calls Jackie ‘a hi-tech version of James Stewart’s immobilised photographer in *Rear Window*’ (2006). Chris Knight of the Canadian *National Post* suggests that there is something overall Hitchcockian about *Red Road*: ‘If Alfred Hitchcock had been born 65 years late and 650 kilometres north of London, he might today be making a movie

like *Red Road*' (2007:PM3).

While the greater emphasis on *Red Road*'s genre readings in reviews may detract from the understanding of it as art cinema, it concurs with the argument that it lacks national specificity as to identify a film with a Hollywood genre also associates it with international film culture. However, these same reviewers also identify *Red Road* in relation to national contexts. For example, a number of critics identify it as a British film in terms of production context or in relation to traditions of British cinema. Alan Morrison of the *Daily Record* calls it the 'British film of the year' (2006a:43), and Baz Bamigboye of the *Daily Mail* calls it 'another success for BBC films and its Scottish partners' (2006:62), implying that *Red Road* is a British production with some Scottish involvement and ignoring any Danish input. In all three markets, Andrea Arnold is identified as English or British. Scottish papers refer to Arnold as English, while the London ones mostly call her British. Rowat refers to her as being 'Kent-born' (2006:2), but in the *Evening Standard* Derek Malcolm calls her 'a British talent to watch' (2006c:42). North American critics refer to Arnold as both English and British: Lacey calls her an 'English director' (2007:R5), *The Washington Post*'s Desson Thomson a 'British first-timer' (2007:C05). Furthermore, in London-based and North American reviews, critics are interested in where *Red Road* fits in the traditions of British realism. For Lacey, 'the shabby milieu of *Red Road* feels like an update of the kitchen-sink realism of the British new wave of the early sixties' (2007:R5), and for *Morning Star*'s Jeff Sawtell, *Red Road* is one of 'a few more releases by British producers that signal a new interest in realism' (2006).

Some reviewers also identify *Red Road* as Scottish, perhaps more strongly even than they identify it as British. In North America, there is the usual fascination with accent and language. Thomson mentions 'thick-accented curses' (2007:C05) while Knight complains, 'One needless distraction is subtitles for dialogue that is accented English, but surely comprehensible to anyone who's ever sat through a Mike Myers

move or a Sean Connery soliloquy [...] Some Scottishisms don't translate any better in written form' (2007:PM3). In Scottish and London-based papers, critics point out that there are Scottish actors in the cast⁵⁹, and in all three markets, critics label *Red Road* a Scottish film, and even sometimes amend 'Scottish-' to a genre label. A *Daily Record* critic labels it a Scottish film (Anon. 2006i:54). *The Sun*'s Johnny Vaughan calls it a film 'from north of the border', while Knight labels it 'a Glaswegian thriller' (2007:PM3). In fact, the film's Glasgow setting and locations are the ways in which *Red Road* is most consistently identified as Scottish. The *Daily Record* critic refers to it as 'a film developed and shot in Glasgow' (Anon. 2006i:54), while James Cameron-Wilson writes in *Film Review* that the film is 'Superbly shot in some of the seedier tracts of northern Glasgow' (2006:103) and a *Variety* critic declares that 'Glasgow's ugliest estates have never looked so beautiful' (Anon. 2007b:B7). For a film that could be set anywhere, critics based in Scotland, London, and North America seem keen to remind their readers of the actual place *Red Road* portrays. The importance of Glasgow to these critics could account for why they label it as specifically Scottish rather than British. The perceived authenticity of its setting firmly associates it with Scotland.

That critics in all three markets connect *Red Road* to trends and traditions in Scottish filmmaking could also help explain how some understand the film's own national identity. In Scottish and British publications, the emphasis is on miserablism. Rowat suggests that viewers might at first mistake *Red Road* for another run-of-the-mill miserablist film (2006:2), and *Time Out*'s James Christopher says, 'The atmosphere of Scottish miserablism may put some people off' (2006a:11). By contrast, Fuller identifies Clyde as 'a Scottish "hard man"' (2007:71), albeit one that subverts Clydesidism traditions. Furthermore, in the London papers, there is a tendency to liken *Red Road* to other Scottish filmmakers. For French, the film carries on the traditions of

⁵⁹ See *The Herald* (Anon. 2006g:3) and Bamigboye (2006:62).

Bill Douglas (2006:14), but for the *New Statesman*'s Ryan Gilbey, the film's touches of humour place it in the tradition of films by Bill Forsyth (2006). Hannah McGill writes in *Sight & Sound*, 'Though Arnold herself is English, her film fits (un)comfortably into an oft-maligned tradition of slum bound Scottish miserablism that stretches from Bill Douglas to Lynne Ramsay, David Mackenzie and Peter Mullan' (2006:26-28). McGill here likens *Red Road* to a certain strain of Scottish filmmaking while also implying that Arnold has more in common with these filmmakers than other ones.

This strong association with other Scottish films perhaps helps to explain where in some of the London and North American reviews Arnold is misidentified as a Scottish filmmaker. Some Scottish critics even appropriate Arnold as one of their own: one from the *Daily Record* declares she was 'born in Kent but working up here, so given "Honorary Scot" status for this review' (Anon. 2006i:54). Scottish critics had good reason to claim this association; many of them find the film accurately captures their experience of living in Scotland. For *The Evening Times*'s Andy Dougan, the highlight of the film was that 'having been born and raised in Red Road it was a nice surprise to go to the pictures and seem my ould house' (2006b:4). Likewise, Reid finds *Red Road* gets Scotland right: she calls it 'a Glasgow movie through and through' and 'raw and authentic to its core' (2006:16). Despite being aimed at international audiences, Scottish critics not only label *Red Road* Scottish, but embrace it as being authentically so. While a film working on both a nationally specific and universal level is something that is not unique to *Red Road*, it is significant that it does so in spite of its identification by academics as a 'European' film. Perhaps acceptance by the film's home audience led critics in other markets to accept its Scottish identity without question.

Though *Red Road* may have been intended to appear universal or non-national, and there are some ways in which critics receive it as such, labels of 'Scottish' and 'British' suggest that this is not the only way to understand the film. These labels imply that there is still something nationally specific about the film, something recognised by

audiences at home and abroad. Furthermore, labels identifying a 'British' or 'Scottish' connection suggests that many people still place importance in the idea of a national identity. That Scots accept *Red Road* not only as a 'Scottish film' but also as an accurate representation suggests that their own perception of their national identity is changing. The Scottish identity *Red Road* constructs is an open one accepting of global and transnational identities.

***Brave*: Digital Places, Women's Spaces**

Brave is computer animator Pixar's thirteenth feature film. Founded in 1979 as the digital division of Lucasfilm, Pixar has from the beginning been involved in creating the technology that enables the films they make. In 1983 current Pixar Chief Creative Officer John Lassiter was brought on board to start making animated shorts. Three years later, this division was bought by Apple co-founder Steve Jobs and renamed Pixar; that same year, 'Luxo Jr.', the first 3-D computer animated short to win an Academy Award, was released. In 1991, Pixar signed its first production agreement with Disney, and in 1995 the first feature length computer animated feature film, *Toy Story*, was released. Disney subsequently bought Pixar in 2006.

Brave has a different feel to Pixar's previous features, most of which feature talking creatures or inanimate objects. It was their first feature with a historical setting, and, more importantly, the first with a female protagonist. It was also Brenda Chapman's directorial debut. Chapman, who had already worked on three films with Pixar and had been on the animation teams for films by Disney, DreamWorks, and Aardman, pitched the idea for *Brave* to Lassiter. This had been inspired by some of the problems she had encountered raising her own daughter (Diu 2012:26-29, 31). Midway through production, however, Chapman was fired over creative differences (Braund 2012:80-84) and replaced by Mark Andrews who had been on *Brave*'s creative team and had previously directed shorts for Pixar.

The film is set in a Highland kingdom in the distant past⁶⁰. Tomboyish Princess Merida (voiced by Kelly MacDonal) would rather spend her time outdoors riding her horse or shooting the bow and arrows her father, King Fergus (Billy Connolly), gave her than suffering the lady-like lessons given by her mother, Queen Elinor (Emma Thompson). Merida learns that she must marry a son of one of the three Clan Lords (Robbie Coltrane, Craig Ferguson, and Kevin McKidd) to be determined by a contest of strength. Merida balks—she does not want to give up her freedom for dull courtly duties—but Elinor insists that this is a tradition that must be carried out for the good of the kingdom, so Merida chooses archery for the competition and enters herself. As the lords' sons are unappealing and ineffectual, Merida wins, angering the lords, who brawl with Fergus. After a row with Elinor in which she slashes the family tapestry and her mother throws her bow on the fire, Merida rides out into the woods, where blue will-o-the-wisps lead her to a witch's cottage. Merida gets the witch (Julie Walters) to sell her a spell that will change her mother's mind. But the spell has an entirely different effect; Elinor is transformed into a bear, the animal Fergus despises after having lost his leg in a fight with the monstrous Mordu. After escaping the castle with the help of her rambunctious triplet brothers, Merida and bear-Elinor go looking for the witch, but only find the cryptic message she left that they must repair what had been broken. While in the wilderness, Elinor and Merida bond as Merida teaches her how to fish, but it is clear the longer Elinor remains a bear, the less likely she is to return to human form. They discover that Mordu was under the same spell as Elinor, and hurry back to the castle, where Merida makes a speech that convinces the lords to let their children choose who they marry. Before they can repair the tapestry, Elinor is discovered and pursued out into the woods. Merida, sewing the tapestry as she rides, rushes to save her mother from Fergus; Mordu attacks Merida, Fergus, and the lords, but Elinor defeats him. Merida

⁶⁰ The production design has elements suggesting that the film could be set anywhere from the Pictish to the early medieval period.

uses the tapestry to save her mother, and order is finally restored to both the kingdom and the family.

Brave clearly draws on familiar representational tropes in its construction of Scotland. The two female identities offered in the film—dour Elinor and feisty Merida draw on familiar stereotypes of Scottish women found in Tartanry and Kailyard representations⁶¹. Furthermore, the vague historical setting, the castles and landscapes rendered in fine detail, kilted warriors, Celtic carvings and designs, and even Merida's fiery hair (and matching personality) are all reminiscent of Tartanry. So too the folk tale-like structure of the narrative; it suggests Scotland is a magical place, one that is back in the mists of time. As Cairns Craig has suggested of many examples in Scottish culture, it constructs Scotland out of the forward movement of History (1996:39). The production team's perception of Scotland reinforces this: according to Mark Andrews, 'Scotland is one of my favourite places in the world. The rich history, the weathered stones and trees, the landscapes carved by time—for me, it's a place unlike any other, one that exudes story and legend and myth and magic' (Chapman and Andrews 2012:9).

In this respect, the film has much in common with other films such as *Highlander* and *Rob Roy* that construct Scotland as a fantasy or historical space, but arguably the film to which *Brave* can be most directly compared is *Brigadoon* (1954). As the story goes, the locations scouted for the film were not 'Scottish' enough for Arthur Freed, the producer, so Scotland was recreated on a Hollywood soundstage. For Colin McArthur, this recreation revealed the constructed nature of Scotch myths (2003:115). *Brigadoon* can be understood as 'the working through of the personal obsession of its director [...] with the question of illusion and reality—this

⁶¹ Mrs Campbell (Jean Cadell), George Campbell's (Gordon Jackson) overbearing, strict teetotal mother who disapproves of whisky-stealing in *Whisky Galore!*, is a classic example of Kailyard's dour Scottish women. Flame-haired, opinionated, temperamental, and a bit lusty, Mary MacGregor (Jessica Lange) in the 1995 version of *Rob Roy* is a recent example of the feisty Highland lass.

representation is revealed as the dream *par excellence*' (McArthur 1982a:47). The studio set and dream-like nature of the mise-en-scène shows that the Scotland here represented is deeply rooted in the Scottish Discursive Unconscious.

Brave goes beyond *Brigadoon* through its use of computer animation: not only is the Scotland we see in this film not an actual Scottish location, but it has also never existed in any physical space. Pixar took great pains to make aspects of the CGI imagery seem real. New software was created to animate hair and cloth realistically (McIver 2012:47), and the film was released in 3-D, giving it greater illusion of depth. Chapman, Andrews, and the rest of the creative team also took extensive research trips to Scotland, where detailed sketches were made of landscape, flora, and fauna⁶². In addition, the voice cast, most of whom were Scottish actors and comedians, were encouraged to use their native accents and to introduce appropriate idioms into the dialogue (Pendreigh 2012:7). On the one hand, we could read this pursuit of authenticity cynically, as a way to efface or distract from the constructed nature of the film's 'Scotland'. On the other hand, the publicising of these technical achievements and the lengths that were gone to in order to achieve authenticity suggests that the production is openly acknowledging that their representation of Scotland is merely a construct.

The conflict between Merida and Elinor, as a mother-daughter conflict, is 'universal', designed to appeal to global audiences, but we can see it as having other metaphorical meanings. For example, there is also a conflict of generations at play here. Elinor is the older generation and insists on maintaining tradition. As the younger generation, Merida bucks tradition; her attitude toward gender roles seems more contemporary.

It is also tempting to read politics into this conflict, especially as 2012 also saw the announcement of the 2014 Independence Referendum. Voiced by an English

⁶² For examples of these sketches see Lerew, J. (2012) *The Art of Brave*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books.

actress⁶³, Elinor, with her belief that breaking tradition could be dangerous, could be seen to express a Unionist point of view. By contrast, Merida's desire for freedom, as well as her insistence that young people should be able to choose their destinies, seems to support both the need for a referendum and independence itself. Of course, it is highly unlikely that Chapman and Andrews intended any political readings of *Brave*; they are a coincidence of the film's release date, a coincidence that the SNP nevertheless willingly embraced: former First Minister Alex Salmond even reviewed the film for *The Sun* and declared Merida 'a Scottish heroine who does her country proud' (2012:30).

Brave constructs Scotland as a place in which these differing opinions can coexist. The point of the story is about resolving the conflict between mother and daughter. Even as a bear, Elinor is still prim and proper, with no idea how to live in the wilderness. Merida has to teach her which berries are safe to eat and how to fish. In doing so, Elinor lightens up; eventually she stops walking upright and leaves her crown behind, and even changes her mind about letting princesses have weapons when Merida uses her arrows to catch fish. Furthermore, she comes to better understand her daughter. When Merida delivers a speech to the quarrelling clan lords, Elinor, hiding at the back of the great hall, mimes to her daughter to tell them that they must break tradition. In doing so, Elinor shows that she has come to accept her daughter's belief that it is not fair to force her into marriage.

Merida, too, comes to learn from her mother. She has to be diplomatic to prevent fighting between all the lords. In addition, to break the spell, the family tapestry must be sewn—one of the domestic chores Merida despises—back together. In sewing together the torn halves of the tapestry, Merida brings the different sides together. *Brave*

⁶³ Emma Thompson has had other Scottish roles in film and television work like *Tutti Frutti* (1987), for example, and her mother, actress Phyllida Law, is Scottish. However, she has also starred as English characters in several high-profile heritage films such as *The Remains of the Day* (1993) and *Howards End* (1992). Thompson plays Elinor Dashwood in her own adaptation of Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* (1995); the spelling of the name is the same as used in *Brave*.

suggests that Scotland is a place composed of both the old and the new. In the end, Merida and Elinor work on a new tapestry together, one that depicts their adventures. With the kingdom changed, they are creating new legends for a new era. For Craig, this form of myth could have a positive use in that it functions to differentiate people (1996:220). In this way, Merida and Elinor are not only creating legends, they are also defining what the kingdom is.

Brave also repurposes Scotch myths to fit a changing perception of Scottishness. According to Duncan Petrie, Scotland's location in cinema as a marginal space made it 'a space in which a range of fantasies, desires and anxieties can be explored and expressed' (2000a:32). In films such as *I Know Where I'm Going!* and *Local Hero*, outsiders from the metropole travel to Scotland and are transformed by the experience. However, in these films Scots are generally excluded from the transformative powers the nation holds for outsiders. In *Brave*, however, the characters undergoing transformation, Merida and Elinor, are not outsiders. In this case, both the protagonist and the transformation come from within. The constructed 'Scotland' has the same effect on Scottish women as it does for outsiders, male or female. By feminising masculine 'Scotch myths', *Brave* reclaims this transformative space for Scots.

This reclamation has an effect on the representation of Scottish women. If we compare Merida with Mary MacGregor in the 1995 version of *Rob Roy*, both women with personalities as fiery as their curly locks, we can see how female Scottish identity has changed. Mary may be a strong female character with an almost contemporary attitude toward marriage, but she is ultimately defined by the parameters of her marital relationship. Merida, on the other hand, will not be defined by anyone but herself. She refuses to conform to tradition; but instead works to change it. *Brave*, therefore, transforms the role of women in 'Scotch myths' at the same time it reclaims them.

Given its overt play with traditional representations of Scotland, it should come as no surprise that the most common way film critics labelled *Brave* as Scottish is by

recourse to Scotch myths. In all markets considered, critics allude to, use, or call out the film for the use of Scottish stereotypes and clichés. Alison Rowat describes the setting in Glasgow's *The Herald* as 'an olde worlde Scotland (the exact date has been lost in the mists of time.)' (2012a:9). For *The Independent*'s Geoffrey Macnab, 'the Scottish stereotypes are laid on thickly. Minutes in, the bagpipes begin to wail. References to haggis aren't slow to follow. Nor are the Braveheart-style antics of Highland warriors, who are predictably keen to show us what they're not wearing under their kilts' (2012:10), and Peter Howell of the *Toronto Star* describes the setting as 'the ancient Scottish kingdom of DunBroch, a place of towers and tartans' (2012:E1). As has been seen with previous examples of films using Tartanry or Kailyard Scotch myths, much is made of the landscapes, even though this time they are rendered in CGI. According to Lisa Kennedy of *The Denver Post*, 'the action unfolds in the green vales, lush forests and water inlets of Scotland' (2012a:7C). For John Millar (appearing in Brian McIver's *Sunday Mail* column), 'The countryside, castles, even our fickle weather are brought to life by some of the most fantastic animation you have ever seen' (2012a:2-3); while Henry Fitzherbert describes *Brave*'s landscapes as such in the *Sunday Express*: 'With its verdant, squelchy forests, heather-clad hills and misty landscapes, Brave is a visual delight that represents Pixar's greatest technological achievement' (2012a:59). These last two examples show where the reactions to the use of landscape differ from those in films discussed previously where the interest is in the sublime of the filmed landscape itself. Whereas in the case of *Brave*, critics marvel more in the technological achievement in representing that landscape.

In London-based and North American reviews, there is also a tendency to read the film as a piece of Scottish folklore. The *Toronto Star*'s Jason Anderson calls *Brave* 'a Celtic fairy tale' (2012:E7), while Ian Nathan in *Empire* magazine describes it as 'Drawn from a swatch of ursine-scented Highland folklore, the tale unfolds in a soothingly majestic Celtic Scotland' (2012:46-47). In addition, in the British papers,

Brave often draws comparisons with other Scottish films; for example, according to *The Guardian*'s Ben Child, 'Brave's title has drawn comparisons with a certain Mel Gibson movie beloved of Scots nationalists' (2012), and Nathan calls Merida 'a girl on a mission, like Gregory's Girl retrofitted to Skyrim' (2012:46-47).

In all markets, there is a great deal of emphasis on *Brave*'s authenticity. Kennedy highlights the Scottish roots of both Chapman and Andrews (2012a:7C), giving more legitimacy to their storytelling. And as usual, much emphasis is placed on accent. The Minneapolis *Star Tribune*'s Colin Covert may declare that 'If ya dinnae like a Scots accent, this wee fable will scorch yer haggis' (2012:1E), but in this case it is not just the North American critics showing interest in accent and dialect. Matthew Bond notes the use of real Scottish words in *The Mail on Sunday* (2012), while Rowat declares that 'the Scots characters, mercifully, speak in authentic Scottish voices' (2012a:9). While North American critics still see the Scottish accent as a novelty, critics in Scotland and the UK in general are impressed at the accuracy of them in a Hollywood film. In addition, critics in all three markets emphasise the use of Scottish actors to voice most of the main characters. In the *Daily Record & Sunday Mail* John Millar comments that 'the leading players are all Scots who do themselves proud' (2012:4-5), while Child notes that *Brave* 'features an almost entirely exclusively Scottish cast' (2012a), and *Daily Variety*'s Peter Debruge refers to Macdonald as a Scottish actress (2012).

For several London-based reviewers, there is a vague feeling that *Brave* gets it right. As Robbie Collin describes in *The Daily Telegraph*, 'Brave's plot seem to have percolated through the iron mountains and tangled forests it plays out against: this feels like a story passed down from the early days of an ancient nation, thereby making the kilts and Howard Shore's rousing Celtic score feel like more than tartan window dressing' (2012:7). For Shore, there is something more authentic hiding amongst the clichés. Scottish critics, too, perceive *Brave* to be more authentic than previous Hollywood attempts to represent Scotland. For one thing, a critic in the *Sunday Herald*

notes that the film has captured something of Scottish humour (Anon. 2012n:58). For another, much as with *Red Road*, many critics proclaim the accuracy of *Brave*'s representation. According to Millar, 'Whenever Hollywood does Scotland, there is that dreadful feeling that they are going to go all Brigadoon on us [...] it's a delight to report that *Brave*, Tinseltown's latest foray into the nations lochs and glens, is a triumph! [...] Disney/Pixar have done Scotland proud [...] so much in *Brave* is spot-on' (qtd. in McIver 2012a:2-3). A *The Evening Times* critic agrees: 'You couldn't exactly call it realistic, since it's a medieval fantasy, but it is still one of the most authentic Hollywood portrayals of Scotland you are likely to see, deftly sidestepping the pitfalls of going all Brigadoon on us' (Anon. 2012k:24). Whether it is because they recognise that there is some value in Scotch myths type representations, or perhaps because the film constructs a Scotland in which women and Others can participate in these myths, Scottish critics recognise *Brave*'s representation of Scotland as authentic.

In all three markets, though, critics also associated *Brave* with other kinds of markers beyond those of nationality. Genres are frequently mentioned, the most common being action, fantasy, and family films⁶⁴. Critics, too, link *Brave* to a recent trend of more action-friendly female protagonists in films. Kate Muir of *The Times* says that Merida 'joins Katniss in *The Hunger Games*, and the latest Joan of Arc-style Snow White and Alice in *Wonderland* as a new breed of warrior women' (2012:12-13), while Steven Rea of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* also compares *Brave* to these films and concludes, 'It's been a good couple of months for strong-minded women wielding medieval weaponry' (2012:W04).

However, the most apparent way critics present *Brave* as not-Scottish is by evaluating it as a Pixar or Disney movie, or, in some cases, both. A few critics seem

⁶⁴ For examples of action, see Hunter (2012:52-53) and Anon. (2012hh:T32). For fantasy, see Gire (2012a:26) and McCartney (2012a:15). For family film, see Anon. (2012w:4-5) and Howell (2012:E1).

prepared to embrace *Brave* as a ‘proper’ Pixar film. Allan Hunter declares in the *Scottish Express* that ‘A new film from Pixar is always a treat and *Brave* is no exception’ (2012a:52-53) and *USA Today*’s Claudia Puig says that it ‘hit another bull’s-eye in the Pixar animation canon’ (2012:2D), while the *Sunday Sun* critic deems it ‘a return to form for John Lasseter’s team of digital wizards’ (Anon. 2012j:12-13) after the disappointing *Cars 2* (2011). However, far more critics found that the film was not quite what they were expecting from Pixar. Rowat explains that ‘The story is simple by Pixar standard, which might disappoint those hankering after a Wall.E-style depth, or the layers to be found in the Toy Story tales’ (2012a:9), but most critics who felt *Brave* was not up to Pixar standards did so because they felt it too Disney. Cosmo Landesman says in *The Sunday Times* that ‘Some critics have complained that *Brave* is too much like the old-fashioned, play-it-safe animated fairy-tale stories we associate with Disney, and not in the fresh, innovative and offbeat style that we expect from Pixar’ (2012:11), while *The Globe and Mail*’s Liam Lacey argues that magic in the film ‘takes the movie out of the realm of wit and the patient elegance of the best Pixar films and into the much more conventional sphere of the Disney tradition’ (2012:R3). However, the sentiment that Pixar had succumbed to the clichés of its parent company were not shared by all critics; many felt *Brave* to be a very un-Disney princess story. For many, Merida is no Disney princess; Thirza Wakefield in *Sight & Sound* suggests that *Brave* deliberately uses Disney conventions to bring them up to date (2012:97). Millar finds her ‘rather different from the usual Disney model’ (2012:4-5) and for *The New York Times*’s Manohla Dargis she ‘is active instead of passive, a doer rather than a gal who hangs around the castle waiting for Prince Charming to rescue her’ (2012:1). As much as *Brave* does not fit the Pixar mould thanks to its Disney-like qualities, it is also a bit too contemporary and forward-thinking (one might say, too Pixar-like) to be a ‘proper’ Disney film, either.

With critics finding *Brave* to fit comfortably into neither the Pixar nor the Disney canon, some turn to other animators for comparisons. In London-based and North

American reviews, critics turned to Disney/Pixar's main Hollywood competitor, DreamWorks. Both the *New York Daily News*'s Joe Neumaier (2012:47) and *The Guardian*'s Peter Bradshaw (2012:17) say the film greatly resembles DreamWorks's *How to Train Your Dragon* (2010), with the later also noting that there are similarities with their *Shrek* (2001) as well. However, in all three markets, critics turn to an entirely different tradition of animation, that of Japan's Studio Ghibli, for comparison. For Rea, *Brave* 'borrows [...] more than a bit [...] from Hayao Miyazaki's heroine-driven animated adventures' (2012:W04), while for Hunter 'Brave eventually strays into territory dominated by Japanese animation giant Studio Ghibli as Merida ventures into the woods and discovers a mysterious witch' (2012a:52-53) and for Nathan the focus on the mother-daughter relationship is more akin to a Miyazaki film (2012:46-47). Indeed, Merida's journey of self-discovery has much more in common with those of the heroines of, for example, *Kiki's Delivery Service* (1992) or *Spirited Away* (2002), than with the romantic trajectories of *Cinderella* (1949) or *Sleeping Beauty* (1958). *Brave*'s affinities with Japanese anime, on the one hand, could be seen as an appeal to global audiences, signalling a shift away from the West as the dominant cinema audience. On the other hand, that anime is familiar to a wide array of film critics in Scotland, Britain, and North America suggests a greater circulation of international films. It is because of the better availability of films that not only is the style of Studio Ghibli recognisable to a populist critic in middle America, but also that Scottish labels are being recognised throughout the world.

Planet Arthouse: *Morvern Callar* and Transnational Scottish Identity

Morvern Callar is Lynne Ramsay's follow-up to her feature debut, the critically acclaimed *Ratcatcher* (1999), which was set in Glasgow during a 1970's dustmen strike. *Morvern Callar* is an adaptation of Alan Warner's novel of the same title. Morvern (Samantha Morton) wakes on Christmas morning to find her boyfriend has killed

himself and left her instructions to send the manuscript of his novel off to a publisher. Instead, Morvern takes his money, puts her own name on the novel, and buries the body in a field. She goes about her life—working in a supermarket in an unidentified Scottish seaside town (Oban in the novel) and attending raves with her friend Lana (Kathleen McDermott)—apparently in a numb state, often listening to a mix tape created by her dead boyfriend on a Walkman. Even a holiday to Spain with Lana, paid for with the boyfriend's money, does not affect her state of apparent detachment, and it is only when Morvern, having left Lana by the wayside after a trip to a remote village, gets out into the Spanish countryside that she seems more at ease. While in Spain, Morvern meets with publishers who give her an outrageous advance for the appropriated novel. After a brief return home to Oban where she unsuccessfully asks Lana to go away with her again, we last see Morvern in a foreign club, dancing away, where she apparently disappears or merges into the music and hallucinatory lights.

While Warner's 1995 novel has been compared to Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting* both in terms of its style and subject matter, the two filmic adaptations differ vastly. While *Trainspotting*'s multiple narrators were pared down by the filmmakers to a more audience-friendly single male protagonist, *Morvern Callar* retains the original novel's focus on an intensely subjective, female-centred narrative. However, instead of turning the novel's first person point-of-view into an explanatory voice over as the former film did, Ramsay prefers to keep Morvern's interiority unexplained or closed off, her blank face leaving the audience unsure of her feelings and motivations. For another, while *Trainspotting* invites readings as a national allegory, *Morvern Callar* does not engage directly with the national at all. Rather, according to John Caughie, 'It puts into play subjectivities which resist any attempt to contain them within the familiar contours of a national identity. It experiments instead with ways of being and behaving, seeing and representing, which never quite congeal into the acceptable or resolve into closure' (2007:105).

Whether or not we can state that *Morvern Callar* engages with Scotland in a national sense, film critics still received it as a Scottish film in certain significant ways. One of these ways was by its industrial context and setting. Thus while the London-based reviews consistently label *Morvern Callar* as a ‘Scottish’ film⁶⁵, the Scottish, British and North American critics all emphasise Ramsay’s Scottish origins. The *Daily Record*’s Alan Morrison refers to her as a ‘Glasgow-born’ filmmaker (2002:5), the *Sunday Mirror*’s Quentin Falk as an ‘award-winning Scots director’ (2002:58), and Dave Kehr of *The New York Times* as a ‘gifted young Scottish filmmaker’ (Kehr and O’Connor 2002:45). In addition, a few critics in these three markets also emphasised the film’s partial setting in and use of Scottish locations. Both Morrison (2002:5) and the *New York Daily News* critic (Anon. 2002p:18) mention the film’s opening location of Scotland while *The Independent* critic praises the way the Scottish landscapes were shot (Anon. 2002t:4-11). British and North American reviews alike seem fascinated by the casting of Kathleen McDermot, a Glaswegian hairdresser apparently plucked off the street by Ramsay to play Lana⁶⁶. Predictably, critics in North America also use accent to label the film as Scottish: according to *Variety*’s Derek Elley, the ‘heavily accented dialogue will test non-Scottish ears’ (2002a:30).

Another way in which critics located *Morvern Callar* as Scottish was by linking it to other established literary and film texts and traditions. Across the board reviewers note that the source novel was written by a Scottish author. Philip French of *The Observer* says that ‘Ramsay pursues similar themes through an adaptation of a well-thought-of novel by a fellow Scot’ (2002a:7), and *The New York Times*’s Elvis Mitchell comments that the novel ‘felt like an answer to Irvine Welsh’s “Trainspotting”’ (2002a:19). The British and North American critics note Warner’s Scottishness,

⁶⁵ Steve Jelbert said it was ‘Widely expected to be the most important Scottish film since *Trainspotting*’ (2002:15).

⁶⁶ See Jelbert (2002:15) and Elley (2002a:30).

explicitly, in the case of French, and by association in Mitchell's case. Scottish critics, such as Hannah McGill of *The Herald* simply refers to 'Alan Warner's celebrated novel' (2002d:19), and does not highlight his Scottish roots, suggesting that these critics assume their readers do not need the connection made for them. Additionally, in the London papers, comparisons were made between *Morvern Callar* and various Scottish antecedents. For example, both French (2002a:7) and *Film Review's* Rupert Laight (2002:76) compare the film to *Shallow Grave*. In particular, critics like Sukhdev Sandhu of *The Daily Telegraph* (2002:25) note the influence of Bill Douglas on Ramsay, while James Christopher of *The Times* (2002:12) associates *Morvern Callar* with the trend of miserablism, which portrays Scotland as an inescapably bleak place⁶⁷.

Though less sentimental, we can also see *Morvern Callar* in relation to aspects of the the Kailyard tradition. The film's Scottish setting is provincial and rather bleak, and it is shot in muted colours that make it look cold and dull in comparisons to the warmer ones that convey Spain as warm and inviting. Like the 'lad o'pairs', Morvern longs to get away from all this, and uses her intellect to do so. While the 'lad o'pairs' generally achieves his escape through education, Morvern, however, achieves hers through deceit, a contrast to the moralistic world of the Kailyard. Women being excluded from the Scottish identity the Kailyard constructs—recall McCrone's assertion that 'There is no [...] "lass o'pairs"' (2001:142)—Morvern must find alternative, morally dubious means of moving on from parochial Scotland. As such, Morvern becomes the long-assumed non-existent 'lass o'pairs'. We can therefore see the film as a feminist reclaiming of the Kailyard tradition, but, as the sentimentality characteristic of the Kailyard is here absent, we can also see the film as a critique, questioning the need to mourn over a national identity with such a strong gender bias.

Caughie reminds us of the importance of recognising the ways in which *Morvern*

⁶⁷ For more on miserablism, see Manderson, D. and Yule, E. (2014) *The Glass Half Full: Moving Beyond Scottish Miserablism*. Edinburgh: Luath Press.

Callar is 'Scottish', noting that...

[...] it is important to recognise Lynne Ramsay as a Scottish filmmaker, expanding the range of creative practices within Scotland, opening up a repertoire of creativity in film which has historically been quite limited, making it a little more difficult to seek shelter in a poverty of creative imagination. To close off questions of authorship and creativity is to remove the film from its history and locality and to lose the strategic, tactical and imaginative value which the film brings to the possibilities of being creative in Scotland (2007:114).

However, the film also destabilises national identity in several different ways. Morvern herself is not associated with any particular national identity. 'I'm not from here,' she tells a woman over the phone, and indeed we can hear that she is not, as Morton uses her own English accent. Yet Morvern is not exactly English either. She goes on to tell the woman that she has lived in Scotland for a long time. While in Spain, Morvern engages in identity play. First, she and Lana tease some British men at their resort by letting them think they are Swedish or German. Later, she tells the Spanish family who pick her up while hitchhiking that her name is Jackie—the name on a necklace she found.

According to McCrone:

The apparent demise of overarching, meta-identities seems to have allowed a plurality of new ones to emerge from beneath the corpse. These are not simply expressions of supreme individualism, but reflect greater opportunities to play out who one wants to be, selecting from an array of choices and with greater control over the messages and signs given off. The 'politics' which drive this process are indeed 'personal', in so far as they appear to give the individual greater leeway and choice. Although one may be critical of the assumption that identities are chosen freely and without constraint, they do highlight a new set of assumptions that people make

identity a very personal matter, rather than having it foisted upon them in a mechanical fashion (2001:151).

Plural identities allow people to try out and play with different identities. For Morvern, identity is fluid and adaptable rather than merely contingent. Whereas Renton could choose an alternative to traditionally masculine ones, and Nina could be both Scottish *and* Asian at the same time, Morvern is able to slide between Scottish and a variety of other identities as she sees fit.

Thus Morvern does not really seem to belong anywhere. She seems just as isolated from people at the Spanish resort as she did from those in Scotland. Even when she and Lana leave the resort and go to a remote village, Morvern, though seeming to enjoy the festival more than she had the clubbing, still stands to the side observing. According to Ian Goode, Morvern's isolation differentiates her from European culture at the same time it links her to it (2007:4). Lana's insult of 'What planet are you on?' is apt: there is no society into which Morvern fits. We find out she was a foster child; she belongs to no one. The only place Morvern seems to feel at ease is nature—she seems to take pleasure in trees and insects in the woods near where she buried her boyfriend, and in the soil and ants of the Spanish countryside. 'Nature' is everywhere; it is not something that is limited by national borders, and, in this way, neither is Morvern.

Her lack of belonging complicates the way we understand the film within traditions of Scottish representation, particularly the Kailyard. For Jane Sillars, precisely because Morvern is at home neither in Scotland nor abroad, the film's reimagining of the Kailyard tradition does not necessarily equate to a national reading:

Its openness lies in a kind of shifting between inside and outside, the opacity of Morvern's inner space met by the strangeness of the outside world. She is no more at home in Oban than Ibiza, but the two spaces are not coded in fleeting moments of integration. The meaning of these landscapes is not a given but open to possibility, transformation (2009:137).

Morvern Callar breaks down the binary between home and elsewhere/abroad, allowing for new understandings of these spaces.

Furthermore, according to Sarah Street, in *Morvern Callar* ‘Scotland as a narrative setting is less important than its function as a place to be left, to move away from [...] Scotland is not necessarily “replaced” but rather *re-placed*, that is to say, located within a broader, trans-national perspective’ (2009a:143). Street adds, ‘While *Morvern Callar* has its particular locales which may or may not be familiar to audiences, the film’s topographies could also be identified with other landscapes, evoking a kind of shorthand familiarity that opens up the work to international audiences’ (2009a:147). Because of the way Ramsay transforms nationally specific places into transnational spaces, the film opens itself up to a wider range of audiences.

The way *Morvern Callar* addresses different audiences can be seen in its critical reception. While reviewers in all three markets labelled the film as Scottish in fairly consistent ways, there are other contexts which trouble its construction as a specifically Scottish film. Some critics in all three markets labelled the film or Ramsay British. In a few cases, this could just be a slippage between the terms ‘Scottish’ and ‘British’. The *Toronto Star* critic calls Ramsay a ‘British director’ (Anon. 2002g:D02) and *The Herald* critic calls Ramsay ‘One of the most distinctive talents in British cinema’ (Anon. 2002u:16). For Laight, Ramsay ‘has revealed herself to be one of the UK’s most original assured young directors; one has the sense that this film marks the beginning of an era in British cinema that is somehow altogether new’ (2002:76), which suggests that, for the London-based press, there are higher stakes involved in claiming Ramsay as British. For other critics, particularly those based in London or North America there is a notable distinction. Typically, the Americans note the difference in Morton’s accent: Elley finds it strange that *Morvern* has an English accent instead of a Scottish one (2002a:30). British critics, too, seem unusually interested in the way *Morvern*’s accent stands out. For example, Jelbert says that Morton uses ‘an East Midlands accent as if

she's stepped from a Shane Meadows flick' (2002:15). Interestingly, in either case, the discussion continues to be framed in the context of the national.

However, critics also tended to relate *Morvern Callar* to international contexts. In all three markets, critics note the use of international pop music on the film's soundtrack⁶⁸. Furthermore, critics in all markets try to link it to Hollywood films. Critics in all three markets frequently refer to Morton's roles in American films and therefore her association with a different kind of international cinema, Hollywood. Morrison cites Morton's performance in *Minority Report* (2002:5); while Jenny McCartney of *The Sunday Telegraph* declares her 'most memorable as a deaf-mute in Wood Allen's *Sweet and Lowdown* and a water-bound psychic in Spielberg's *Minority Report*' (2002:9), and Jami Bernard says in the *New York Daily News* that 'whenever there's a role that calls for an actress who can speak volumes without much dialogue (as in "Minority Report" and "Sweet and Lowdown"), the call goes out to Morton' (2002:62). Some critics also try to shoehorn *Morvern Callar* into the categories of genre. For *The Scotsman*'s Alastair Mckay, the film seems like a 'pulp noir' (2002:12). London-based and North American critics, however, tend to see it more as either a road movie or a dark comedy. For Kehr it is a road movie (Kehr and O'Connor 2002:45); for Elley, it is 'blackly comic' (2002a:30). For James Christopher of *The Times*, it is both a 'black comedy' and 'a dusty road trip' (2002a:4). These critics' suggestions of genre are an attempt to create some kind of sense out of a complex film.

But by far the most pervasive label for the film is that of the European art cinema. Only the British critics explicitly talk about Ramsay's European influences: S F Said of *The Daily Telegraph* likens her to the French director Claire Denis (2002:19), Allan Hunter in *Screen International* to Danish filmmaker Carl Dreyer and French-Algerian novelist Albert Camus, and Alexander Walker of the *Evening Standard* to the

⁶⁸ See Mckay (2002:12), Solomons (2002:72), and Mitchell (2002a:19).

Danish Dogme movement (2002a:14). But in all three markets, the film is talked about in terms that would suggest it belongs outside the mainstream. Critics discuss the film in terms that suggest it can be seen as something other than mainstream narrative filmmaking. In all three markets, critics talk about the film's aesthetics in terms that suggest it is understood as art cinema. Andy Dougan writes in *The Evening Times* that the film 'looks more like an exhibition piece than a movie' (2002:2), and Elley calls it 'a basically plotless, psychological mood piece' (2002a:30). Nick James writes in *Sight & Sound* that it is 'about as far away from Hollywood as you can get' (2002:13). In addition, the British and North American critics' expectations of a limited audience—Hunter notes that the film's 'mainstream appeal is dubious' (2002b) and Elley that its 'commercial horizons still remain extremely limited' (2002a:30)—further suggests a reading as art cinema in that it has a very niche audience. Moreover, the disdain with which the UK tabloid critics treat the film—the *Daily Mail* critic refers to it as 'achingly pretentious' (Anon. 2002s:52)—suggest that they, too, understand it to be an 'art film', mainly in the sense that they find it incomprehensible. In fact, most of the critics who explicitly label *Morvern Callar* as 'art cinema' tend to be from the British tabloids, whose ideological positions are revealed in their equation of art with a waste of money.

In addition, reviewers in all three markets describe Ramsay in terms that would imply she is an auteur filmmaker. The *Sunday Herald's* Wendy Ide calls *Morvern Callar* 'entirely Ramsay's vision' (2002:6), Peter Bradshaw writes in *The Guardian* that 'Ramsay's confidence is what is so absorbing: her confidence in her own visual language, her mastery of the material and her address to the audience' (2002d:14); and the American magazine *Premier* puts Ramsay in league with other auteurs: 'Ramsay will someday, maybe sooner or later, have a body of work that will place her in the company of Antonioni, Buñuel, or Breton, to mention just three great cinematic poets' (Anon. 2002l:19-20). However, only Scottish and London reviewers actually use the term auteur to refer to Ramsay, and then only in a few cases. Ide says 'I hate the term

auteur [...] but for Ramsay, the title fits' (2002:6). In the *Independent on Sunday*, Jonathan Romney both labels Ramsay an auteur and explains why British film critics hold back on using the term: 'In Britain we don't normally have much time for auteur film-makers [...] a film-maker whose identity and fervour are visible in every shot, that just smacks too much of the Continent' (2002:9). Using the term 'auteur' then, to describe Lynne Ramsay would label her something other than Scottish or British; that critics are reluctant to use it suggest that there is some importance placed on having a filmmaker of Ramsay's calibre attached to the nation.

Many of the films examined in the previous chapters have replaced a stable Scottish identity with an instable, fluid one, and *Morvern Callar*, too, offers multiple ways to be Scottish and female. On the one hand, Morvern's transience seems not to belong anywhere. On the other, Lana appears much more home-bound since she returns to Scotland and refuses to go away with Morvern again. Lana has more ties to Scotland; her grandmother is still alive, whereas Morvern's foster mother is dead. Unlike Morvern, Lana also seems to fit in wherever she goes: at the festival, Morvern just watches what is going on, but Lana, who did not want to be dragged away from the resort, participates in the celebrations anyway. 'It's the same crap everywhere so stop dreamin'', Lana tells Morvern when she refuses to leave Scotland again. The reason why Lana is able to be at home as much in Spain as in Scotland is that she has embraced the similarities in culture that globalisation has brought about. In this way, Ramsay has constructed two different forms of female identity—one for whom nowhere is home, and one for whom everywhere is—but significantly both of these identities reject national specificity. Rather, *Morvern Callar* offers us female transnational Scottish identities.

Conclusion

In various ways, all three films considered in this chapter—*Morvern Callar*, *Red Road*, and *Brave*—play with familiar 'Scotch myths' representations. As with the Kailyard

tradition, *Morvern Callar*'s eponymous heroine escapes the confines of provincial Scotland, but Ramsay uses this association to destabilise rather than reaffirm national identity. In its place, she explores a sense of travel and rootlessness, an experience that is coded female and in which Scotland as space and place come to be understood to be part of a wider global community. With its impoverished and resolutely urban setting, *Red Road* immediately connects with the tropes of Clydesidism, but here Jackie's female gaze transforms Glasgow and repositions this 'traditionally' masculine environment into a feminine space. On the face of it, *Brave* presents the clearest connection to 'Scotch myths' of the three films, directly evoking Tartanry and Kailyard. But in so doing the film not only constructs an imaginary Scotland that is inclusive of both the traditional and contemporary, it also writes women into these male-dominated myths as active and desiring subjects.

While the Hollywood-made *Brave* was regarded as Scottish by film critics, and most noticeably along the lines of these myths, we see both *Morvern Callar* and *Red Road* continue to be labelled as Scottish in similar ways that films have been since the New Scottish Cinema. However, with *Morvern Callar*, there was a much stronger tendency to label the film in the context of European or international art cinema, taking focus away from the national. For *Red Road*, too, critics emphasised its ties to European cinema as well as to Hollywood genres, but there remains a stronger national identity, especially in Scotland, where the film was embraced as an authentic representation of Glasgow. Critics also labelled *Brave* authentically Scottish despite the fact that they were, at the same time, labelling it a global, Hollywood film and an international film along the lines of the Japanese Studio Ghibli. The Scottish identities constructed in reviews of these films, but particularly of *Red Road* and *Brave*, is that of productions which are simultaneously Scottish *and* international. Like the transnational Scottish identities created by *Morvern Callar*, or even the hybrid Scottish identities created by

the films of the previous chapter, the Scottish identities constructed by these films are not only plural and porous, but also open to the changing global climate.

For David McCrone, ‘Just as political sovereignty in the modern world is both layered and shared such that powers and responsibilities operated at different levels for different purposes [...] so people appear quite content to attach identity to these levels as and when it suits them. The issue is not which one you are, but which one you choose in different contexts and for different purposes’ (2001:192). There is a wide range of identities available in the postmodern world and like Morvern, we can move between them. Therefore, rather than think of the national as a concept that has been supplanted by the transnational, the global, etc., we can see it as one that sits alongside these and other identities and which people activate as they see fit. The three films considered in this chapter are all situated in several different cinematic contexts based on nationality, style, and genre, among other things, but the ways they playfully activate their Scottishness not only works to make the formerly masculine Scottish identity more inclusive of women, they also, in the fluidity of their identities, make Scottish identity a contemporary one.

Conclusion

This thesis has investigated the continued importance of national identities and cinemas by studying the case of Scottish cinema. Rather than construct a potentially problematic definition of Scottish cinema, I have instead considered the way that Scotland has been constructed in films since the 1980s. Drawing on Michael Billig's theory of the banal, everyday nation rather than the modernist approaches that shaped the perspectives of theorists like Ernest Gellner or Benedict Anderson, I have theorised 'Scotland' in much the same way as David McCrone: as a changing set of meanings, asking both how and by whom Scottishness is constructed in film. I have asked how these constructions of Scotland balance multiple identities in two ways. First, I examined how films, beginning after Scottish nationalism took a cultural turn at the end of the 1970s and including ones from a variety of production contexts, both employ 'traditional' modes of Scottish representation and offer alternatives. Second, I turned to the reception of these films, examining reviews to see what they can tell us about how both insider and outsider audiences understand the Scottishness of the films. In studying the reviews alongside the films, I have asked both how they reflect the films' constructions of Scotland but also where, how, and why they diverge.

Whereas in *Scotch Reels*, Colin McArthur and his colleagues generally found representations of Scotland up until the 1980s to be regressive, locking Scotland out of a more progressive understanding of history, the films I have considered from the 1980s—*Highlander*, *Local Hero*, and *Restless Natives*—knowingly played with the tropes of both Tartanry and Kailyard, two representational strategies considered to be regressive Scotch myths, which locate Scotland as a space outside or beyond the forward progress of History. *Highlander*'s use of Tartanry is part of the film's postmodern play; its signifiers of Scottishness are used to destabilise identity. *Local Hero* and *Restless*

Natives also utilise myths in a postmodern way, but to create an open, rather than limiting, form of Scottish identity, one that is inclusive of both the traditional and alternative forms of representation. This suggests the need for a more complex or sophisticated understanding of the relationship between representation and identity that chimes with David McCrone's investigation of Scottish identity as essentially multi-dimensional, pluralist and contingent. Likewise, while the reviews of *Local Hero* and *Restless Natives* tend to reference Scotch myths discourses, there is also a growing tendency for critics to label films as Scottish based on a distinctive quirky sense of humour associated with the authorship of Bill Forsyth. And while, critics identified *Highlander* as Scottish largely based on its familiar use of Tartanry, they also were far more interested in linking the film to transnational or Hollywood styles and genres. Therefore, we can see that, even during the 1980s, discourses of Scotland and Scottishness in relation to cinematic representation were more complex than critics like McArthur tend to suggest. These three films use 'traditional' representations of Scotland to construct identities that are both fluid and plural. Moreover, that the Scottish identities these films construct were being recognised in newspaper and magazine reviews suggests that an alternative, contemporary understanding of Scotland was becoming more widely accepted.

The films considered from the 1990s would continue to build on this idea of a discourse of pluralism. Film and literary critics like John Caughie and Cairns Craig began to re-think the positions they had initially taken in *Scotch Reels*, trying instead to reclaim and redeem certain traditional forms of Scottish representation. Meanwhile, a new generation of critics like Duncan Petrie proposed that the increase in Scottish film production since the 1980s constituted a 'devolved cinema', one which is moving forward, but is also continuous with previous representations of Scotland. At the same time that Hollywood films continued to use regressive forms of Scottish representation, films of the New Scottish Cinema constructed plural Scottish identities by offering

several alternatives to ‘traditional’ forms of Scottish masculinity such as the Kailyard ‘lad o’pairts’ or the Clydeside ‘hard man’. Films like *Trainspotting* and *Orphans* use their ensemble casts to both critique and parody traditional Scottish masculinity while offering alternative representations of Scottish men. *Trainspotting* poses a hybrid masculinity that is both Scottish and global as best for a changing Scotland, whereas on the other hand *Orphans* suggests that the forms of Scottish masculinity that it represents are equal in that none of the brothers is particularly more capable of coping with their mother’s death than the others. Even films produced for large international audiences were not simply reproducing Scotch myths. For example *Rob Roy* questions the binary opposition of manly Scotsmen and effeminate Englishmen on which Scottish masculinity is articulated in films like *Braveheart*. Again, Scotch myths discourses appear in the films’ reviews, particularly in regards to the two historical dramas, and we see the films again being labelled Scottish based on their sense of humour, this time, the darkly comic tones of both *Trainspotting* and *Orphans*.

What we see to a greater extent in this decade, however, is a tendency to locate films as Scottish according to their production context. This had been done to a certain extent before, mainly with *Local Hero* and *Restless Natives*, which, though funded by London-based British companies, nevertheless had Scottish creative involvement and were shot on location in Scotland. But with the wide growth of film production in Scotland during the 1990s, a more distinctive Scottish cinema was emerging. At the same time, however, Scottish films were being discussed in relation to broader international contexts. *Trainspotting* was identified in some quarters as part of a wider trend in global youth culture, while *Orphans* was linked to international art cinema⁶⁹. *Braveheart* and *Rob Roy*, on the other hand, were routinely associated with Hollywood stars and genres; interestingly, though, in the case of the latter, which was often labelled

⁶⁹ Though *Local Hero* can be understood as ‘art cinema’ due to critics’ attempts to define Forsyth as an auteur, critics were less explicit in labelling it as such.

a 'Scottish Western', the genre label does not detract from the understanding of the film as Scottish. Instead, it reinforces its Scottishness by defining it as a hybrid of the nationally specific and the global. Therefore, as Scottish film production increased, so too did the number of ways 'Scotland' was being constructed on the screen, and, as a result, there was also a widening in the recognition of these new identities. Furthermore, as a consequence of this, mainstream Hollywood film was also beginning to question 'traditional' forms of Scottish representation. As with the 1980s, Scotland on screen during the 1990s remained defiantly plural not only in terms of the integration of the traditional and the contemporary, but also in the ways that these categories were being further broken down to offer a dynamic array of multiple Scottish masculinities.

This trend would continue into the 2000s as Scottish films shifted to engage with ethnicity, race, and gender, moving away from merely plural identities to ones that are also hybrid. During this period, scholars of Scottish cinema such as Jonathan Murray or David Martin-Jones began to examine ways in which it could be considered transnational or global rather than simply national cinema. This can be productively explored by way of films that complicate the idea of Scottish identity through a focus on ethnic or racial diversity and difference. Thus *Strictly Sinatra* and *American Cousins* both ponder Scots-Italian identities. In the former, national identity is shown to be as much a performance as Tony Cocozza's Frank Sinatra impersonations; while the latter, though seemingly privileging a diaporic Italian identity, constructs a hybrid Scots-Italian identity through its use of sound and image. In destabilising national identity, these films open up the understanding of national identity and create greater possibilities. In a similar way *Ae Fond Kiss* and *Nina's Heavenly Delights* use Scots-Asian identities to construct a more pluralist vision of contemporary Scotland and Scottishness. *Ae Fond Kiss* shows that the way people relate to their national identity is not simply a matter of choosing between a Scottish and an Asian identity. *Nina's Heavenly Delights* also constructs a hybrid Scots-Asian space and suggests that the nation is what binds plural

identities—rooted in race, gender, or sexuality—together. Furthermore, all four of these films engage in genre mixing. *Strictly Sinatra* and *American Cousins* combine the Hollywood gangster film with dark and romantic comedy respectively, while *Ae Fond Kiss* blends melodrama with social realist art cinema, and *Nina's Heavenly Delights* blends the romantic comedy with Bollywood musicals. The way they mix genre is metaphoric of the way they all construct Scottish identity as a blend of different cultures. When identifying these films as Scottish, critics tend to concur with this hybrid construction of Scotland. While the Scottish identity of both *Strictly Sinatra* and *American Cousins* may have been troubled by an association with the Hollywood gangster films, some critics also marked them as Scottish through comparisons to Bill Forsyth's comedies. *Nina's Heavenly Delights* is also linked to Forsyth; alternatively, *Ae Fond Kiss* is labelled Scottish not due to links with Scottish comedy but through critics' appropriation of Ken Loach as a Scottish filmmaker. But both films are more prominently labelled 'Scottish' by virtue of their association with what critics felt was an accurate depiction of Glasgow as a multi-cultural city. Therefore, the idea of a plural Scotland was well-enough established by the beginning of the twenty-first century that filmmakers could move beyond the plurality of white male Scottishness. In addressing themes of race and ethnicity, Scottish films move towards constructions of Scottish identities that are also hybrid, based on a combination of national, racial, ethnic, sexual, gender, and other characteristics. This is further reflected in the critical response to these films. Through juxtaposition of genres, styles, etc., the films have been connected with or related to British cinema, Hollywood, Bollywood, European cinema, and so on. More importantly, in the way they praise the accuracy of the depiction of Glaswegian diversity, critics clearly have accepted the idea of Scotland as a plural nation of hybrid identities before encountering these four films. Plural and hybrid Scottish identities were now widespread.

Finally, I considered films that challenge the traditional association of Scotland with masculinity by foregrounding Scottish women's experiences and perspectives. Significant scholarly work in this area has already been done by the likes of Sarah Neely, who has celebrated the neglected female Scottish filmmaker Margaret Tait, and Jane Sillars and Myra MacDonald, who have considered the profound ways in which representation of Scots and Scotland has been gendered. Films dealing with women's experiences also move beyond a plural or hybrid perspective toward a more fluid sense of identity. We can also see, in these films, a return to the exploration and reworking of traditional Scotch myths. *Red Road* for example reclaims the trope of Clydesidism by using the female gaze to transform Glasgow from a masculine to a feminine space. And while *Brave* may be a Hollywood construction of Scotland, it does not take Tartanry and Kailyard at face value; rather, it uses them to write women into these male-dominated myths. *Movern Callar* plays with the Kailyard in its own way, using it to destabilise a sense of national identity and explore a rootlessness that connects Scotland to a global community. Identity is therefore fluid in that one can slide between the many identities on offer as they see fit. Though *Brave* was somewhat obviously labelled Scottish by critics in relation to traditional motifs and stereotypes, the other two films were located more in comparison to a growing corpus of Scottish films. However, all three were discussed widely in the context of various international or global cinemas, chiefly European art cinema and Hollywood. Yet, surprisingly, these films—*Red Road* and *Brave* especially—were deemed particularly authentic by critics. Much like the hybrid identities discussed in the previous case study, some critics understood the films to be simultaneously Scottish and international. What we can take from this is that, first of all, the idea of a plural Scotland extended not just to understandings of it as a multi-ethnic nation, but also as one inclusive of both binary genders as well. Second, we can see that this idea of a plural Scotland coincided with a wider desire for more varied gender representation in cinema, which resulted in a greater variety in the way Scotland was

represented in both indigenous and dominant cinema. Finally, as both the films and critics construct Scottish identity as plural, hybrid, and fluid, it suggests that there was a greater understanding of nation as something that is not necessarily mutually exclusive of international, global, etc. contexts.

Overall, there has been a significant broadening in Scottish film of the concept of what it means to be Scottish. Films from the 1980s constructed a Scotland that was inclusive of both the traditional and the contemporary. Those from the 1990s offered multiple versions of Scottish masculinity, though they still constructed Scotland as a predominately white male space. The films of the next decades shifted away from this to offer hybrid ethnic Scottish identities and constructions of Scotland as a feminine space. In a way, films have come full circle since the 1980s. The films discussed in Chapter 4 (*Braveheart*, *Rob Roy*, *Trainspotting*, *Orphans*) and Chapter 5 (*Strictly Sinatra*, *American Cousins*, *Ae Fond Kiss*, *Nina's Heavenly Delights*) are rather serious about the way they construct Scottish identity in that they partake less in play-for-play's-sake than the films of that earlier decade. In some ways, the project of Scottish films of the 1990s was establishing a distinct Scottish cinema and identity, but with the 2000s films that dealt with race and ethnicity, there is more interest in the transnational or global identities. However, the twenty-first century films that deal with women's experiences have a lot in common with the films of the 1980s in the way they play with Scotch myths. We can draw parallels between how *Local Hero* and *Restless Natives* playfully use myth to construct Scottish identities that are both traditional and contemporary and the way *Brave* and *Red Road* use them to make Scottish identity more inclusive of women. Furthermore, the play with Scotch myths tropes in both *Highlander* and *Morvern Callar* posit identities that are instable and flexible. For the former, this postmodern play shows identity to be nothing more than a construct, but in the latter, the fluidity of identities allows for the construction of open and inclusive Scottishness.

Moreover, here we can see Scotch myths being used in the progressive way Cairns Craig suggests; they are used to construct new forms of Scottish identity.

The way film critics have located films as ‘Scottish’ has developed alongside the way the nation has been constructed. As we have seen, in the 1980s, critics began labelling films as Scottish according to the sense of humour displayed in Bill Forsyth’s films; as Scottish film production increased, we see critics more often relating individual films to a wider corpus of Scottish cinema. Moreover, critics now define Scottish film in relation to new representations of Scotland in film as well as by the old Scotch myths tropes. In addition, they also use hybrid constructions of Scotland, both in how they understand Scottish films generically and in terms of understanding them as both national and international, global, or transnational films at the same time. As with the way filmmakers have constructed Scotland, film critics seem to understand the nation on screen as an increasingly plural, hybrid, or fluid concept. In this way Scottish films are arguably reinforcing a vision of Scottish identity similar to that defined by David McCrone. In the variety of ways they construct or label a film ‘Scottish’, they suggest that Scottish identity is contingent on a variety of historical and cultural factors.

This thesis has shown, through examination of the ways Scotland is constructed in films and their reception, that ‘Scotland’ is widely conceived of as a plural, hybrid, and fluid place. There are many implications of this. For one thing, it can help us understand what often can seem like a disparity between Scottish national culture and Scottish nationalist politics. A contingent understanding of the concept ‘Scotland’ can help explain why, for example, the majority of Scots would reject independence and yet feel separate enough from British mainstream political parties to vote overwhelmingly for the nationalist party in the 2015 General Election. For another, it impacts on the way we understand national cinemas. Rather than look at them as being eclipsed by the transnational, international, global, etc., my consideration of Scottish film shows how the national continues to function, sitting alongside and, indeed, intersecting with these

more expansive concepts and ideas. Therefore, I suggest that we need to further reassess the way in which the national continues to be a meaningful and important concept in relation to contemporary cinema.

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