

The National Theatre of Scotland's Imagination of Contemporary Scottish Identities

By

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Abstract

The National Theatre of Scotland (NTS) seeks to stage identities and histories, which either have not been staged before or which have represented Scotland and its people in a way that was disingenuous. This dissertation explores four NTS productions that make explicit the NTS's desire to create narrative alternatives to stereotypical Scottish tropes in favor of demonstrating the true diversity of Scottish life both historically and within the present day. The alternative and pluralized narratives are clear: the history and myth of the Black Watch is de-romanticized throughout *Black Watch*; the derring-do of the Border ballads comes to terms with modern society in *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart*; Calum MacLeod's legendary feat is celebrated as a virtuous failure in *Calum's Road*; the unique lives of Shetlanders and their relationship to mainland Scotland is celebrated in *Ignition*. The NTS embraces Scotland's cultural contradictions and explores them throughout its work. The moments of disconnect between regions within Scotland and between modernity and the past is the focus of exploration within this dissertation.

Scotland is in the process of defining itself as a nation separate from Great Britain, and the NTS is an agent of that effort. In order to define itself as a nation, the Scottish people need to be united, not as a homogenous group but as citizens who feel they are connected by some thread and who see their lives woven together no matter how disparate their lives happen to be. The NTS "Theatre without walls" mission stitches these threads throughout the Scottish nation as the productions travel broadly and become representative of a true National Theatre by bringing art to all corners of the Scottish nation. Their unity does not remove the individual characteristics of a region or background but instead demonstrates that it is because of their diversity that the Scots are so remarkable.

Introduction

Nessie, Neeps and Neds:¹ Scottish Identity and Image

“Sometimes I think you could be born in this country. Live in it all your life. Study it. Travel the length and breadth of it. And still—if someone asked you—to describe it—all you’d be able to say about it without fear of contradiction is—‘It’s cold’” (*Dunsinane*, Greig 29)

Scottish playwright David Greig² published “Notes to Self: A To Do List for Scottish Culture” to his personal blog on 12 May 2015.³ Within this post Greig described how he was invited to contribute to the “Culture: What Next?” gathering as part of The Scottish Storytelling Centre, located on Edinburgh’s Royal Mile by writing a statement on Scottish culture. Instead of directly stating cultural intentions for the nation, however, he chose to publish a personal “To-Do List” that focused on his own dreams and goals. He chose this personal rather than public stance because, “[s]uch events often feature speeches telling ‘us’ things ‘we’ need to do. I dislike this blanket use of ‘we’ when very often it really means ‘I’ or ‘you’ . So instead I wrote a To Do List which is explicitly directed at me – this is what **I** think **I** need to do over the next 10 years... but as Walt Whitman said: ‘I contain multitudes,’ so if you read this and any part of it resonates with you, feel free to hear it as ‘we’ .”⁴ Greig’s discussion of culture as a personal experience seems obvious, but it can upend typical cultural projects, such as the “Culture: What Next?” gathering which sought to bring the Scottish people together over a shared story. Instead, Greig’s emphasis on himself decenters the cultural experience, and allows each and every person participating in the event to become the center of his or her own experience.

The parallels between Greig’s self-centered “To Do List” and the goals of the National Theatre of Scotland (NTS) are clear, for both want to celebrate Scottish people and culture but do not want to speak for all Scots as if they were a homogenous group. Instead, the National

Theatre of Scotland takes special care to address Scottish experiences from different geographical regions, from various time periods, and from distinct age groups in an attempt to define “us, the nation” (Billig 61). The NTS connects these diverse regions and identities, and by celebrating their differences helps to shape and imagine a complete Scottish nation. This dissertation serves to introduce varying personal interpretations of culture and nationalism. It seeks to connect and in turn reflect upon the nation as it is actively re-imagined and re-shaped in each performance through a broad array of experiences and beliefs. Throughout the introduction, Greig’s “To-Do List” serves as a scaffold, around which my analysis of the role of the National Theatre of Scotland and Scottish theatre are built.

“I need to always remember to pluralize the word ‘culture’ when I’m speaking about Scotland.”:⁵ Scottish Cultural Diversity

The National Theatre of Scotland (NTS), formed in 2006, and had before it a unique challenge. First, it was one of the newest national theatres to form in the western world.⁶ Secondly, the NTS needed to create a national theatre that represented a people that were technically already represented by the UK’s National Theatre in London. How could they separate themselves as a unique national organization in order to culturally represent the diverse people that live within the nation? In order to do this the NTS chose to “rebrand” Scotland from a nation of tartan-wearing fighters to the multifaceted nation that actually exists, and the NTS worked to pluralize Scottish culture. The NTS brings to focus tropes of identity that are often forgotten or overlooked on an everyday basis. Michael Billig, identifies these tropes (or flags as he calls them) as absent-minded nationalism (50). By focusing on different regions, experiences, ages, beliefs, and cultural practices the NTS challenged the absent-minded nationalism which produces common stereotypes of Scots on stage. When presenting the military, for example, the

guilt and pain of war is highlighted in opposition to the savagery so commonly associated with the Scottish warriors. Similarly, romantic images of “bonny Scotland” are juxtaposed with the realities of the modern era. In this way the NTS is not only revising the Scot on stage but is also working to re-shape and construct more holistic Scottish identities: “Typically, the construction of national identities relies on the circulation of narratives—part truth, part legend—that invest nations and nationalist projects with coherence and intent” (Reid 18). Throughout much of their productions, the NTS utilizes the well-known narratives of Scotland and then alters them, just a bit, to better speak to contemporary Scottish culture. Identifying and articulating what it means to be Scottish, is in keeping with identity trends across Europe. Janelle Reinelt notes the “latest public debates in the UK about what it means to be British and the tension between a policy of multiculturalism and that of assimilation” and the echoes of such tensions appear on stage within countries across Europe with large immigrant populations (229). These cultural tensions fuel and drive the mission of the NTS as they investigate various forms of Scottish identity within their plays.

The NTS seeks to stage identities and histories, which either have not been staged before or which have represented Scotland and its people in a way that was disingenuous. This dissertation explores four NTS productions that make explicit the NTS’s desire to create narrative alternatives to stereotypical Scottish tropes in favor of demonstrating the true diversity of Scottish life both historically and within the present day. The alternative and pluralized narratives are clear: the history and myth of the Black Watch is de-romanticized throughout *Black Watch*; the derring-do of the Border ballads comes to terms with modern society in *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart*; Calum MacLeod’s legendary feat is celebrated as a virtuous failure in *Calum’s Road*, the unique lives of Shetlanders and their relationship to mainland

Scotland is celebrated in *Ignition*. It is through the marriage of myth and reality that the identity of the NTS is created. In many ways the NTS serves the function that other national theatres do: “National Theatres are founded on assumptions of historical, linguistic and cultural continuity, which persist despite the facts that contradict them” (Steve Wilmer qtd. Kruger 38). However, the NTS embraces Scotland’s cultural contradictions and explores them throughout its work. The moments of disconnect between regions within Scotland and between modernity and the past will be the focus of my exploration within this dissertation.

Some plays produced by the NTS do not directly relate to Scotland but instead feature the creative work of Scottish artists, and connect Scotland to the larger fabric of Europe. These productions may be difficult to assign as “national” as they contradict what we currently believe about Scotland, or what the NTS has previously projected as a cultural identity within Scotland. The re-imagining of *MacBeth* (2013) as a one-man show in an insane asylum, though non-traditional, is clearly a Scottish claim on “the Scottish play.” However, many of the productions of the NTS do not so easily fit into a “National Theatre” wheelhouse. For example, Zinnie Harris’s *The Wheel* (2011) takes place during the Spanish Civil War, while *Let the Right One In* (2013, 2014, 2015) is based on a Swedish vampire film. Both plays feature Scots on stage performing in their natural dialect, and as a result they broaden the definition of Scottish culture on stage by both validating the Scottish dialect and by performing a publically supported art utilizing Scottish bodies on stage. Additionally, by exploring the shared histories of other European nations, the NTS emphasizes a Scottish identity that is not bound within the confines of race or lineage, but instead one that acknowledges influences and the importance of other cultures and heritage.

The NTS, through its work and supported by its manifesto, rejects a singular view of nationalism. The manifesto (2006), written by the members of the Federation of Scottish Theatre when the NTS was being conceptualized,⁷ defines the role of the NTS within Scotland, and emphasizes why the NTS needs to exist as a separate entity from other extant theatre companies:

We have spent many hours debating the notion of a "national theatre" and the responsibility that entails. It is not, and should not be, a jingoistic, patriotic stab at defining a nation's identity through theatre. In fact, it should not be an opportunity to try to define anything. Instead, it is the chance to throw open the doors of possibility, to encourage boldness. I hope our programme goes some way to realising these ambitions. I hope we will make Scotland proud. (Manifesto)

The NTS is re-imagining what it means to be a national theatre by refusing to simply portray the Highland warrior or stab-happy Glaswegian as the singular vision of Scotland as a nation. These images are too simple; they attempt to encompass a large group of culturally divergent people, and more often than not are negative images. Barbaric imagery of Scotland works to keep Scotland as “other” while the English dominate the sphere of culture and civility. In order to imagine new and varied Scottish identities, the NTS must contend with the existent images.

The NTS chooses to present multiple identities and to complicate the national image rather than seeking to define it. Donald Smith, in “Playing National: The Scottish Experiment,” pinpoints that part of this struggle to form a national theatre was not only about portraying a singular national identity, but also the complex notion of creating a new national drama: “The national drama would by definition embody in dramaturgy, acting and production styles that which is culturally and historically distinctive about Scottish society, so imposing a weight of political as well as artistic expectation on its periodic flowerings” (Smith, “Playing National”

222). The national drama and the national theatre both carry with them the weight of political and artistic expectation, and as a result anything produced by the NTS will be automatically linked to a political objective. It would also bring with it the legacy and baggage of Scottish performance, which would need to be acknowledged in some way, whether by fully embracing it or by re-imagining it. The legacy of Scottish theatre will be discussed in detail later in this introduction. In order to avoid the stereotypical portrayals of nationalism it is important that the multifaceted nature of Scottish identity is depicted in the national drama. “The infinite possibilities for talking nationally about ‘us’, ‘you’ and ‘them’ illustrate the dilemmatic character of nationalism” (Billig 87). The reliance on multiple voices and styles allows for the NTS to be a national theatre while also avoiding singular vision of national identity, thus emphasizing a cultural nationalism built from various stories and experiences, but also challenges the NTS to work to be fully inclusive and to depict all voices and views on stage.

One of the primary ways the NTS goes about creating this new theatrical voice is by not operating out of a singular theatrical venue. Instead, the NTS takes the theatre to the people by creating a “Theatre without Walls.” This organizational system inverts the power dynamic usually existing in theatres, and national theatres specifically. The institution is created and the expectation is that the audience will come to said theatre to view the productions put on at the location. Even when a national theatre has multiple locations the people are expected to travel to the productions in one of the key locations, for touring is not a key element of the production’s design. The National Theatre of Scotland⁸ focuses on site-specific shows in varying communities and emphasizes touring for its main stage productions. The expectation is that the theatre will come to the people and be more accessible both in terms of geographical location and in terms of price point.

With no dedicated building, the National Theatre of Scotland remains a fleet-footed organisation that collaborates with the existing theatrical infrastructure of Scotland to produce small- and large-scale text-based theatre, community-based theatre, children's theatre, site-responsive theatre, multigenerational, multi-focused and, importantly, multi-sited work that is free to roam the nation and overseas.

(Holdsworth 36)

The theatre-without-walls arrangement allows for the NTS to embark upon more varied projects.⁹ Once the company is not constrained by their physical space, the options for production are endless. If the national theatre acts as a “stand-in for the nation state,” then lack of a singular theatre space indicates a lot about the nation of Scotland (Kruger 39). The NTS, and by extension Scotland, are not bound to tradition, but instead are driven by creativity and a need to be unique. The NTS has performed plays in pubs, backstage in hallways and closets, within cars and RVs, and even on traditional stages, but the lack of a traditional cultural center allows the productions to share equal value. No show is prioritized on the “main stage” or the “secondary stage,” and as a result no story is given preference over another. Throughout this dissertation, I examine the importance of non-traditional staging, utilizing the theories of Henri Lefebvre and Ric Knowles in regard to specific spaces and productions. Additionally, though the financial and economic organization of the NTS is important to its infrastructure and organization, those details are without of the scope of this project.

Some of the productions are insular and focus on the communities which produce them and view them. An example is the *Home* series, the NTS's inaugural performance series of ten site-specific performances taking place around Scotland. Each performance was created and performed by the local community, and yet these collections of individual pieces connected the

nation together. “These individual performance ecologies, complete with specific modes of transportation, production materials, community involvement, and the transformation of buildings, woods, and a boat into performance venues, aimed to connect these ten locations while dispelling the idea that a performance by a national company could define *the* space, community, or ambitions of a nation” (Zerdy, “Performing” 115). Each location created an individual performance, with unique production teams and dramatically differing content. *Home Glasgow*, combined, as director John Tiffany describes, “the two iconic structures in Scotland—mountains and tower blocks” (“Home Glasgow”). At one point during the performance, actors repelled from the sides of the tower blocks (apartment complexes) much as a mountaineer repels from the side of a cliff face. The performance was unique and urban, but with a hint of the natural landscape that makes up the rest of Scotland. The inclusion of nature as an abstract fit really well with the Glaswegian urban setting for many of the Glaswegians only make it out into the mountains and moors of Scotland on holiday. *Home Dundee* played on nostalgia by converting a gallery into a 1950s dance hall and projecting interviews with occupants of local care homes. The performance highlighted days gone by and celebrated the youth of the people who are often overlooked in contemporary society. “As a result of their site-specificity, the *Home* performances were able to evoke local memories in a range of ways not usually associated with mainstream theatre practice or traditional theatre spaces” (Reid 62). Each production was free to the public, emphasizing the importance of community and the audience over profit and expensive production values. Through the initial *Home* performances, the NTS instituted itself as an innovative company that is focused on the people and the individual locales, and thus separated itself from the majority of contemporary theatre practices.

The *Home* project highlights the de-centered nature of most the NTS productions. The move away from a cultural center directly reflects the devolution of Scotland in 1999, and emphasizes a cultural and political remove from the rest of the UK. Scotland de-centered its cultural, social, and legal world from London, and as a result separated itself from the cultural pull of London and its artistic scene. Traditionally, Scottish artists who wanted to make it in the theatre had to abandon their native country (and often their native language) and either move to London, or at least have their work move to London, in order to succeed.¹⁰ Creating a new theatrical space, one in which Scots could both perform in the vernacular and have viable careers, allowed Scottish talent to remain in, or in some cases return to, Scotland. When the NTS formed in 2006, there was no push to centralize in Edinburgh or Glasgow. Instead the push was to create art for all of the people, wherever the people may be. Overall Scotland is a more liberal country than the rest of the UK, tending to vote either Labour, or, recently, Scottish Nationalist Party. The people are poorer, with less disposable income to spend on the arts than wealthier patrons. The Scottish voting record demonstrates more liberal social and political views, and in recent years these differences have widened the gap between Scotland and England. The NTS therefore must depict these beliefs and fears within its productions and define the Scottish identity as one that separate from that of England, and to construct an identity that can hold its own within the broader European context.

“If anyone asks me where Scotland stands now I need to say.

a) Roughly in the same place it was the last time you looked. Or b) It’s too soon to tell.”: Scottish Theatrical History

In order to fully understand why the National Theatre of Scotland needed to form, first it is necessary to understand where contemporary Scottish theatre fits within the legacy of Scottish theatre and Scottish vernacular theatre. The Scots and English have a longstanding discomfort

with what is referred to as the Scottish National Drama. What is defined as national drama changes throughout time, but the unease associated with the work has never changed. The first national drama can be linked to the union of the crowns in 1603 because this is when the need to define Scotland as a “nation” separate from England became realized (Findlay 38-41).¹¹ The discomfiture associated with the Scottish national drama can be traced to varying issues; however, the two most prevalent concern language and identity politics. Scots (the language) was removed from the stage in the early seventeenth century when poets and playwrights began to favor writing in the elegant and proper English dialect used in London (Findlay 52). The switch to English was an overt nod to the King and the official language of the nation and also was a pragmatic move to double one’s audience, or at the very least gain the larger (and wealthier) audiences of the south. The preferential use of English on stage also kept many Scots from performing, for the “distinctive speech patterns” of the Scots put them at a disadvantage for portraying “declamatory tragedy or verbal comedy” (Scullion 131). The disuse of the Scots language on stage is now viewed as a form of political hostility toward Scottish culture. It forced the Scots to defer to the English for cultural guidance, both in terms of language and for storylines and theatrical tropes. Scottish characters were reduced to subsidiary characters, and usually stereotypes of either penny-pinching misers or bloodthirsty warriors. It was not until 1757 with the announcement in the *Caledonian Mercury* of John Home’s *Douglas* that a play is recorded to address Scottish issues (Scullion 98). Despite Home’s watershed patriotic Scottish play, the success of the work was measured by how well the play did in London, not by how the Scots received the work (Scullion 98, 106). John Home, perhaps the singular hope for Scottish theatre of the eighteenth century, found success in Edinburgh but soon began premiering his

work in London, and his move away from Scotland further supported the cultural superiority of the English theatre scene.¹²

By the nineteenth century, Scotland was perceived as “northern Britain” throughout the British Isles, and often is still today. It was through eighteenth-century resistance to this notion, and in connection to the 1745 Jacobite Rising,¹³ that the first real Scottish national drama was born—finally portraying Scottish heroes and heroines on Scottish stages by Scottish actors in the Scottish dialect. These national dramas were often set in Scotland’s past in order to appear innocent and representable. However, they were not purely historical, but instead were viewed as highly political and timely. Scottish history was also, for the first time, considered to be a viable topic for exploration on the stage. This included adaptations of Sir Walter Scott’s *Rob Roy* (1819) and *Guy Mannering* (1819), and significant productions of *Macbeth* (1830). “The ‘Scott’ dramas brought into Scotland’s theatre thousands of her people. Once the floodgates were open, the Scots, hungry to reassert their shared cultural identity in a public arena, returned again and again to see their national heroes and heroines portrayed in authentic Scottish settings, by Scottish actors with Scottish accents” (Bell 143). The “Scot dramas” were significant not only because they brought Scottish actors to the stage but also because these dramas attracted Scottish audiences to the theatre. It was an opportunity to see their stories played before their eyes in a way that was never seen before. As more plays with a Scottish focus were produced, the English censor became concerned that rebellion would be instilled in the audiences as they watched. As a result, the plays were advertised as “National” to avoid the censor, and until recently “National” dramas carried with them a reputation of rebellion and political power (Bell 147). National dramas were often performed to open theatrical seasons. They eventually lost their political edge and instead became synonymous with nostalgia. However, these initial national dramas reflect

the work that the NTS seeks to produce two centuries later—work that engages and challenges the audience, while representing a people who feel under-represented on stage.¹⁴

The Scottish National Theatre Society formed in 1922, composed of members of leading companies (such as the Scottish National Players and the Curtain), with the objective of developing new national dramas, encouraging Scottish attendance at the theatre, and the goal of forming a Scottish National Theatre (D. Hutchinson 221). These early national dramas privileged one type of Scottish identity: the romantic and nostalgic. As a result, the theatre focused on the sentimental history of the Highlands while avoiding the drama unfolding in the cities, especially in the Glasgow tenements. Any serious subject matter was also pushed to the side in favor of romance and escapism while the real situation of the cities was simply ignored.¹⁵ The plays were written in English but performed with naturalistic (and more musical) dialects of the rural north, and there was no attempt to accurately represent dialects of locations featured within each play (D. Hutchinson, “1900” 224-5). Glaswegian, the working class Scots dialect of Glasgow which is harsh to the ear and hard to understand, was not heard on stage until 1940 (D. Hutchinson, “1900” 225).

The 1950s and 1960s were difficult times for Scottish theatres, both in terms of play content and struggling companies. These decades were filled with theatrical failures, poor management, high turnover of artists, and a lack of direction (Smith, “1950” 259-70). By the 1970s there was resurgence in Scottish nationalism and, by extension, Scottish national drama. Different companies interpreted this newfound enthusiasm for all things Scottish differently, thus diversifying the Scottish theatre as a whole and creating a less heterogeneous depiction of Scottish identity (Smith, “1950” 270). Scottish actors were beginning to feel confident utilizing their own voices while acting, Scottish playwrights were remaining in Scotland to write instead

of traveling to England, and the Edinburgh Festival Fringe was gaining notoriety; Scotland was finding its way in the theatrical milieu (Paterson 75, 79).

Scottish theatre of the 1970s is noted for its timeliness and relevance to the Scottish people. The theatre from the 1970s ushered in socially relevant and political theatre that kept abreast with the ever-expanding television and radio industries (Smith, “1950” 277). The lively nature of the theatre allowed it to speak to many classes of Scots, introducing theatre as an art of the people, versus an art of the Anglo-Lairds. The theatre company 7:84 specifically worked to level the audience through their highly political, pro-Scottish tours of *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil* (1973), and further connecting culturally divergent areas of Scotland by combining the Highland cèilidh¹⁶ with urban trappings. 7:84 made theatre accessible to the people and challenged the traditional values of both theatre and the role of Scots in Great Britain (Mackenney 66). The 1970s also marked the first real focus on the trilingual identity of the Scottish nation (Scots, Scots-English, and Gaelic). Translation was the link “between the linguistic diversity of the Scottish experience and the capacity of the indigenous theatre of a small northern European nation to absorb and reflect the international stage” (Smith, “1950” 305). Despite Scotland’s growing international reputation and the increasing audience populations within Scotland, the productions relied on government subsidy to survive, and often grants were only given in response to a financial crisis, so many companies were forced to close simply due to lack of funding (Smith, “1950” 280). However, despite the financial challenges, the 1980s and 1990s saw an increase in dialect usage on stage and an increase in female Scottish playwrights, most notably Liz Lochhead.¹⁷

The cultural growth and interest in theatre caused a revitalized mission to establish a national theatre. Many groups, including the Scottish Actors Company and Scottish Society of

Playwrights, formed and subsequently disbanded in an attempt to create some sort of Scottish National Theatre (Smith, “1950” 285). The movement picked up steam in conjunction with the Scottish Devolution Referendum, and the build-up to those elections. In 1997, Scotland voted to form its own devolved Parliament, and as a result the Scottish Arts Council moved from London to Edinburgh. In November 1997, playwrights David Harrower and David Greig argued in *The Scotsman*, for a devolved stage to match the newly devolved Scottish Parliament: “Scotland has voted to redefine itself as a nation. To redefine ourselves we need to understand ourselves, exchange ideas and aspirations, confront enduring myths, expose injustices, and explore our past. The quality, accessibility, and immediacy of Scottish theatre makes it one of the best arenas in which these dialogues can take place” (qtd. Reid 82-83). The emphasis in Greig and Harrower’s op-ed is on redefining the Scottish nation in a way that is actively chosen by the people. They are seeking to understand who the Scots are as people, and in order to do that the theatre must be in dialogue with the people in terms of fresh ideas and goals of the nation. The theatre must challenge the stereotypes of the Scot onstage, expose injustices, and explore the history of a nation that is so fraught with tension. The playwrights were speaking for the people whom they represent. They understood the needs of the Scottish people and wrote about a dream theatre that could accommodate those needs.

Ultimately the NTS has become the theatre for the Scottish people, and both Greig and Harrower work with the NTS. Though the artists spoke for themselves when creating their call for theatre, their call represented the needs and hopes of the Scottish arts community, and the National Theatre of Scotland was designed to answer the needs of the Scottish people. The National Theatre of Scotland was officially approved by the Scottish Arts Council in 2004 and produced its first show in 2006, almost fifteen years after the most recent campaign to form the

theatre began in 1992. It became a theatre devoted to “quality, accessibility, and immediacy” in order to provoke conversations and to depict the various facets of Scotland, from the past to the present, from the Islands and Highlands to the Lowlands and Border, and from the rural to the cities. The emphasis on authenticity and the plurality of cultures allowed the NTS to form and set out its ambitious mission.

Two particularly unique elements of Scottish culture and identity, which form the basis for cultural nationalism, are the language and folk performance methods, which are both cornerstones of the NTS creative focus.

The language of the Scottish popular audience does not consist exclusively in the various forms of Scots, English and Gaelic spoken in particular areas; it also includes traditions of popular performance passed down from generation to generation. The event to which popular modes—vernacular and profane language, local references, the mixing of comedy and pathos, audience interaction, the incorporation of music and song—continue to influence Scottish theatre making into the twenty-first century is evident across a range of practices. (Reid 46-47)

The NTS not only embraces the trilingual nature of the Scottish people, but also chooses to communicate utilizing other forms as well. Popular performance, such as the cèilidh or stand-up, and popular performance venues, such as pubs, music halls, or community centers, feature heavily in the productions of the NTS. Many of the literal uses of language, from the specific vernaculars in particular regions depicted, to the heavy use of profanity to accurately depict certain groups, may be lost on international or non-regional audience members. The language begins to map the landscape as the vernacular connects to the particular geography and region of Scotland that the production is depicting. The productions combine comedy and realism, unlike

the dramas of the turn of the twentieth century, and seek to touch the audience, whether it be through direct interaction by involving the audience within the action of the play, or indirectly by simply touching the hearts and minds of the audience members. Music and song feature in many of the plays produced by the NTS.¹⁸

“I need to stop Scotsplaining democracy to people.”: Scottish Politics and the NTS

On 1 July 1999, Queen Elizabeth II opened the first Scottish Parliament since 1707 and it was followed by a performance of Burns’ “A Man’s a Man for a’ That,” which historian T.M. Devine notes is a poem that is an “eloquent condemnation of rank and privilege,” thus clearly setting apart the Scottish ruling center from that of London (631). At the time of Devolution, a few off-hand comments were made regarding independence and the fledgling Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP), but with only 25 percent of Scots polling interested in an independent Scotland, the issue was not taken seriously (Devine 632-3). By 2004, polls reported that approximately three-quarters of all Scots felt “exclusively” or “mainly” Scottish, and “Britishness” was in decline, and had been for the past half century (Devine 662). The loyalties toward Scotland as compared to Britain or the United Kingdom were especially prevalent among the younger generation and could also be likened to the sharp decline in Protestantism, which is associated as an ideological tenet of the Queen and of British identity.¹⁹ The year 2007 marked three hundred years since the union of the crown (four hundred using James I’s ascension in 1603 as the date of “union”)—a rare feat for a European union. In this same year the SNP “became the largest force in Holyrood by one seat and formed a minority government” (Devine 663). Then in May 2011 the SNP won majority (69 of 129 seats) in the new Parliament, and the fears of independence that were joked about over ten years before were finally becoming a reality. Now that the SNP had the majority a referendum for independence could not be blocked,

and Alex Salmond, the head of the SNP until September 2014 made it his goal to assure a referendum would occur during his administration.²⁰

The Referendum was voted upon on 18 September 2014, with an 84.6 percent turnout, and though it ultimately failed with the Yes attaining 1,617,989 votes (44.5 percent) and the No 2,001,926 (55.5 percent), it changed the landscape of Scotland forever. With the General Election in May 2015, the SNP won 56 of 59 seats available to Scotland on the British Parliament, thus shifting the dynamic in London to reflect more of the political mood present in Scotland than ever before.

Overall the NTS is an apolitical entity. It did not take sides during the Referendum (2013) but instead launched a season dedicated to the nation itself, entitled “Dear Scotland: your note to our nation,” which focused on celebrating Scottish history and Scottish folklore. In the marketing e-mail sent to all the the NTS subscribers the season was described as “a celebration of maverick poets, mercurial monarchs and a country with a lot on its mind in this remarkable year” (Sansom). The NTS fully acknowledged the changes that were about to take place within the nation, and brought attention to those changes within the season, but at the same time simply commented on them as “remarkable” and left space for the people of Scotland to make their own choices. Instead the NTS chose to celebrate the Scotland that was and the Scotland that is before the nation embarked on the Scotland that will be.

The title production, *Dear Scotland*, featured monologues written by Scotland’s leading writers, including David Greig, Zinnie Harris, and Liz Lochhead, performed in the National Gallery before some of the most renowned portraits of the nation. The performance was promenade style, so the audience experienced the famed gallery and witnessed monologues connected to specific portraits along the way. This performance gave the audience a new view of

the portraits they had seen dozens of times, or perhaps gave locals the excuse to enter the gallery that they walk by every day but have never bothered to enter. The piece also introduced a certain level of history to the audience, for often portraits all begin to look the same, and the names merge together, or the history learned in primary school is forgotten. The monologues gave the audience a glimpse into the lives of the people within the paintings, and perhaps those glimpses are the truth, or purely fictional, but the connection no doubt makes the experience of walking through the portraiture section of the gallery more memorable than it usually is to the average viewer.

The NTS also produced a series of three plays collectively known as *The James Plays*²¹ by Rona Munro and directed by artistic director Laurie Sansom. These works examined the lives of three Scottish kings—James I, James II, and James III—and ran both in Edinburgh during the Fringe and a month later in London at the National. The NTS produced a video series along with *The James Plays* documenting the James family tree to enrich the history surrounding the three plays. The series can be interpreted to support both sides of the Referendum bill: On the Yes side, it is presenting the history of the last Scottish kings, and by presenting these great men in a tetralogy the NTS is placing *The James Plays* on the same plane as Shakespeare’s history plays, specifically the first and second tetralogies, that documented the great English monarchs. However, these same plays can be seen to support the No vote just as easily, for they are easily equated with Shakespeare, the greatest English playwright of all time, and were performed at the National in London, which is the clear theatrical center of the United Kingdom. That the productions during the “Dear Scotland” season, *The James Plays* and others, could not be clearly connected to a political leaning is what makes the NTS’s role within Scotland so powerful.

Unlike other national/nationalist theatres in times of independence moments the NTS chose to first serve the people as compared to serving the cause.

The quintessential example of the NTS placing the people first during the Referendum question was by electing to produce *The Great Yes, No, Don't Know, 5-Minute Theatre Show*. On Monday, 23 June 2014 the NTS sponsored twenty-four hours of live theatre from Scotland (and beyond) on the theme of “Independence.” These short five-minute theatre productions were created by anyone for an audience of everyone. In order to be included, the piece had to be broadcast, performed in front of a live audience, and the ideas had to be submitted ahead of time and be selected by the co-curators David Greig and David MacLennan. However, there were no restrictions on what could or could not be produced. Instead the instructions for involvement encouraged the participants to think outside of the box:

Your five minutes can be filled with whatever you want it to be. This can be whatever theatre means to you. You can write your own script, create a scene or a situation, it can have music or dance, a director and actors, lighting and costumes or nothing at all. You can interpret it in any way you like, any style you like. It can be a thriller, a drama, a romance, a joke, a song, a monologue, anything. It can be on a stage, in a living room, a park, village hall, office, class room, football pitch, the choice is yours. You are in charge. You decide what your five minutes are; you decide where to perform it, how to cast it and who the audience will be. *It's your story; however you want to tell it.* (“Five Minute Theatre,” emphasis mine)

The artists and creative team of the NTS saw a need among the people of Scotland and anticipated the desire for a public forum regarding the moments and perhaps life-changing event that would take place in September. By providing a platform to creatively voice opinions, fears,

desires, hopes, and dreams, the National Theatre of Scotland not only curated twenty-four hours of theatre, but also fostered a sense of community throughout Scotland when politics and partisanship was dividing it. It emphasized that “it is your story; however you want to tell it” and, by opening up the medium and the storytelling method, allowed those who were at a loss for words to express themselves in any way possible, without fear of doing it “incorrectly” or needing to abide by some sort of party lines. The direction also created a feeling that one did not have to be a professional or someone with years upon years of theatre experience to create a play in a park or within the pub. The productions the NTS puts on in unique spaces are artistic creations that anyone can do. By encouraging the average attendees to utilize the so-called trademark spaces of the “theatre without walls” the NTS is emphasizing that there is nothing to a national theatre without the people that make up the nation, who live the lives on which the plays and performances are based.

The *Five Minute Theatre Show* featured a variety of talent and views and ultimately emphasized the diversity of the Scottish populace. The quality and professionalism of the individual productions in the first *Five Minute Theatre* varied from simple productions that were clearly put together in a kitchen with whatever was lying about, to very professional-level shows, with high-quality actors, costumes, and sets within rented locations. The NTS also provided poster templates so all participants, even those without graphic design experience, could promote their own work throughout their communities, as well as providing general trailers and media to promote the entire event, both nationally and internationally. The NTS has produced Five Minute Theatre Shows in the past, but this was the first to be produced on a specific theme. *The Great Yes, No, Don't Know, 5-Minute Theatre Show* emphasized the importance of the audience to the NTS, and the value of their personal opinions during the shifting time surrounding the

Referendum. The focus on change is in fact a hallmark of Scottish theatre, for “Contemporary Scottish theatre makers remain conscious that processes of seeming cultural disintegration—such as the weakening of the Union—can be crucial in enabling democratic diversification” (Reid 89). The diversification surrounding the Referendum was in terms of both social and political identity. The emphasis in Scottish theatre, and especially the theatre coming out of the NTS, is one of variety and diversity.

The NTS season directly following the failed Referendum was equally as important as the season leading up to the vote. The 2015 Season (running from January through June) was entitled “Belong.” “Belong” to the NTS is just as multifaceted as “culture,” as artistic director Laurie Sansom explains: “Most of us want to belong. Sometimes it’s not always easy to fit in. The embrace of community can protect and it can stifle. In this diverse season, we see stories of communities under pressure from within, friends and family rallying round, and people making incredible journeys to escape and invent new identities. This year we hope you will join us to explore what it means to feel part of a gang, or out there on your own.” The communities of Scotland were divided after the Referendum, with many individuals beginning to identify themselves solely by their vote, especially those who voted yes. On the street, especially in urban centers, one could see blue t-shirts with the number 45 emblazoned across the front, as the “yes” voters claimed their identity and formed pockets of “belonging” amongst themselves. Immediately after the vote, Facebook photos changed to depict one’s leanings—blue 45 to represent the “yes” votes and red 55 for the “no” votes, and many Facebook users, over two years later, have yet to change their photos from these identifiers, or are sure to add a colored button to any photo posted to mark their vote. Families have become divided by the vote, and now that the Conservatives are in power in London²² the future of Scotland looks pretty grim.

The emphasis of the “Belong” season is not to put on plays demonstrating everyone getting along, but to remind the audience of the possibilities still at hand, even if the future was not what either side hoped it would be. The cultural shift associated with the referendum continues to shape and re-imagine the NTS and their productions, and as talks of independence re-arise, the response of NTS will continue to comment on the cultural nationalism of the contemporary Scottish nation, both within Europe and on a global scale.

“I need to stop using Irn Bru and Lorne Sausage as an easy trope of identity.”: Scottish Popular Culture and Tartanry

Once at a costume fitting, I mentioned that I was writing my dissertation on “Contemporary, nationalist Scottish theatre,” and the costumer replied, “Oh, so a lot of kilts.” This response of course can only be expected because 1) she is an American and as a whole Americans know only a handful of things about Scots, such as they wear plaid kilts (with nothing under them), they drink a great deal, and they probably shag sheep; and 2) as a costumer she is naturally bound to think of the clothing or costume of a nation before the actual people, for that is the marking of her job and passion. Despite the normality of her comment, it still bothered me. I admit I was a bit curt in my response when I told her that only one of the shows within my dissertation had any appearance of men in kilts at all, and even then it was done in a way that challenged the stereotype. She then became a bit embarrassed, and the conversation ended quickly. This was obviously a sign of my infancy as a scholar, but still the conversation replays and replays in my mind. Why did her assumption that everyone would be wearing kilts bother me so? I personally wear my kilt as often as I can, and unabashedly love tartan plaid. So what is it that separates my appropriation of the national pattern from hers?

David Greig, in his “To Do List,” struggles with this very concept within his own writing, and in fact Scottish playwrights struggle with this dichotomy on a daily basis. Is there inherently anything wrong with identifying with Irn Bru and Lorne Sausages²³ if those are in fact identifiers of the Scottish populace? Or by taking the obvious way out, is the playwright, the poet, or the songwriter leaving out the large amount of the population that has nothing to do with those identifiers? What about the Scottish population who still drinks tea and has fancy cakes on Sunday? The most obvious and overused “easy trope of identity” in Scottish popular culture is the tartan, a relatively new and invented symbol of ancient Celtic communities (Trevor-Roper 15). “Scotland is a country—and perhaps it is unique in this—whose performance of identity utilises a distinctive woven cloth. This cloth, tartan, has been an important element in the performance of Scottishness for several centuries and its efficacy as a signifier is apparent in many contexts”²⁴ (Reid 19). We see this tartan used as an easy way to mark “Scottishness” all over popular culture, and it is considered to be the “contemporary national costume” (Reid 20). The Stage Scot, often depicted as a Highland warrior, donning kilt and sporran no matter what the occasion, was created as an outsider view of the Scottish nation (Ramert 24). These characters were often romanticized as keenly violent and imagined as large and apish figures (Ramert 48). The most familiar depiction of this Stage Scot comes from Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*. By the end of the 19th century, the Stage Scot becomes demure and passive, and must stand back silently while others take from them without comment or punishment (Ramert 58). The Stage Scot helped to emphasize the superiority and prowess of the British Empire, and allowed for the Scottish “barbarians” to be part of the cultural nation, but only as subsidiaries to the dominant English culture.

Though the depiction of Scots on stage changed drastically during the 20th century, the images and trappings of the Stage Scot still exist and permeate popular culture. An example that was seen around the world was the characterization of Pippin in Peter Jackson's *Return of the King* (2003). He is costumed in tartan upon his return home from his adventures around Middle Earth simply because the actor portraying him, Billy Boyd, is Scottish. In some ways this is a fun nod to Boyd's heritage, but the costuming choice does not fit the character of Pippin at all, and there are no Scots in the world of Middle Earth. Why must the Scottish actor be clad in tartan? The *Return of the King* example is mild and at its core innocent enough; however, it is the remnant of a much larger issue called "tartanry." For the majority of the twentieth century, the term was "typically used pejoratively to describe the vulgar commercialization of tartan and its employment in reductive, stereotypical, and often comic, performances of Scottishness" (Reid 20). A similar reduction of Scottish culture to images is seen throughout the *Harry Potter* series. Beyond the romantization of the location of Hogwarts in the Highlands of Scotland, the most blatant example of tartanry is Professor McGonagall, as she wears tartan robes and speaks in a thick brogue. McGonagall is strict and at times seems to lack kindness as she keeps the students in order, much like the martial depictions of Stage Scots from a century earlier.

In addition to the warrior Stage Scot, many Scots on stage were portrayed as penny-pinching misers, and the trope of the "scrooge" comes from Charles Dickens misreading a gravestone in Edinburgh as "Ebenezer Lennox Scroggie—mean man" when in all actuality the gravestone proclaimed Scroggie as "meal man." Thus the depiction of Ebenezer Scrooge from *A Christmas Carol* was shaped out of Scottish "miserliness" and the impact it had on one man's kindness ("Revealed"). This association between penny-pinching and cruelty added to the misrepresentation of Scots on Stage. One of the most popular depictions of the Scottish scrooge

comes from Disney and their depiction of Scrooge McDuck,²⁵ who gained major popularity through the Disney show *Duck Tales* (1987-1990). Uncle Scrooge is depicted as a rich man, speaking in a ridiculous brogue, who is penny pinching. Though he could easily provide his nephews with anything and everything he instead keeps all of his gold for himself. The show also depicts him competing with other Scotsmen for more money. There are even episodes where Scrooge is seen in a kilt. Though the show on its surface is simply tales of derring-do, it is also guilty of tartanry and perpetuating stereotypes about Scots to an impressionable audience. The distaste for the “barbaric” Scot has not decreased as we have moved into the twenty-first century, but now the humor claims to be “tongue and cheek” as compared to legitimately hateful. For example, the BBC/PBS television show *Last Tango in Halifax* (2012-present) uses the Scots as the butt of the joke throughout the series. While the show carefully approaches issues of teen pregnancy and gay marriage, the idea of a “Scottish” character is disgusting, and comic relief to the English audience.²⁶

Under the umbrella of “Tartanry” are three more terms that identify more specific forms of cultural appropriation, centered around the use and misuse of the tartan as a cultural symbol. “Lauderism” derives from Sir Harry Lauder (1870-1950), the variety hall performer who exaggerated the Scottish persona with such ire and reductiveness that a term was named after him. His performances were “comedic,” steeped in stereotype, and focused around the Lanarkshire miners. He combined Lowland speech with exaggerated Highland dress and generally mocked Scottish history and culture (Reid 20). “Kailyard,” which is examined in depth in chapter two of this dissertation, is literally the “cabbage patch,” and it generally refers to a nineteenth-century school of Scottish fiction, but is more generally applied to any sentimental, sanitized, romanticized representation of Scottish life, with preference being given to rural

depictions (e.g., *Monarch of the Glen* or *Outlander*). “The important thing is that these fictions offer a version of national life that is at some remove from the harsh realities of urban Scotland” (Reid 7). Finally, “Balmorality,” which is “appropriation by the forces that regard the tartan as ‘other’” (I. Brown, “Tartan” 6). The word derives from Victoria’s royal visit to Balmoral Castle in 1822. Balmorality can be used in two ways—1) the “winner” in a conflict can adopt the tartan at public events as a sign of reconciliation, or 2) the “winner” can also appropriate and in turn suppress the tartan and its associated images, such as the bagpipes. By suppressing the image of Scottish identity, the victor is controlling the outward projection of Scottish strength and vitality (I. Brown, “Tartan” 6). Balmorality is by far the most vicious of the terms under the tartanry umbrella for within it comes concepts of control and dominance as well as the struggles with stereotypes and exaggeration.

Tartanry and its components “evidence a destructive false consciousness, a neurotic and infantilized national psyche [...] Continually producing fantasy version of Scotland and Scottishness, it leaves little room for realist or progressive representation of the nation” (Reid 7-8). The fantasy of “Scotland” shifts between the warrior culture which was feared during the Jacobite Risings (1689-1746) or the romantic, rural simplicity depicted in the works of poets such as Robert Burns (1759-1796) and Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832). Many other fantasies of Scotland exist but fit within these two extremes. The romanticization of the Highland warrior in full kit can fall within either category depending on the reaction toward the warrior. If he is to be celebrated as a hero, then he falls within the Burns and Scott camp, but if he is to be tried as a rebel then he would fall into the Jacobite camp.

The literal tartan exists in Scotland on a similar spectrum, both existing through a time when it was hated and demonized, and then later celebrated and mass marketed.²⁷ The Dress Act

of 1746, part of the Act of Proscription,²⁸ made the wearing of the Highland dress, specifically the kilt and tartan, illegal in Scotland. The kilt and bagpipes were allowed on stage to represent not only the Highlands, but all, when the tartan could not be otherwise legally worn. In some ways, this allowed for the tartan to live on for it was kept in tradition on stage, but it also became associated with general “Scotophobia” (I. Brown 5). The only other place the kilt was allowed was in the Highland regiments of the army.

The depiction of all Scots in Highland dress paints inaccurate and homogenous pictures of Scottish identity, and assumes a shared Celtic lineage. It whitewashes the complexity and creates an entire nation out of one location instead of acknowledging the multiple regions and traditions associated with those locales, and also fails to recognize the “false” authenticity found within the plaid itself. With so many sentimental presentations of the “tartan monster,”²⁹ audiences do not know how to interact with realist representations of the nation because after repeated exposure to exaggeration and stereotype the authentic representation appears boring. Yet, this is not to say that all representations depicting tartan, whisky, pubs, or claymores are inaccurate, but instead that the artists have laid upon them an incumbent duty to pierce the fabric of reality with the subtle threads of stereotype, the banal with the exaggerated, and the everyday heroes with those of myth and legend. It is the job of the national theatre to push against these stereotypes and to question tartanry in the theatre. Sir Walter Scott, a legend of Scotland, was guilty of tartanry through his misrepresentations of the past and high romanticization of history and myth. Through historical revision Sir Walter Scott’s work may be revisited and the NTS can question the Scotland that Scott envisioned to emphasize that the Scotland that exists now is just as good if not better. The national theatre needs to acknowledge the past, but not romanticize it,

and to bring together pieces of the truth within the stereotypes to create accurate depictions of contemporary Scotland.

Tartan itself is a fabric fraught with expectation and appropriation. A fabric which represents a people and yet can never seem to do so. I want to take it apart to its pieces and rebuild it, to decentralize it in a way by removing the “aura” from the fabric, and to allow it to represent a nation, but more importantly to represent the individual people within the nation.³⁰

The tartan plaid is a pattern that can vary in complexity. From two to three interlocking colors, to four or five, the plaid has come to be associated as a pattern of class and sophistication due to its geometric symmetry and bold colors. The tartan is woven like all other fabrics, combining the vertical warp with the horizontal weft. The unique aspect of most plaids, and all tartans is that you can distinctly see the warp and weft combine as the lines of color intertwine.

Tartan is an orderly way of introducing a riot of colour in a very restrained manner because the design in the warp is the same as the design in the weft. The true color that is created by the crossing of the warp with the weft is strong, but easier to look at because of the grid design. It remains organic instead of psychedelic even when vivid colours are used. (Stewart qtd. I. Brown 1)

There is something peaceful about the tartan, even though one is being bombarded with color.

The grid structure maintains a sense of order, yet within that order is diversity and a seemingly endless combination of colors and interlocking lines. The contemporary tartan is seen as beautiful and stylish, but this was not always the case. Tartans, and particularly kilts and the associated Highland dress, were seen as barbaric and crude. Kilts and plaids represented a Celtic culture that was viewed as beyond civilization, covered in blue war paint, and above all, pagan. Now, however, the tartan is haute couture. “Talking about fashion and not mentioning tartan is

like talking about fine dining and not bringing up wine. The fabric is an eclectic essential in high fashion, and Jean Paul Gaultier would agree” (qtd. I. Brown 11). As long as the colors are symmetrical, the combinations to create the two-over-two twill pattern are endless.

The word *tartan* itself derives from the Old French *tiretaine* meaning “a sort of cloth half wool, half some other yarn; stuff of which the weft is wool and the warp linen or cotton” (*Dictionary of Scots Language (DSL)* qtd. I. Brown 2). The cloth itself was not pure and was clearly not made of one type of material, but instead was a hybrid.³¹ As a symbol representing a group of people, the tartan is a hybrid, and therefore the people it is representing cannot be encapsulated by a stereotype or an exaggerated caricature, but instead the people must be hybrid as well. “Apparently simple in construction, tartan is also capable of staggering complexity; it is multivalent and dichotomous” (Jonathan Faiers qtd. I. Brown 11). If we were to continue to think of the tartan as representing Scotland, it should be the complex tartan. The tartan of Scotland is made up of the Lowlands, the Highland, and interwoven with the Islands and the Border. The stories of the urban setting should intersect with the rural and within that grid square we should be able to see both colors, but also a new color that makes up the two. It is within this interweaving of the 100 percent Scottish wool, and the seemingly cheap cotton or linen that the real stories are told.

National identity is fluid and complex. It is a hybrid of all the people within the nation—both those who wear traditional regalia with their kilt, sporting flashes and sporran, and those who prefer combat boots and a leather jacket. There is no prescribed way to wear the tartan, no “irreverent” usage of the national fabric, but instead it can be used, destroyed, re-woven, and used again to represent the history, struggles, and successes of a nation that is coming back into its own. It is the power to change that we need to emphasize in the tartan of the future, for

“Tartan embeds carefree design carefully, a celebration both of the vitality of nature and of the interaction of human intellect, aesthetics and dynamic growth” (I. Brown, “Tartan” 1). It is within this juxtaposition between freedom and design that the NTS has found its niche. It interweaves theatricality, humor, music, movement, site-specificity, language, landscape, and a focus on the audience to create a new and ever-changing tartan for the nation. It is no longer one specific pattern, but one that grows with the audience it was meant to cover. The aesthetics and intellect found within the works of the NTS are unique to the work that it produces. The works may not be the best, may not be the most unique or earth shattering, but they are honest and in touch with what the Scottish people need the most—a sense of place and acknowledgement that their voice, their concerns, and their triumphs matter.

“I need to step back and leave space for other people to do those things.”: Chapter

Summaries

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the projected imagined Scottish identities and what they mean for the future of Scotland. In order to do this, I have narrowed the scope to four specific performances, spanning the life of the NTS. Each production was premiered, or in some cases commissioned, by the NTS. Choosing productions that have only “lived” within the National Theatre of Scotland allows the analysis to remain grounded within the theatre company itself and not be informed by past productions or past theatre companies. There were many fascinating re-mountings or re-imaginings of famous works (such as Zinnie Harris’s feminist take on *A Doll’s House* (2013) or the one-man *Macbeth* (2013) starring Alan Cumming), but these works are influenced by their past productions and by the cultures that created them. Instead, this dissertation will focus on the works that in future productions will forever be influenced and linked to the NTS and the cultural weight of Scotland.

The productions span from 2006 to 2013³² and include main stage plays and one site-specific performance piece.³³ Two of the plays discussed, *Black Watch* and *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart*, are main stage shows that were very popular and toured internationally to the UK, Australia, and America. *Black Watch* also toured in Korea. Each play focuses on a different region of Scotland, with purposeful avoidance of the Highlands. This avoidance was done for two reasons: 1) there were no major productions performed by the NTS about the Highlands that were not re-mounts or re-imaginings, and 2) the Highlands are so often depicted as the cultural “center” of Scotland that I wanted to truly de-center the examination of Scottish culture by utilizing case studies that take place in the Islands, the Border and the Lowlands. The Highlands are an extremely important region of Scotland, but in order to truly distance this project from the trope of the Highland warrior I have chosen to focus on other regions of Scotland, particularly identities that have so often been ignored or have been depicted as if they were in the Highlands.

The first chapter, entitled “Fuck Culloden: *Black Watch* and New Patriotism,” examines the award winning play *Black Watch* by Gregory Burke, directed by John Tiffany (2006). The play presents tropes of Scottish patriotism—the tartan, the Saltire, the brave warrior fighting for honor and adventure—and yet demonstrates that these tropes hide the truth of war. The men of the Black Watch are marketed as a romantic vision of soldiering that never comes to be. Instead the men are paid to be bullies and to do the dirty work of not only the United Kingdom but of America as well. In the end we see that Cammy and his mates have dismissed the flag flying patriotism that Scots (and tourists) are sold in Edinburgh at the Royal Military Tattoo, and come to realize that Scotland needs a new kind of patriotism—one that can be at peace with the past, but also move Scotland into the future. This play is unique because it is set in Fife, which is located just north of Edinburgh in the Lowlands, and in Fallujah, Iraq.

The second chapter, ““Border ballads, neither border nor ballad?': *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart* and a Modern Mythos,” explores David Greig's *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart* (2011). The tale is of a young academic, Prudencia, who attends a conference in Kelso, along the Scottish Border, where she goes to present her research on Border Ballads (specifically on the topography of Hell). She eventually is kidnapped by the Devil and must be saved by her arch-nemesis, Colin, a cultural studies academic who studies football chants. The play is written entirely in rhyme (sans when Prudencia is in Hell), and juxtaposes the kailyard view of Scotland, to which Pru holds so tightly, with the practical and popular culture view held by Colin. It is only when the romantic and banal acknowledge one another and need each other that a resolution is found. The play calls into question idolizing romantic views of Scotland (and Sir Walter Scott) and acknowledges the importance those images have on shaping the future while simultaneously emphasizing the importance of seemingly silly things, such as football chats. Perhaps what we view now as banal and everyday will be the ballads of the future?

The third chapter, ““I hate to tell you, Calum MacLeod, but they are leaving anyway': *Calum's Road* and the Everyday Hero” focuses on David Harrower's adaptation of Roger Hutchinson's novel, *Calum's Road* (2011, 2013). The play tells the real-life story of Calum MacLeod, and his quest to build a road from Arnish to South Arnish on the island of Raasay in the Lower Hebrides. Throughout the non-linear play we see his devotion to his land and his family, and his fears of modernization while he is forced to embrace modernity. Calum is representative of the everyday hero that can be found throughout Scotland—one that remains true to himself and fights for the cause he believes in no matter how small it may seem to the government or the people around him. The play also is used as a tool to teach small bits of Gaelic to the audience and to raise awareness for the dying language. Though Gaelic is found on street

signs and menus throughout the Highlands and Islands, it is spoken and read by few, as those who learned it in their youth were forced to move to the cities for work. The play highlights a dying age, and yet again emphasizes the importance of merging the past with the ever-changing present and is ultimately a celebration of failure.

Chapter four, entitled “‘So Whaar Noo?’: *Ignition* and Pluralizing Identities,” tackles the six-month long, site-specific performance piece in the Shetland Islands, *Ignition*. *Ignition* explores the relationship of Shetlanders to their cars, and the performance is articulated across a landscape in a way that is only possible through the use of performance, as compared to a single-location play. The performance is an act of historical revision used to culturally include Shetland as Scottish that also fully acknowledges the unique traditions and culture of Shetland and celebrates its Viking past. The performance was rooted in Shetland, but through the technologies of Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Wordpress, the world was introduced to the *Ignition* performance and also to the unique lives of Shetlanders. By creating a media event, the NTS allowed for the performance to both exist for the Shetland audience and for the audience of Scots (and the NTS abroad) beyond Shetland. The celebration focused on the Shetland community, but resonated in terms of Shetland’s oil, the tourist trade, and as Shetlanders as outsiders. The performance piece allowed for the outsiders of mainland Scotland to look in, and for the Shetlanders to feel, on some level, they finally belonged. Ultimately, *Ignition* encourages Shetlanders to forgive past injustices and move forward as part of Scotland, and celebrate and embrace their own unique heritage.

This dissertation is an acknowledgement of a unique, national theatre company that produces a variety of work and focuses on high quality and a deep connection to the people it serves. Though this dissertation only engages with four productions at an in-depth level, it

demonstrates that the National Theatre of Scotland is a theatre company that strives with every show to advance the work of the nation, the people, and its art.

Chapter One

Fuck Culloden: *Black Watch* and New Patriotism

Black Watch serves as the flagship production for the National Theatre of Scotland. It was the first main stage production for the fledgling theatre company, following the initial run of the HOME project,³⁴ and it was also the first show to be commissioned by the NTS to represent the goals of the company and of Scotland. A central goal detailed in the NTS manifesto, and central to the production of *Black Watch*, is to re-invigorate the role of Scottish theatre. The manifesto states, “Scottish theatre has always been for the people, led by great performances, great stories or great playwrights,” and yet up to the initial performance of *Black Watch*, few Scottish theatre works were known outside of Scotland, and not many more were known within the Scottish borders.³⁵ Throughout the world Scottish theatre is often equated with British theatre, and relatively few Scottish playwrights addressed Scottish issues.³⁶ “This play, commissioned by the newly-created National Theatre of Scotland, has a depth of human knowledge and fellow feeling that makes it both real and contemporary” (Humphrys 75). The founding artistic director, Vicky Featherstone, contacted playwright Gregory Burke in 2004 and requested that he look into the story of the Black Watch regiment, who had recently returned from Camp Dogwood in Fallujah, Iraq. Burke followed the story, and eventually conducted interviews over a few months with a group of returned soldiers. The resulting interviews, traditional Black Watch songs, and a few fictional scenes were shaped throughout rehearsals into the “highly physical piece of political theatre,” *Black Watch* (Tiffany x).

The play is a documentary drama that takes place primarily between two time periods and locations. The first is present-day Scotland, directly after the amalgamation of the Scottish military regiments in 2006. The second is in Fallujah, Iraq, approximately six months earlier. A

Writer meets with former Black Watch soldiers in a pub in Fife and asks them questions about their experiences in the military. The Writer, who is a dramatic representation of playwright Gregory Burke, interviews the men with the intention of basing a play on their lived experiences.³⁷ The focus of the Writer's interview is surrounding the death of three Black Watch soldiers in a bombing in 2005. The former soldiers share their experiences with the Writer, and throughout the play the scenes shift from present-day Scotland to six months prior in Iraq. The shift in time and location allows the audience to see the lifestyle and challenges of the men when deployed.

Director John Tiffany, in his preface to the text of the play, posits that *Black Watch* offers something unique to the canon of Scottish theatre (ix). The new Scottish theatre, Tiffany describes, “features narration, song, movement, stand-up comedy, film, politics and, above all, an urgent need to connect with its audience. It is never dry and academic, and therefore deeply relevant and bound to the time in which it is created. It is a distinct form of theatre of which Scotland can be very proud” (ix). Tiffany's claims are lofty and cannot apply to all productions within Scotland. However, Tiffany's own production of *Black Watch* seeks to meet all of the aspirations he set forth, in one way or another.

The song and narration, as identified by John Tiffany, separate *Black Watch* as a Scottish drama. As the play begins, Cammy is established as the heartfelt narrator. The dialogue is interspersed with ballads and traditional songs sung by the men who are in the field fighting, and during these sequences they dance traditional jigs or move in sequence. The third tenet of Tiffany's new Scottish theatre is the heavily choreographed movement throughout the show. The movement is so vital to the mise-en-scene of *Black Watch* that Tiffany attempts to explain within the published text the powerful choreography by Steven Hoggett, the assistant director in charge

of movement, though his own annotations.³⁸ Tiffany's fourth tenet, stand-up comedy, perhaps fits within *Black Watch* the least as the show is ultimately a political drama; however, there are lighthearted moments, and jokes punctuate the intense physicality of the play. Though not quite on the level of stand-up, the inclusion of humor, and especially bawdy humor, fulfills the comedic category as well.

The final three tenets laid out by Tiffany are film, politics, and an urgent need to connect to the audience, and these three in essence create the setting for the play. Televisions above the stage alternately broadcast images of war or football throughout the performance. And of course the politics of the play are impossible to miss as eight hundred Black Watch soldiers are sent to Camp Dogwood to complete a mission that four thousand US Marines could not. However, at its core *Black Watch* strives to connect with the audience, whether they are Scottish, American, English, Canadian, Australian, or Korean. This chapter posits that Gregory Burke's *Black Watch* challenges and complicates the image of the Scottish warrior to establish a precedent of historical revision and complication for future National Theatre of Scotland performances. The play engages with the contemporary audience and the fraught history of the nation, resulting in a play that tells not only the story of soldiers but also the story of national identity.

The location of the premiere served as a backdrop to the political message of the play and helped the National Theatre of Scotland establish itself as *the* new, Scottish theatre. *Black Watch* opened in 2006 at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, the largest arts festival in the world. This festival is Scotland's most famous arts event, drawing thousands of theatre practitioners and fans to Edinburgh each year. By premiering the first major show of the NTS at the Edinburgh Fringe, the world, as well as the Scottish people, were introduced to the fledgling theatre company. The location also served the political motivations of *Black Watch* by staging the performance in an

abandoned gunnery hall below Edinburgh Castle, the site of the yearly Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo.³⁹ As the men and women who officially fight “for Queen and country” were above on the castle grounds, marching back and forth performing the yearly Tattoo, the cast of *Black Watch* were below performing their own tattoo, as a critique, celebration, mockery, and bash all in one. The specificity of place was a key way that the NTS connected with its initial audience. It first utilized the popularity and fame of the Fringe Festival to promote and showcase its first main stage show, but it also capitalized on the Tattoo, and the Tattoo’s aura, by choosing a performance location so close to the castle. Many of the audience members and reviewers commented on this connection to the Tattoo. A reporter from the *Evening Standard* stated, “it’s almost a mini-Tattoo. But there’s no flag-waving here, just a deeply humane examination of the culture of soldiering...a brilliantly realised piece” (Lee). The reviewer noted a nationalistic signifier by referencing the Tattoo, but instead of dismissing the performance as simply patriotic, the reviewer highlighted how the show examines the culture of soldiering, specifically being a soldier in the Black Watch regiment.

The flag waving that literally starts the show is not present at the end as the soldiers are falling to the ground as the pipes and drums play. After the piece ended, the audience exited the gunnery hall onto the Edinburgh street and, depending on the time of day, either heard the Tattoo going on above, or at least saw the esplanade in the castle’s courtyard. The castle’s symbolism of Britain’s ruling class that made decisions for the men that fought and died before their eyes for the past hour and a half would have been hard for those first audiences to ignore. “You emerge, after an hour and three quarters of this astonishing show, with your political dander twanging, your outrage tweaked” (Black Watch Reviews). It is with this strong and defiant statement that the NTS began its life, as a theatre that questioned the ruling class, brought theatre to the people,

asked the hard questions, told stories both real and fictional, and in the end brought everyone together under a form of unity and simultaneous difference. With the widespread success of *Black Watch* came requests for international tours. First it visited the United States, both Los Angeles and New York, in 2007. The next year the tour expanded, and the production visited numerous theaters in Australia and New Zealand, returned to Scotland for additional touring, stopped in England and Wales, returned to the United States, and also visited Canada before finally premiering in London in June of 2008. A second tour traveled throughout the UK and the United States in 2010 and 2011.

Much of what shapes contemporary Scottish national identity is Scotland's relationship with other nations, primarily England. The play *Black Watch* serves as a re-evaluation of Scotland's role in international conflicts. Throughout the drama we see the soldiers question why they are in Iraq and proclaim that they are no longer heroes, but are instead bullies. The exploration of the Black Watch not only serves to examine the military and political views of the modern nation, but also helps to re-imagine a shared identity between all Scots. The Black Watch emphasize a lineage that goes back to the Celts and paints a picture of an independent Scotland in the past, and may even be pointing to an independent Scotland in the future. Burke's play emphasizes that the men of the Black Watch fight for one another but not for their nation. Instead we observe the men build a new nation through their friendship and shared lives—the stepping-stones between their relationships and military brotherhoods help to form the Scotland of today and tie it to the imagined Scotland of yesterday.

Physicality and Politics

Black Watch is a demanding production, not just for the performers, but for the audience as well. Upon entering the theatrical space, all audience members are warned that there is no re-entry

once the show begins. All bathroom breaks and panic attacks must be planned and executed ahead of time. The audience is bombarded with simultaneous experiences—there is blaring bagpipe and drum music while a saltire projection sweeps across the floor, and all the while you are trying to find your seat. The *Guardian* described the production as, “John Tiffany’s storming, heart-stopping production is all disorienting blood, guts and thunder, threaded through with the history and songs of the regiment and intercut with lyrical moments of physical movement, like some great dirty ballet of pulsating machismo and terrible tenderness” (Gardner). The production utilizes a traverse stage,⁴⁰ placing the audience in a parallel organization facing each other and creating a large esplanade-playing

space flanked by scaffolding towers on each side, on which screens are hanging (see figure 1). The music builds and a voiceover announces the entrance of the Black Watch as if the performance



was the military tattoo: “Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome

Figure 1: Black Watch Scaffold by Manuel Harlan, Left to Right: Cameron Barnes, Andrew Fraser, Gavin Jon Wright, Adam McNamara, Stuart Martin, Richard Rankin, Scott Fletcher, Benjamin Davies

[...] It’s almost time for the thrilling moment when the gates swing open. The unforgettable sight and sound of the massed pipes and drums. Ladies and gentlemen, may we present the Black Watch” (Burke 3). A cannon fires, and suddenly there is only silence as Cammy enters through a door at one end of the stage. He is lit by a single spotlight and dressed in civvies. The “thrilling” and “unforgettable” moment the audience was promised only seconds ago is suspended by Cammy’s meek entrance and casual opening: “A’right. Welcome to this story of the Black Watch” (3). The audience was promised a highly physical show through advertisements that

attracted them to the show, warnings posted all about the playing space, and constant reminders from ushers before the start of the show. The sight of one man dwarfed by the size of the playing space creates an anticlimactic start, especially when juxtaposed with the buildup of the show. The blaring and bombastic music is replaced by a single voice, while a lone spotlight replaces the swinging saltire. The sudden silence and change in lighting brings focus to Cammy as he walks across the stage. Within this first moment of the play, critical distancing is employed to juxtapose the propaganda of war and war's reality. This juxtaposition serves to highlight the dichotomy between the real life of soldiers and the life projected by the media and government.

By directly addressing the common beliefs about men in the military, playwright Gregory Burke begins to dismantle audience expectations of the military drama. In order to address the assumptions of the audience without insulting them, Burke has Cammy speak for and then in turn challenge commonly held opinions about the military and its soldiers. Cammy begins by pointing out that he did not want to participate in this show because of the common assumptions about soldiers in the army: they can't do anything else, they are lazy, they are exploited by the institution of the army, etc.⁴¹ Instead of directly contradicting those presumptions, Cammy confirms that in a way they are all true: "And people's minds are made up about the war that's on the now ay? *Beat*. They are. It's no right. It's illegal. We're just big bullies. *Beat*. Well, we'll need to get fucking used to it. Bullying's the fucking job. That's what you have a fucking army for" (4). His confirmation of the stereotypes subverts expectations and distances the audience in order to focus on the bigger picture of military injustices to Scottish regiments rather than the story of one man and his unit.

The critical distancing of the audience continues as, "Pub I," begins by over-stimulating the audience with sound and action. "Pub I" is the first scene between the Writer and the soldiers

who have returned from Camp Dogwood. The pub set consists of a few chairs and tables and a full-sized, red-felt pool table centered in the performance area. Football plays on the screens located on each set of scaffolding, and music also plays in the background. The din of the pub is jarring after Cammy's speech into relative silence, and the focus of the action is not quite clear. The transition into the pub is done completely by the actors; there are no stage crew visible, and there is no attempt to hide the set-change from the audience. Instead, the transitions between scenes become moments of reflection and act as a constant reminder that the play is a re-telling of stories told by real men to a Writer. There is no attempt to capture or re-create real life on stage, but instead each moment is simply a representation of reality, and it is enlarged or compressed depending on what is called for within each moment. As the play progresses, the audience views more and more "backstage" business. This reveal distances the audience from the emotional content of the play and brings the theatrical elements to the forefront. By allowing the audience to witness the men change into and out of their uniform and view set pieces transition before their eyes, the action removes any inkling of "theatrical magic." As Granty, Stewarty, Macca, and Nabsy all run on with the pool table and other pub furniture, it is clear that the scene is changing, and even though each man takes a stance within the scene to hint at *in medias res* is it obvious that the scene exists only as the fragment we as the audience can see. The rushed scene shift interrupts the focus on Cammy's speech and splits the attention from his personal experience alone to include the experience of his regiment. The simultaneous scene shift over action becomes a key element to the story telling narrative of *Black Watch*, while the audience is often bombarded with numerous sensory elements, and the use of Cammy as a narrator helps to bring focus to the more important moments of the show—the story.

The problem with *Black Watch* on its surface is that it only presents a singular view of Scottishness. That view is one of heavy drinking, even heavier swearing, promiscuity and a predilection for violence, and Celtic origins⁴² (ignoring the culturally diverse population). The NTS was presented with the challenge of incorporating many ideals of Scottish identity into one, stereotype-fraught package. The first way it goes about re-marketing this potentially problematic image is through the use of narration and audience connection to the character of Cammy. Cammy is the first character we see on stage, and the only one who directly interacts with the audience. He tells the history of the Black Watch regiment, discusses the politics at play, and challenges the audience to think about the men they see in front of them in new ways. The men depicted in the play are very easily confused for a number of reasons. They are depicted in matching uniforms half the time, so there are no distinguishing characteristics or visual quirks that set a character apart in the minds of audience members. To compound this, they all have matching haircuts and are often wearing helmets, which shadow the details of their facial features. The design of the playing space also makes it harder to differentiate the characters—each one is seen in profile and rarely seen facing the audience, so only the closest (and most intense) seats would have a chance at telling the men apart from facial features alone.

The movement throughout the play is often very quick and moves from one side of the stage to the other, so no matter how “good” one’s seat is there will be moments of strain as one attempts to identify the characters. In other words, “Tiffany used the physical and metaphorical parameters of the parade ground to keep the action moving briskly up and down the field” (Griffin 469). Traverse seating also places many of the audience members high and away from the playing space, which is ideal for seeing all of the action and choreography without feeling as if one is watching a tennis match, but it also compounds the difficulty of differentiating between

characters. There is a reason basketball players wear numbers, and it is apparent as audience members squint to differentiate between Kenzie and Nabsy or Fraz and Rossco. The names of each character also blend together, as each soldier's surname is made into a nickname. Grant becomes Granty, Campbell becomes Cammy, and so on, and as a result most names end in the same sound and are easily interchanged with one another.

The soldiers are often thought of as a collective—"the boys," "the men," and even Cammy refers to them as a group when he calls them "my mates." However, when the play ends and three of them die the group identity suddenly comes into question. The answer all goes back to the mutability between characters, and on the larger scale, the way that we as audience members, or as citizens, approach the deaths of men and women in military campaigns, or tragedies in general. As the play begins, none of us are familiar with Kenzie, Fraz, or the Sergeant, so though their deaths are sad they are simply a casualty of war. By the end of the play, however, we have laughed at the Sergeant along with Cammy, we have seen Fraz lose his spot on TV because of too much porn and too much lip, and we have watched Kenzie grow from a newbie to a full-fledged soldier. When they fall from the scaffolding on one side of the playing space, covered in blood, and we watch them hit the ground, there is a new level of connection to the story, a new level of connection to the entire regiment, and a new level of connection to the betrayal the men must feel. Since each of the men easily morphs into the next, it is essential for one of the men to connect to the audience, to show his face, to take off his helmet, and to be clearly "the protagonist" in order for the audience to care at all about the situation that is going down right in front of them. Cammy serves as the face of the Black Watch to the audience within the performance hall, to the BBC audience back home when he is interviewed by the reporter, and to his men. He is the ideal soldier—he is polite, has family lineage with the Black Watch

going back three generations, and is knowledgeable about his regiment. We as the audience are then placed in the privileged position where we see him lose faith in the institution that he loves.

The collective identification of the soldiers expands to apply to national identity. As audience members leave the gunnery hall hearing bagpipes playing on the Royal Mile and seeing the flag flying over the castle above, associations between the play and the role of the Scottish nation would be hard to ignore. It is easier to think of the Scots as a collective, a group of people who are all identical—who perhaps look similar, talk in a similar fashion, and dress in similar ways (especially for formal events where the kilts and regalia are still regularly worn), yet there is an inherent dismissal of all the individual traits, regional dialects, and communal traditions that shape national identity when it is so universalized. Just as Cammy, Fraz, and Kenzie are all unique parts of the whole of *Black Watch*, so is each individual Scot a unique and vital part of the whole of Scotland. There is no one play, one song, or one image that can capture such a diverse people. And yet, each small attempt to depict the complex people adds to the collection of depictions of contemporary Scots, and little by little the pieces will overlap, be in conversation with, and juxtapose one another to begin to map the Scottish identity. *Black Watch* depicts the warrior, men from Fife, the disappointed Scot, the contemporary soldier, the lower class, etc.

Cammy acts as the primary narrator, but Kenzie and Fraz, who are two of the casualties to the suicide bomber, act as narrators of sorts, or at least as guides throughout the play. Fraz and Kenzie are never present in the pub scenes, and they spearhead transitional scenes between the pub and Iraq and back again. Kenzie and Fraz's first entrance occurs during the transition from "Pub I" to "Camp Incoming" and is perhaps one of the most memorable visuals from the play. Gunfire pounds over the speakers and the lights flash as the men and the Writer run off the stage, knocking over the furniture of the pub as they run. All that remains is the red-felt pool table lit by

a single spotlight. The felt of the pool table is suddenly slit through with a knife and a soldier emerges and stands up in the center of the table. He looks around, adjusts his hat and puts away the knife. The red felt becomes blood-like as the knife easily slips through it and the men whose

deaths are about to be discussed

emerge. Music, static, and

unintelligible words can be heard in

the background, almost as if we

were overhearing a poor radio

transmission, and the lack of focus

in the audio track draws attention to

the very precise movements of the



Figure 2: *Black Watch Pool Table* by Scott Suchman, L to R, Andrew Fraser (Fraz), Scott Fletcher (Kenzie)

soldier in the pool table. The soldier,

who we later learn to be Fraz, reaches into the table and pulls out another soldier, Kenzie. Kenzie adjusts his own hat and the two look around the space as if on watch (see figure 2). As they reach into the table to equip their guns, the static dissipates and we hear an excerpt from the *Today* program between John Humphrys, the host of the program, Geoff Hoon, the defense secretary, and the then-leader of the Scottish National Party, Alex Salmond. Fraz and Kenzie loop their guns over their shoulders and stand back-to-back, circling the space and keeping watch as they turn. They are obviously nervous, but eventually relax and end up facing one to each side of the audience as Alex Salmond begins to speak.

We see Salmond, both as the actor upon one set of scaffolding and as a live feed of the actor's face on the televisions, which are mounted on the scaffolding towers on both sides of the stage. As the interview continues, Fraz and Kenzie change positions on the pool table. They

move to the adjacent corners simultaneously, they sit together and begin to watch the interview. Each movement of the men works to emphasize certain points of the interview and even pulls the attention away from the screens and the “politics” of the situation to the everyday happenings on the ground. The impact of this event is still raw at the time of the interview, and the realities of the men in Iraq and their families have forever shifted: “This happened yesterday. The widows in Fife are still hurting. The mothers who lost sons still lie awake through many long nights of sadness and grief” (Humphrys 74). Alex Salmond can argue that their deployment into the “triangle of death” was purely political, but that does not change the fact that the men of the Black Watch still are in that area and must live with it day to day. On the stage the audience sees an actor portraying Salmond is on top of one scaffold, while an actor portraying Geoff Hoon is on the other, and as their argument progresses the audience must sweep their focus from one side of the stage to the complete opposite. Throughout the interview the men on the table are visible in peripheral vision of audience members, if not distracting enough to take the entire attention away from the men speaking. This divide of focus helps to emphasize all of the pieces at work in the Black Watch story. On one level we are watching the real world report of a suicide bomb that killed three soldiers and an interpreter, but its presentation in the context of the play, however, foregrounds these events, thus challenging the purpose of this news story and the role of Scottish forces in Iraq.

The decision to amalgamate the Scottish regiments was a political move—one that removed autonomy from the Scottish soldiers and placed control in the hands of the commanding, and usually English, officers. In the interview the political motives are explicitly stated and ultimately shape the feel of the rest of the play. Alex Salmond addresses how grief over the death of the three soldiers will “give way to a wave of anger as Scotland and the Black

Watch facilities compare and contrast the bravery of our Scottish soldiers with the duplicity and chicanery of the politicians who sent them into this deployment” (8). Salmond’s language when discussing the politicians is accusatory and acerbic. He clearly takes the deaths of the Scottish soldiers as a personal attack on Scotland, demonstrating the low value of Scottish lives to the English rulers.

The defense secretary, Geoff Hoon, views Salmond’s comments as a way to take advantage of the situation and to advance his own career, and refutes all of Salmond’s statements about any political motive surrounding the United States in Iraq and the involvement of the Black Watch. And even though a political agenda cannot be proven, Salmond points out the math: “The Black Watch have been sent to do an impossible job—eight hundred Scottish soldiers are replacing four thousand American marines and we’re actually expected to believe that one hundred and thirty thousand American soldiers in Iraq couldn’t do the job” (9). Salmond introduces the upcoming 2008 US presidential election, and in doing so emphasizes the clear political motivation of the troop movement. Move the Americans out of harm’s way and improve the way the American populace views its leader (George W. Bush), and by extension the Republican party. The Scots are simply pawns in this larger political game, and overall they are replaceable. The Americans will probably never hear of the deaths of the Scots in Iraq, and in England “the dead soldiers will, of course, be mourned, are being mourned” (Burke 8). However, it is clear throughout the interview that the deaths of the men, two of which the audience sees before them on the pool table, were not viewed as a tangible loss to the majority of the UK. Brutal reality, as represented in the Salmond, Hoon, and Humphrys interview, is juxtaposed with high romantic images, which are often portrayed through song and movement.

The inclusion of these songs and choreographed, almost dance-like movement, takes *Black Watch* out of the realm of mere documentary theatre and emphasizes that the play is not simply representing, but instead is theatricalizing and dramatizing the events surrounding the suicide bombing. The first song comes out of nowhere, as the men duck out of the way of enemy mortars, and the Sergeant attempts to relate the siege they are undergoing to the average Saturday evening out on Perth Road (but with airstrikes!).⁴³ There is absolutely no transition between the Sergeant's glib comparison and him standing up and beginning to sing "The Gallant Forty Twa." The men on stage, Cammy, Stewarty, Fraz, and Kenzie, all remain on the ground as the Sergeant begins the first verse. Cammy and Stewarty sneak off stage sometime during this first verse, but Fraz and Kenzie remain on stage and perform simultaneous movements, most of which take place close to the ground, while singing harmonies along with the Sergeant for the remainder of the song. Fraz and Kenzie are lit only in blue light or are backlit by wash from the Sergeant's spotlight, and their movements are all in slow motion and reminiscent of basic soldiering. Fraz and Kenzie squat, aim their guns, make hand signs to warn their fellow soldiers (who of course are not there), roll out of harm's way, and at one time even seem to enact being hit by an exploding bomb by flailing their limbs in the air and collapsing.

The moments are clear foreshadowing of the suicide bombing and the death of these three characters; however, it comes so early within the action of the play that the audience easily misses the foreshadowing element. Instead, the moment becomes about the beautiful harmonies and the stirring imagery. The harmonies in "The Gallant Forty Twa" and the other songs later in the show are nontraditional and were added by associate director Davey Anderson, who was in charge of music. Director John Tiffany described Anderson's arrangements as "radical" because they speak to the heart of each song but don't feel obliged to maintain the original tune or the

traditional monophonic nature. “The Gallant Forty Twa” serves as the transition between the scene in Iraq and the next pub scene; however, it does not act as a way to cover the scene change. The set pieces are not brought in until the final singing of the chorus, at which point all of the men join in whilst bringing in the pool table, chairs, and tables. Kenzie, Fraz, and the Sergeant exit and the song serves to link the two scenes together. So even when the lights snap up and the sound on the TVs replaces the dissonant music, the feeling and impact of the song remains.

“The Gallant Forty Twa” shapes the scenes that follow it because of its lyrical complexity and because of its musicality. The initial impact of the song comes from the contrast of stereotypically masculine men, ones who carry guns and who swear every third word, with the beautiful harmonies and voices that fill the playing space. Also, for audience members familiar with the song,⁴⁴ it is traditionally a 6/8 jig, and thus has a very clappable and danceable rhythm. The Anderson arrangement eliminates the underlying rhythm, which is key to a traditional jig, and instead makes the song more melodic. The audience in turn cannot be taken in by the mere beat of the song, but instead must listen to the words being sung.

The lyrics of the ballad connect the show to the history of the Black Watch and also inform the audience of the importance of the Black Watch to the communities throughout Fife. The ballad was written and printed between 1880-1900, but the exact dates are unknown due to the aural culture surrounding ballads. The meaning of the word “gallant” throughout the song is two-fold. First the word brings up connotations with bravery, heroics, and respect. The men of the Black Watch are likened to the knights of old, and their mission is bigger than they are, and also more important. However, in Scotland the word “gallant” took on a secondary meaning in the nineteenth century, meaning to gad about, gallivant, or flirt (Concise Scots Dictionary). Near the estimated time of publication, the Black Watch regiment were fighting in Crimea (1854),

India (1858), and Africa (1880s) and would only continue to be shuttled about the world. The attraction of joining such a regiment could be associated with the opportunity to travel and experience the world. We see the men jump at the chance for adventure when Lord Elgin comes to recruit for the Great War a couple of scenes later. He is asked about the opportunity to travel, and also about the women. “Guns and football and exotic poontang and that” are all that men need in order to join the Black Watch (Burke 28). The “gallant” way we romanticize them suddenly seems less romantic as they discuss the women they’ve shagged (or at least that they say they’ve shagged), and their initial, and often racist, impressions of far-off lands and the people who inhabit them. However, the men on stage fit the Scottish definition of gallant—they are simply gallivanting all over the world, flirting with danger and experiencing new places while they are young. There is no expectation for these men to be “knights in shining armor,” but instead they are to be good soldiers, and everything else is secondary.

Though the ballad is historical, the story it tells still connects to the men in the regiment. The song tells of a boy from Dundee who joins the “Gallant Forty Twa,” much like Kenzie, whom the Sergeant tries to make feel better by comparing the bombing to the Perth Road on a Saturday night. The initial verse discusses where he came from and his desire to join the 42nd, and is soon followed up by highlighting the many other regiments that he could have joined. Through this we as audience members not only are reminded that the Black Watch are an elite and therefore desirable group to be part of, but also that they are one among many Scottish regiments. It is so easy to forget as one watches the play that the amalgamation of the Scottish regiments only impacts the men we see on stage, yet many other historic and faithful regiments were also dissolved, and re-branded as a “Scottish” regiment.

Ye can talk about your first royals

Scottish fusiliers
 Your Aiberdeen militia
 And your dandy volunteers
 Your Seaforths wi' their streekit⁴⁵ kilts
 And your Gordons big and braw
 But gae bring tae me the tartan
 O' the gallant forty-twa. (Burke 20)

The section discussing the other regiments is the only one repeated during the performance of the song. Yes, on one level it is because it is the chorus, but since Davey Anderson willingly altered the ballads by adding harmonies and modernizing the music, it is not out of the question that he would choose to not repeat the chorus. The repetition of these lines further emphasizes the differences of the Black Watch and the Aberdeen militia or the Gordons. Each of these regiments also indicates a specific region of Scotland, thus acknowledging the differences not only in reputation but also differences in region. Most Scottish men joined up based on their location—much of the Highland recruits would become part of the Seaforths, and the men on Border would join the Royal Scottish regiment. The differences between the Scottish regiments are emphasized within the “Gallant Forty-Twa” and suggest that amalgamating these regiments would erase centuries of history with each individual regiment. By assuming all the Scottish regiments were the same and merging them together, the British Military threatened centuries-old traditions.

Heroes or Sell-Outs

Black Watch projects these romantic images of what it means to be a soldier, even though they are mostly untrue, as a way to highlight what each man who joins the Black Watch is up

against. These larger-than-life expectations of adventure, travel, and women falling at their feet sets them up for disappointment when all they get in return is untreated PTSD and broken dreams. In order to understand the devastation that each of these men experiences during their tour of Iraq we must first understand how far they had to fall. It was not simply that they worked hard and saw their friends die, but that they went out into the desert to become heroes and came back home to a world that does not want them and that does not respect them. Cammy tells the audience the history of the Black Watch, and all of the wars it fought. Many of the battles mentioned are ones with great familiarity to the audience,⁴⁶ but he also mentions some in which the Black Watch's role is less known, including Waterloo, the Boer War, and the American War for Independence.

The men talk about their familial links to the Black Watch and emphasize that though adventure and romance attracted them to the regiment there was also a familial link that pulled them into the army as well. "That's what a regiment is ay? It's history. The Golden Thread. That's what the old timers go on about. It's what connects the past, the present, the future..." (Burke 25). The history of the Black Watch holds them all together, and yet there is no future for that history to provide for. The Golden Thread has been broken, and no matter how much the men talk about the past and the role of the Black Watch in conflicts that shaped the Western world, it will not change the fact that the Black Watch no longer exists. The romantic image that they all bought into has suddenly been pulled out from under them, so as a result they are struggling to know where they fit within society. Cammy's father, grandfather, and great-grandfather were all part of the Black Watch, and there was no question he too would join. Cammy and the others mention that they all joined early, and a few tried a couple of other jobs before signing up: "When I was eighteen. I went to college first. Doing computers, but it was

pish. I fucking hated it” (Burke 21). Now did Cammy hate his computers course because it was too hard or boring? Or perhaps did he hate it because he knew in his heart he should be somewhere else? Did the Golden Thread tug at him and let him know that he needed to be part of the legendary regiment? As outsiders it is easy to cast judgment on these men who seem to have chosen the wrong career path, but as the men discuss their familial connection to the regiment, the audience learns that there is more to joining the army than a base desire to kill another human being. Instead they have more gallant ambitions and know they fit within a continuum of brave soldiers who have fought for the Black Watch and have worn the tartan and hackle. The men, of course, talk about it in a dismissive way as to not appear too sentimental, so when Granty and Cammy tell of actually joining up it appears impulsive:

CAMMY. I met him on the way back from the recruiting office and he’s just got his papers.

GRANTY. I was like, fuck college, come awa way me.

CAMMY. Aye. So I thought, fuck it. I’m gonnay day it.

GRANTY. And we were off. (Burke 21)

As they tell their stories of joining up, Granty quotes the refrain of “Twa Recruiting Sergeants,” which will be performed toward the end of the show, when he says “Come awa way me.” Even if he intended the reference to be in jest, it emphasizes the incredible pull that these songs and legends had upon the young recruits. Joining up was the most attractive offer on the table, especially for these working class men when college is expensive and difficult. And no matter how hard these soldiers try to shrug off the romantic attraction of the position, it still seeps in through the cracks.

“The Gallant Forty Twa” serves to compound the unrealistic and romantic vision of the soldier presented in the scene immediately prior. The earlier scene establishes the men’s view of their role in the conflict, as well as their expectations when they return home, while juxtaposing these dreams and desires with the harsh and uncomfortable reality. The scene opens with Fraz and Cammy sitting in front of the wagon with their trousers rolled down around their boots. Cammy is reading a torn-up paperback, and Fraz is sitting above him in the doorway to the wagon.⁴⁷ The two discuss the book Cammy is reading about Lawrence of Arabia:

CAMMY. He was here, you know?

FRAZ. Lawrence ay Arabia?

CAMMY. Right fucking here.

FRAZ. *(looks around)* Lucky bastard ay.

CAMMY. Aye. (Burke 13)

From my experience seeing the play twice in Chicago, and watching the BBC recording, the audience is bit hesitant to laugh at this point in the recording. The warnings of intensity and the graphic nature of the show is still at the forefront of most audience members’ minds, so the comedy is a welcome relief, but slow to gain momentum. In fact no one laughs during the BBC recording. However, the scene is almost unbearably ironic. Even though Fraz’s “Lucky bastard ay” is clearly sarcastic, the two men are enthralled by Lawrence of Arabia’s exploits in the same land that they now inhabit. If he could make a heroic adventure in the desert, then perhaps they could too. Of course the reality is they are two men so hot that they are sweating in the sand and sitting with their trousers down, all the while remarking on the exploits of a famous adventurer.

By comparing their lives to that of Lawrence of Arabia, the men establish their own desire for fame and their disconnect to their role within the war. Lawrence of Arabia was another

British man who found himself in the desert doing the work Queen and country, and his exploits have been highly sensationalized. As Cammy and Fraz continue to discuss the book, we soon learn that Cammy has only read the latter half the book, for the other half is in someone else's possession. Yet, his knowledge of only the end of Lawrence of Arabia's exploits inspires him enough to want to read the rest of the book. He doesn't quite understand the politics or the reason for Lawrence of Arabia's service in World War II, but instead he only knows the heroics. Cammy states that this is because "it's hard to tell what it's about when there's only half of it,"⁴⁸ but it is also hard to tell when the only representation Cammy is given is larger than life and highly sensational (Burke 13). Cammy is also speaking to his own experience in the military, where he and the other men in his regiment only know half of what they are doing. The men on the ground are only provided with a small portion of information in order to do their jobs, and as a result they have to fill in the real reason why they are fighting and living in the desert. The natural reaction of the men is to fill in the gaps of knowledge with dreams of heroics and adventure. The problem is that these dreams are not designed to hold up to the reality the men face:

CAMMY. That's the trouble with paperbacks. They aren't designed to stand up to the rigors of expeditionary soldiering.

FRAZ. Do you know who's got the other half?

CAMMY. Somebody in Five Platoon, I think he said. (Burke 14)

The dreams of the men are passed around and broken apart. The fantasy, just like the paperback, is not designed to hold up to the "rigors of expeditionary soldiering" (14). Not only are Fraz and Cammy impacted by the romantic vision of a soldier-spy in the desert, but the book is being

passed from unit to unit, and the sensationalized vision of soldiering is passed along with it without the key information of why they are fighting.

The men's desire to be romantic heroes does not live up to the work they are actually doing in Iraq. As Fraz and Cammy chat, another soldier comes running to the wagon, grabs a gas can, and goes running back toward the other side of the stage. Cammy and Fraz simply watch him run about, and remain sitting on the ground. Fraz and Cammy put forth no effort to appear as if they are working, or to assist the one soldier who actually has work to do. Instead, as they sit their expectations of army life continue to reflect their lack of clear direction from the British government.

FRAZ. The book? It is like the film? Ay *Lawrenece ay Arabia*?

CAMMY. It is fuck.

FRAZ. I bet it's nowhere near as good as the fucking film.

CAMMY. No.

FRAZ. Never is, is it?

CAMMY. Never.

FRAZ. Do you think they'll make a film about this war?

CAMMY. They fucking better. I didnay fucking join the army for it no tay get immortalized on the big fucking screen. (Burke 14)

The desire to be a hero and immortalized on screen is all part of their daily banter, and yet there is an element of truth to it. The men would not be there if they didn't think there would be some level of adventure and danger that is worthy of their sacrifice. Fraz's line "I bet it's nowhere near as good as the fucking film" also reflects their own lives in Iraq. They came to the desert in search of adventure and glory and instead find themselves with nothing to do.

The image the soldiers were sold does not match reality, but that does not stop them from romanticizing their own experiences when they return to Scotland. We see this same desire to be depicted as a heroic vision when the men talk to the Writer about potential casting in the play.

ROSSCO. You want tay like show cunts what we fucking done in Iraq?

WRITER. What you experienced.

NABSY. Will we be getting played by actors?

WRITER. Well, yes, hopefully, if there's a story.

GRANTY. Who'll be playing me?

WRITER. It depends.

GRANTY. He better be good-looking, okay? [...]

GRANTY. Ewan McGregor. He can be me. (Burke 43)

Each one wants to be made bigger and brighter on stage. They become concerned about the sexual orientation of the actors they initially chose, for if the actor is a “poof” he would be unworthy in some sort of way to depict these men. Granty eventually relents and emphasizes that being good-looking outweighs the fear of a “poof” playing him: “I dinnay actually mind if a poof plays me. As long as he's a good-looking poof” (Burke 44). There is a certain level of irony present in this scene as well, for each of the men are talking about the potential actors who will play them, and of course those lines and fears are being presented by the actors who were chosen to represent each of these real men on stage. So as Nabsy, Stewarty, and Granty all argue about the color of Kevin McKidd's hair and his ability to play Stewarty if he is indeed a ginger, we look at Stewarty and see how similar he actually looks to the real Kevin McKidd. This meta-theatrical moment reminds us that these men are simply actors, and that these re-creations we see on stage are simply that, re-creations. Ali Craig, Steven Miller, and Chris Starkie, the men who

played Stewarty in the initial run, the Scottish tour, and the international tour, respectively, become more layered before our eyes. We see the character of Stewarty, the actor of Craig, Miller, or Starkie, and the real man upon whom Stewarty is based simultaneously. The real soldier's desires are to be both accurately and romantically depicted, and we can assume we see a blend of those two in the performance of Stewarty.

The tension between the desire to be a hero and the desire to be a real soldier is especially strong when it comes to the visual trappings of the Black Watch regiment. "No other nation has cherished so absurd an image, and none perhaps would accept it while knowing it to be a lie" (John Prebble qtd. Royle 61). Prebble was speaking of the continued use of the kilt and tartan for military purposes, but I feel his words can be expanded to apply to the image of the Scottish soldier in general. Even though the only "Scottish" elements found on the soldiers of the Black Watch are the small bit of tartan pinned onto their uniform and the red hackle in their hats—neither of which is visible when they are wearing their combat vests and helmets—they still perform a certain level of "Scottishness" in the way they interact with their environment, but not when they interact with their foe. The "terror" that the kilt and hackle used to cause is replaced by a wash of khaki. The enemy does not know the unit is Scottish, or English or American. Instead it is only clear that they are on the other side. The men still cherish the image of the kilt-clad warrior, if simply as a means of differentiating themselves from the nation that controls them. The image is a lie—it is a performance, and the image of proud service to the Queen is also a lie. Cammy and the men remind the audience of this as the play draws to a close:

CAMMY. No for our government.

MACCA. No for Britain.

NABSY. No even for Scotland.

CAMMY. I fought for my regiment.
 ROSSCO. I fought for my company.
 GRANTY. I fought for my platoon.
 NABSY. I fought for my section.
 STEWARTY. I fought for my mates.
 CAMMY. Fucking shite fight to end way though. (Burke 72)

The men actively participate in this performance of valiant heroism, when the day-to-day reality is far removed from that daring image. They don't fit the romantic image painted in the regimental songs, nor do they actively strive to fit that image. Instead, the men on a day-to-day basis simply fight to survive and because their friends are fighting. Stewarty and Cammy joined up together, and living together, suffering together, joking together, and missing home together bonds them to one another more firmly than they are bonded to their role as soldiers. In the end we see they all have left the regiment but will never leave one another.

The Golden Thread traces back generations, but most Black Watch lineages began around World War I due to increased recruitment and the need for job security. These recruitments were in pubs, which are the locus of community for the Scots. The NTS and Burke embrace the hard-drinking stereotype of Scottish men (and particularly soldiers), and they utilize the pub as a representation of home in the eyes of the characters and the place where a large group of men may be gathered. It is within this pub that Lord Elgin, the Bruce Clan Chief, came to recruit for the Scottish military units. Lord Elgin's recruiting style is clearly exaggerated in the play. He marches into the space, carrying a claymore, and slams it onto the pool table before he begins his speech: "Now as you know, my ancestor led his men at Bannockburn and is buried nearby at Dunfermline Abbey. He led his men in a fight for freedom from the tyranny of a

foreign power and the need then, as now, for Scotland men to serve their country in its hour of need is great” (Burke 26). His speech is regulated and anglicized, and though Lord Elgin claims to be descended from none other than Robert the Bruce, there is little about him that reads as Scottish. He wears the uniform we associate with the Scots—a kilt, sporran, and knee-high socks with flashes—but appears to be wearing a costume rather than being at ease in the clothing of his kin. He also speaks clearly, elegantly, and directly. During his introductory monologue he does not swear or use any slang, but instead sounds as if he is reciting a memorized script, as if he has told this story hundreds of times to men in pubs such as this one all over Fife. The men are clearly attracted to the promises he makes, but they are not blindly taken in by his patriotic jingoism; instead the men are focused on survival.

LORD ELGIN. Bannockburn.

Beat.

Freedom.

Beat.

Robert the Bruce and that?

GRANTY. We’re still wanting fucking paid. (Burke 26)

The men’s insistence on reimbursement for their service baffles Lord Elgin. He had attempted to prey on their blind patriotism but failed to take into account the famed Scottish practicality. If they can make more money to send home to support their families (be it parents or young wives and children) then joining up becomes more attractive than working in the pits⁴⁹ and is really no more dangerous. Plus, there is the added bonus of some travel, “Well, France anyway” and three-square meals a day with some down time. The recruitment scene contradicts what is usually assumed for the unprecedented involvement of Scots in the First World War: “The reasons why

those young men swarmed into uniform are varied and defy a simple explanation. Partly it was a result of the general enthusiasm for war, the patriotic rush of 1914, which saw the creation of a huge volunteer army, and in that respect a sense of adventure also played a part” (Royle 51). Burke’s recreation of the events dismisses any patriotic feeling but instead emphasizes an economic necessity, which was then compounded by the promised adventure. By removing patriotism and emphasizing survival, Burke is able to level the playing field between the soldiers in the scene and the audience. It is not as if those soldiers bleed tartan while the rest of Scotland is just trying to scrape by, but they are just normal men trying to provide for themselves and their families.

Lord Elgin performs tradition, while the soldiers perform a more realistic attitude toward life and war. It is the hard work of the men on the ground that is emphasized as the scene comes to a close, not blind patriotism. Once Lord Elgin convinces the men that they’ll be home by Christmas and return with glory, the men determine “the pits are fucked” and they all say, “Where do we sign?” (Burke 29). Lord Elgin marches forward from the pool table and begins to sing a narrative ballad, the second featured in the show, entitled “The Forfar Sodger.” He sings, “In Forfar I wis born and bred/ But faith I div think shame, sir/ To tell the weary life I led/ Afore I left my hame, sir”⁵⁰ (29). There are a few leaps and choreographed moments, but for the most part the song is sung directly to Cammy as he sits in a chair and the rest of the men change the set. Upon reaching the chorus a second time, Lord Elgin breaks into a small jig: “Hurrah, hurrah/ Wi’ ma twittle-fal-air-al-aye-do,” and the men who are walking by him on their way to move set pieces join him. The image is striking. Lord Elgin in his kilt, sporran, and knee socks, carrying the huge claymore and dancing a wee jig fits perfectly into the stereotype of the “Highland warrior,” and yet on each side of him are members of the Black Watch, wearing camo and

fatigues, dancing the same dance. Their uniforms are not performative and don't indicate them as "Scottish" or as "Highland brutes" from afar, and yet they are still part of the same history. Additionally, the contemporary soldiers, Fraz and Kenzie, jump into the song when needed, adding harmonies and their back-up dancing, but as soon as the chorus is over the two men run to complete their next task on stage, whether that is moving Cammy out of the way so they can strike his chair, or grabbing a table and chair on the way across the stage. Lord Elgin on the other hand simply marches back and forth as if he were on display at the Royal Edinburgh Tattoo. He does not have any additional task, and as the scene ends he is taken out while riding the rolling pool table. The contemporary men appear to be doing all of the work, while the past rests on its laurels. The issue of class cannot be ignored in this scene either, as Lord Elgin parades around with a sword of Scottish heritage, and the working-class men must swarm around him to do his bidding, while he gets all the glory.

The song Lord Elgin sings is about the practicality of war and the stability of life as a soldier. "The Forfar Sodger" tells of a young man from Forfar, a town north of Dundee, and he is poor and dreams of joining the army for the money and for the glory. The fourth verse sheds light on the young man's schooling and the superiority of soldiering: "They learntit me tae read an write/ An count the rule o' three, sir/ But a nobler thocht cam tae ma heid/ An a sodger I wid be, sir"⁵¹ (Burke 29). The soldier is a noble occupation, but it comes at the expense of learning. On its surface these lyrics appear to support the stereotype that soldiers are stupid and lazy—they joined the military because school is too hard, or they are too dumb. And yet, the soldier here claims to know how to read, write, and do basic arithmetic, but he chose to use those skills as a military man, and not as farmer or miner. Academic or professional careers are simply not an option to these men, for they do not have the money to support the required additional schooling.

The purpose of advanced schooling is questionable when the men will be resigned to manual labor for the entirety of their lives. The final verse highlights the financial security of joining the military, “They gied me claes tae hep ma back/ An mittens tae ma hands, sir/ An swore I was the brawest cheil/ In a’ the Heilan clans, sir”⁵² (Burke 30). The irony of this song, of course, is rooted in the fact that Lord Elgin is singing it, and the men are only joining in on the chorus. Lord Elgin knows nothing of being poor, of having little food or clothing that does not stop the cold. He was born into privilege, and yet he sings this song of a poor boy who finds a home in the army, and tries to sell this romantic image to the men he encounters in the pub. They are working in the pits, mining coal, and he offers them a way out. True, the way out includes killing foreigners and risking one’s life, but that seems a step up for steady pay and three meals per day.

Fashion and Tartan

The emphasis on practicality within the Black Watch is the undercurrent for Cammy’s historical monologue throughout the scene, “Fashion.” Cammy performs the history, through discussion of the material culture and battles of the Black Watch. As music plays “[a] red carpet rolls out, and as Cammy narrates the following history of the Black Watch the other soldiers maneuver him around the stage and distinct uniforms from the regiment’s history. They resemble a squad assembling and disassembling a military cannon” (Burke 30). Tiffany’s description tells us the purpose behind the specific movements but does not even scratch the surface of the actual scene. His short commentary emphasizes that the show is one that must be seen in order for the visual elements to truly be impactful. The staging is key to creating the critical distancing that can spur the audience to re-think notions of military life, patriotism, and the Black Watch.

“Fashion” is by far the most memorable scene from the entire production, for it both gives the background of the Black Watch and also comments on the performative nature of the

regiment and its costume. As the scene begins two of the men, now dressed in their fatigues, run a red carpet down the center of the playing space. This carpet resembles the red carpet ubiquitous at film premieres or fashion shows. Cammy takes off his shoes and begins to narrate the history of the Black Watch as he walks toward the red carpet, which is now flooded with bright, white light. As he speaks his fellow soldiers

begin to dress him, first by fastening a ruffle around his neck and helping him remove his trousers. They wrap his kilt around his waist, place his red waistcoat and red great coat atop the ruffle, and



connect the Black Watch sash. Cammy is picked up and spun around, and then picked up by five of his mates, two of which fasten on his spats (in lieu of the traditional socks), and put on his shoes (see figure 3). Cammy walks to the end of the carpet, where the Lord Elgin places a navy blue beret on his head to complete his first uniform. Cammy turns, pauses, and poses for a photo. The spotlight above his head flashes momentarily, and the sound of a flash bulb is heard. Cammy continues to tell the history as he is picked up, spun around, held at awkward angles, undressed and re-dressed in a total of four complete uniforms, and poses for a “photo” when each uniform is completed. Three uniforms consisted of different spats, overcoats, and hats, and one featured a non-tartan kilt; the final uniform places Cammy back in his fatigues as his history comes to an end and he rejoins his mates in Camp Dogwood.

Cammy’s history tells the audience that the Black Watch was formed in 1715 or 1725—the exact date is unknown. However, they formed before the battle of Culloden,⁵³ and it was in 1739 that the Black Watch joined forces with the British Army. Cammy then explains the

“historical” uniform, and by extension the name of the regiment. By doing so he expresses his disregard for the origin story of the tartan: “Some people thought we chose this dark tartan to reflect our black, betraying hearts. Bollucks. Fuck all that Cullodenshite. The Highlands were fucked” (Burke 30). Cammy’s blatant rejection of the tartan operates on three levels: First he rejects the idea that the Black Watch betrayed their Scottish roots by fighting for the English. Secondly, he dismisses the romantic ideal that Culloden was a determining moment for nationalist biases. Instead, Cammy points out that the Highlands were destroyed already. The Clearances were taking apart the crofting communities, families were being moved off their lands to make room to graze English sheep, and Highlanders were moving south where they found jobs in mines or attempted to farm. In order to survive, the Black Watch needed to move from its mercenary role to one that was more stable, one which provided food and a regular salary. Finally, Cammy emphasizes that the tartan does not necessarily represent any deep truth of the past but instead was simply a pattern that has gained significance through time. In fact, “[a]ny close reading of a week of twenty-first-century news about Scotland can demonstrate racism, sectarianism, violence, advocacy of economic and military over cultural authority, rampant managerialism and the usual circle of dire practices. But perhaps all this means that the tartan myth, with its long history and basis in family fact, has been decoyed and misdirected, rather than exploited to advantage” (Riach 119). Cammy’s view on the tartan emphasizes that the history of the cloth doesn’t matter so much because it has been misrepresented and that the tartan only matters in terms of how it is viewed today. He continues and discusses how they got to keep their kilts and bagpipes, even though they were part of the English army—this was a simple way for the men of the Black Watch to hold onto Scottish culture. The caveat was that the Black Watch had to serve abroad. But during a time when the kilt and pipes were banned in Britain, the

army was able to preserve them. The Black Watch not only fought to protect the people they left behind, but also to protect the culture that was being taken away from them little by little.

“Fashion” and its striking visuals operate as a metaphor for the role of the Black Watch within military history. The audience witnesses multiple costume changes on stage and in overly theatrical and athletic positions, all the while hearing a fairly straightforward narrative about the history of the regiment. In “Fashioning a Scottish Operative,” Joanne Zerdy equates the didactic history with the movement and meaning of the scene, “The carpet’s linear shape and the soldier’s steps back and forth across it regulate the advancing timeline of the chronicle” (Zerdy, “Fashion” 185). However, I feel this analysis fails to take into account the blatant juxtapositions between the soldiers’ movement and the linear story. The soldiers constantly pick up, spin around, and stop and change Cammy’s course mid-gait so that the linearity of the carpet represents what we want out of the history of the Black Watch, but the story fails to live up to that expectation. We want to see him walk back and forth and display the changes of uniform, but instead Cammy is stopped, re-directed, and manhandled as he attempts to give an linear history. His movement aligns with the re-direction and manipulation of the Black Watch by the British Government, so as he attempts to create a timeline, he must re-direct his story for each major re-direction of the regiment. The audience witnesses the visual history of the Black Watch uniforms and the complicated cultural performance associated with that material culture. There is a visual separation of the Scots from the English within the armed forces. “Most of these outlandish uniforms owed nothing to tradition but were invented by local colonels and they came to represent self-conscious nationalism or what the military historian John Keegan has described as ‘a force for resistance against the creeping anglicisation of Scottish urban life’” (Royle 51). At times Cammy’s discussion of the uniform comes across as ostentatious, such as his discussion of

the red hackle, and at times purely practical, such as when he tells of the how mud on the back of great coats during World War I would cut the back of the legs of soldiers, so the Scots simply cut them off above the kilt. Yet all of these costume changes combine and merge to create the uniform of the contemporary soldier. We see the kilt change from the Black Watch tartan, to the khaki in World War I, to being completely eliminated by the time they arrive in Camp Dogwood.

The fashion show emphasizes the changing relationship with England. The men with the “black betraying hearts” must first abandon their own country to fight for a nation that will come to control and dominate Scotland. Yet, during the fashion sequence there is no waving of patriotic flags for Scotland and Scottish heritage in order to separate themselves from the English. The peace-keeping history of the Black Watch is not seen as a moment of patriotic pride but instead is viewed as the Scottish regiments doing the dirty work of England. Cammy avoids discussing this tension but instead chooses to identify with the much older culture of the Celts. “The thing about the Celts, apart from being an oral culture and disappearing history, was that they looked upon warfare as sport. It was their fun. It was what they did to relax” (Burke 31). Cammy connects his unit to Celts⁵⁴ by first pointing out that they were an oral culture, as he is telling the story of his division orally for the audience to hear. The Black Watch was also disappearing from history as it was folded into the other units to create one, singular Scottish unit. This new unit does not incorporate the unique aspects and history of each division, but instead it is assumed that all who fight in a kilt are the same. Also, there’s the assumption that the desire to fight is in Scots’ blood. In some ways this allows for the unit to be forgiven for their war mongering and bloodlust, for it doesn’t matter if the war is just as long as the men get a chance to fight. Yet, as Cammy is saying this, he is decked out in full Highland kit, so though he

claims connections to the Celts, we also see his connectivity to the romanticized past of Scotland.

The army was one of two places where the kilt and bagpipes were allowed after Culloden⁵⁵ due to the Act of Proscription, and as a result the Black Watch helped preserve these Celtic traditions. “For a country whose identity was increasingly bound up with its English neighbour and a time of encroaching anglicization of Scottish life, tartan kilts and an imagined Highland past became a means of satisfying a deep emotional need. And in no other part of Scottish life did this put down deeper roots than in the army” (Royle 60). The uniform came to represent much more than what Cammy alludes to during his fashion sequence, for the kilt and hackle came as a way for the Black Watch, and indeed most of the Scottish regiments,⁵⁶ to embody Scottishness while fighting for the government that controls them. In many ways the uniform allowed the soldiers to be at peace with conquering and colonizing nations in the name of the nation who once colonized them. Even though these soldiers would fight in colonial battles, they did not always agree with the purpose or the outcome of the battle. Cammy tells the audience, “After the American War ay Independence we refused all Battle Honours for our part in it. Because it was rightly decreed that Battle Honors should not be granted for a war with our own kith and kin” (Burke 31). He reminds us that even though the Black Watch supposedly betrayed Scottish blood by joining up with the English, they are still loyal to their “own kith and kin” and as a result they would not accept honors for killing their neighbors and brothers who had immigrated to America from Scotland. Cammy wants to emphasize that even though the Scottish men work for the English, it was out of a necessity and not out of betrayal to the Scottish people.

The question of loyalty, whether to England or Scotland or both, further complicates the vision of national identity presented in *Black Watch*. The play, and the NTS by extension, encourages audience members to examine the meaning of the cultural symbols to which they all cling. Within the play we also view the importance of a clan within the overall nation. With the Black Watch it is a performed clan, or one that the men join and become a part of through legal means as compared to being born into. The identities of the men are therefore complicated. We see Cammy as a representative of the Campbell clan and a member of the Black Watch. The tartans for these two clans are identical, so if Cammy chose to wear a kilt for a social event, such as a wedding or graduation his clan ties and military ties overlap. The question of which tie is greater does not come into question for Cammy because the Campbells have claimed the Black Watch tartan as their own (and it has also been claimed by the Grants and Monros as well), or perhaps the Black Watch tartan evolved out of the Campbell tartan. "...Whether family sett became regimental or vice versa, linkage of some families with specific setts appears to have existed from at least the mid-eighteenth century, although there was [...] no necessary exclusivity about the identification of a clan sett" (I. Brown, "Myth" 97).

With the lack of exclusivity, the question arises about the real role of tartan within the contemporary Scottish culture.⁵⁷ The lack of exclusivity highlights the performative element of the tartan in general. Since all tartans are simply adopted patterns, the identity associated with the wearer of the tartan is reflected in the plaid chosen and is not necessarily representative of birth or clan. Throughout *Black Watch* the tartan is used as a symbol of patriotism.⁵⁸ The decision of which identity supersedes the other is not as clear-cut for the majority of the men in the regiment. For example, Stewarty would be forced to choose between his devotion to the clan of his birth (the Stewarts) and their red and green tartan, or the clan he joined (Black Watch)

with their dark blue and green tartan. The identities of the men become complicated once they try to represent who they are, their heritage, and their belonging with a fabric of overlapping colors. As the tartan became more and more popular and differentiated throughout Scotland, the way the tartan was viewed also changed. It was once “an indicator of belonging, now to the larger entity of nation but also to the smaller community of kin and clan,” and “these associations have led to an emphasis on, or more recently a fixation and obsession with, tartan as a badge or uniform of clanship” (I. Brown, “Tartan” 14). When one views the tartan as representation of belonging, then the rejection of one tartan in favor of another becomes problematic for identity. As the play progresses we see the soldiers define a nation and identity in a new way and re-imagine what it means to belong.

Propaganda and Real Life

At times the men are literal representations of Scotland to both the rest of the UK and to the Islamic world. Prior to the BBC interview, Fraz is prepped to perform a certain type of “national identity” that is far from reality but that will comfort those who are back home. The larger role of politics is quite clear as the Sergeant tells Fraz to remove the porn from his wagon and reminds the other men, who may be caught on camera, not to “commit deviant sexual acts in from ay embedded journalists” (Burke 34).⁵⁹ He doesn’t want the “Muslim world tuning intay the BBC tay see a load ay porn” (Burke 34). Issues with sexual acts appear again and again within the play. Earlier in the play, the Writer asks the men about the struggles of peacekeeping, and they bring up a game that they played in Kosovo called “Toby tig,” which is a vulgar long-form version of tag. The man who was “it” would wait until his mark would be busy and distracted and then “[you] go up to them, get your cock out and whack them on the puss way it,” and then that man is “it” (Burke 24). After the men describe the game to the Writer, he soon changes the

subject. Toby tig is also referred to by the Sergeant during this scene, and the men are reminded that it is an inappropriate game to play in front of a camera.

As the Sergeant lays down the law, an Officer arrives and encourages Fraz to leave up the porn and the pictures of cars (which Fraz describes as Granty's porn). The Officer bellows as he prepares to leave, "It's important that we have a reminder of what we're here fighting for. Porn and petrol. That's a joke by the way, Fraser" (Burke 34). And yet the audience gets the impression that the officer's "joke" was the closest we've heard to the truth about why they were actually there. The Officer comes across as the "cool" leader of the group, as he encourages the men to be themselves while the Sergeant controls their every move. The Officer jokes with them and insinuates that he knows their pain—he states that the embed interviews are "one of the hazards of modern warfare" and yet it is one of the most necessary hazards. The double-casting of the Officer and Lord Elgin also enriches the performance, for though he is no longer in his kilt, he still seems to be performing a certain type of camaraderie that does not exist. The Officer, speaking in clear received pronunciation,⁶⁰ sounds nothing like the men he is responsible for, yet he attempts to relate to them. He changes who he is for them, and they in turn must present themselves as something other than what they are in order for the British public to accept them and their mission. The performance of being clean, respectful, and heroic is what the British populace wants to see—not the porn-loving, swearing, Toby tig-playing antics that actually go on during the average day.

The need to project a certain performed version of the war forces Cammy to give the interview and gives the audience a clear connection to embed interview. Fraz is ultimately not allowed to give the interview because even though he is handsome and looks the part of a hero,

the Sergeant is afraid that he will not say the proper things. The performance of a certain national identity is more important than assuring that each man gets his turn in front of the press.

SERGEANT. Aye, but what about when he opens his mouth? The boy's a
fucking maniac.

STEWARTY. A good-looking maniac.

SERGEANT. That cunt, on the fucking six o'clock news?

Beat.

This war's unpopular efuckinough wayout that. *(To Cammy.)* Just
smile and reassure the great British public that you are happy in
your job. (Burke 36)

There is no attempt to present any semblance of reality to the viewers at home but instead to reassure them that the war is a good idea and that the men who are sweating in the desert are enjoying every minute of it. The constant interviews, the hazard of modern warfare, are the way to keep the masses at ease. The men have to master performing themselves to the populace at home, as well as performing soldier to one another and their superiors. The men work to let those at home know that their government is doing the right thing, while the men on the ground know that they are not the heroes they project on the BBC but are instead bullies who are fighting men who are not equipped to fight back.

Though the audience knows of the amalgamation of Scottish regiments, the interview emphasizes the disconnect between the men on the ground and the men in charge. The Reporter asks Cammy about the amalgamation, to which Cammy replies "I dinna really pay attention to gossip" and leaves it at that. The idea of disbanding the Black Watch doesn't seem real to Cammy, and though it is a controversy "at home" the reality of it on the ground hasn't hit yet.

The British people know more about the future of Cammy's job than he does and yet he is expected to fight on as if nothing were happening. The Reporter remarks on the lack of porn in Cammy's wagon, and Cammy feigns disgust at the very idea. Reporter: "You worry sometimes about the way that must play in the Islamic world?" Cammy: "Aye. *Beat*. They much prefer it when we're shooting at them" (Burke 38). At the core of the argument, Cammy is right. He emphasizes the irony in the British military and media being concerned about "insulting" the Iraqi natives when they are actively at war. The view of porn on TV will not suddenly change the opinion of Britain on the part of Islamic people nearby, who support or oppose Britain's involvement in this war for more serious reasons. Cammy's blatant statement of this contradictory fact forces the interview to stop suddenly in an awkward silence. The Cameraman breaks the tension and moves the interview along. The Reporter jumps to the key question:

REPORTER. How have you found like here in Camp Dogwood? There's been a lot of controversy at home about the deployment.

CAMMY. It's a buzz, you're in a war ay, but you're no really doing the job you're trained for but it's no like they're a massive threat tay you or tay your country, you're no defending your country. We're invading their country and fucking their day up. (38)

The honesty that Cammy shares with the Reporter is staggering. He thinks he is reassuring the populace, but instead he confirms the fears that these men shouldn't be involved in the war. The Black Watch started out as mercenaries and then swore to protect King and country, but this war doesn't even begin to fit into the oath they swore. Instead, they are returning to their days as mercenaries, fighting someone else's battle and wreaking havoc when the men themselves have nothing at stake. The Reporter is taken aback a bit, and finds a way for Cammy to re-answer the

question: “Right. Okay. Great. Brilliant. We just need to film that again, but without the swearing” (38). Cammy smiles and is embarrassed that he didn’t keep his language in check and agrees to another take. Yet, the language may not be the only reason the Reporter wants to re-record.

Bullying weighs on Cammy’s and the other men’s minds throughout the show and is often the focus of their reflection. Later when the Writer is discussing their roles in the war, the men agree that even though they were itching to fight, or at least earn their keep, that fighting the Iraqis would not have been a fair fight. The men become increasingly frustrated as they re-tell their experiences and how one-sided it all was. Granty comes straight to the point and emphasizes why the fight was unfair, “The difference in firepower and the kit, it’s that much” (Burke 48). The pub is set up similarly to the first pub scene, with the pool table slightly off center and several chairs on the far end of the playing space near one set of scaffolding, but this time there are no tables. Cammy, Stewarty, and Rossco are all seated in a triangle configuration with Cammy at the pinnacle, and thus the farthest from the Writer, who is seated between Cammy’s group and Nabsy, Macca, and Granty at the pool table. As the conversation continues, the Writer is forced to look behind him at times and then shift around to look back at the other group of men, so even though everyone is remaining fairly stagnant, the movement of the Writer creates a sense of movement within the scene. The subtle movement is intensified when the Writer asks “Did you worry about having to shoot people?” (Burke 48) at which point Cammy, Stewarty, and Rossco all lean back simultaneously in their chairs, almost as if to lean away from the question. They begin to answer, tersely, and as Rossco points out the obvious, “I dinnay give a fuck who you are, if you fire a gun at me I dinnay like you. It’s nothing personal,” all three lean

their chairs back on only two legs (Burke 48). The chair is leaning back in such a manner looks casual, as if the men don't care about the topic they are discussing.

All of their body language indicates that this is no big deal, but since it is so clearly an act, the audience comes to realize that their casual discussion does not correspond with their true feelings of the situation. As soon as Cammy says, "Like I say, way the difference in kit," the three drop their chairs back to all fours, and their faces betray their performance. It is clear that though these men feel the need to act tough and to support the "job" that they trained to do, they are deeply torn about what they actually had to do. The men are well trained in their response, for they know they must appear to like their job, just as the Sergeant told them before the embed interview. Yet, despite their desire to put on a happy face, the truth comes out.

CAMMY. After a while, it's more bullying than fighting ay.

STEWARTY. You dinnay join up tay bully cunts day you.

ROSSCO. Bullying's the job.

GRANTY. It's no the reason you want tay be in the army, though.

CAMMY. It's a buzz, you're in a war ay, but you're no really doing the job you're trained for but it's no like they're a massive threat tay you or tay your country, you're no defending your country.

We're invading their country and fucking their day up. (48-9)

Cammy repeats the speech he gave to the reporter that was interrupted by bombings. But here, since the interview is being done by a Scot and for a Scottish audience, the language is not censored, and Cammy's views about the absurdity of the war are supported by his mates. He emphasizes that they are the ones who are invading, so in a sense they are the bad guys. The Iraqis are only protecting what is theirs the best they could, while Britain is invading and, as

Cammy puts it, “fucking their day up” (49). Cammy’s words are allowed to resonate with the audience this time, while previously his words were censored and the movement following the interview had to capture the emotional content of Cammy’s monologue.

Shots are fired and the interview comes to an abrupt end as the Reporter and his Cameraman duck for cover. The shots serve as a way to transition into a moment of reflection and representative movement. Fraz, Rossco, Kenzie, and Granty all run in with towels around their waists. Rossco and Granty follow Cammy into the back of the wagon while Fraz and Kenzie jump onto the Reporter and Cameraman—it is obviously a ploy to “save” the civilians and get Fraz his chance on TV as Kenzie points the Cameraman at Fraz to capture his heroic moment. More explosions take place and the men disperse. Stewarty “bursts onto the stage, diving for cover. The door of the Warrior slams shut, isolating him in the space. He lies with his hands over his head as mortars explode around him” (Burke 39). The lights continue to flash throughout these moments and when the explosions stop, the stage goes dark, so at first it is hard to see what is going on as the lights slowly fade up and Stewarty rolls onto his back, obviously relieved that he has survived. At first he begins to laugh, and then cry. He sits up and angrily continues to cry. He is clearly mad that he is upset, for it is a sign of weakness where he is, but he cannot help but admit his fears and his loneliness.

Stewarty’s breakdown gives way to a highly choreographed scene. Stewarty suddenly notices he is not alone, and jumps up, composes himself, and takes a stack of airmail, or blueys, from the Sergeant. He opens his letter and smiles, standing with the remaining letters at his side. Kenzie enters, grabbing the stack of letters and searches for his own letter, again allowing the remaining stack to be easily grabbed by the next man to enter. Each man that enters and finds his letter takes it to a private spot on the stage and reads it alone. A letter is then dropped by each

man, one by one, and the readings then take on what director John Tiffany calls “a subconscious sign-language which expresses the context of the letter” (Burke 39). Each one mimes his unique letter, repeating the actions again and again. The miming is not clear and is different across the stage. As an audience member you do not get the impression that you are supposed to understand what is in each of these letters but instead that the letters are personal moments for each of the men. Letters from family, friends, and loved ones speak to the men individually, so even though they all do similar actions and are forced to share the same physical space, we can see that they are within their own psychological and emotional spaces—separated from one another even if only for a brief moment. The rhythm to the movement mimics that of a choral round, where each new character starts at the same “entrance” moment within the previous character’s movement, and it builds and then recedes until only one is left doing the movement alone. The sudden sense of calm and fluidity that comes from this interlude feels like a huge break from the intense action of the previous scene, and as the Sergeant finishes his miming and picks up his letter to leave, the bombing and flashing of lights starts up again.

The letters that the men within the regiment receive are a private affair and give the audience insight to the men’s inner thoughts. We, as the audience, are only given a hint as to what the contents contain, and it is made quite clear that we are not supposed to understand. The overlapping, choral-type movement pulls the focus of the audience members in different directions as they all try and translate the various letters. The e-mails from the Officer to his wife, however, are made public. We are given access to the Officer’s view on the war and what he imparts to his wife in private. In war, the Officer has no private life but instead all of his life is up for public display. Within his e-mails we are also given a glimpse of what she says to him. The first e-mail begins: “My darling, you said in my last e-mail I sounded worried? Well, we are

here in Dogwood and the task does look quite challenging” (Burke 12). The Officer is able to communicate with his wife almost instantaneously with the e-mails they send back and forth to one another, while the men on the ground must wait for the airmail to arrive; however, their messages seem far more emotional—they are filled with love, inside-jokes, and stories that make the men smile, laugh, or gaze longingly. The Officer, even though he can speak to his wife more often, is forced to be more contained—he must put on the “public” face that he supports his superiors even if he does not. Conversations with his wife should be honest and open, but the Officer cannot doubt his role in the war, even for a moment.⁶¹ We are reminded of this difference between the two types of communication soon after the “Blueys” movement. “Officer Email 2” tells of the amalgamation of the Scottish regiments, not as an announcement to the troops, but in answer to his wife’s questions. She is concerned about what she has heard on the BBC, and we are made privy to the Officer’s controlled outrage. The juxtaposition of the two forms of correspondences allows the audience to view the internal and external struggle of the men in the regiment. What they feel and think is not always what they are allowed to act upon, and thus they cannot be judged personally for their actions. Instead, the inner workings of the political system are being revealed. We see that the men are simply doing their jobs, and no matter what terrible things they are asked to do, they are real men with families and friends who love them back at home.

Often the men join because of a desire to support and care for those families left behind in Scotland. The final song demonstrates this, by emphasizing the practicalities faced by the men who enlist, and the attraction of joining up when the only other options are the difficult life of farming or raising sheep. As the song begins, Fraz and Kenzie are each atop one of the esplanades on the far sides of the stage, in full kit. They begin to sing in unison, facing one

another, as the rest of the men change into their uniforms and switch the scenery over. The use of Fraz and Kenzie serves as foreshadowing of what is to come when the wagons are attacked and the two are killed. So many of the transitional scenes featuring only Fraz and Kenzie foreshadow their deaths, and yet the foreshadowing does not become overbearing or trite. Instead each moment builds upon the previous, so by the time we hear them sing, we are prepared for the ending. The words of the song, “Twa Recruiting Sergeants,”⁶² highlight what Fraz and Kenzie are dying for and why they joined in the first place.

For it's over the mountain, over the main
Through Gibraltar, tae France and tae Spain
Wi' a feather in your bonnet and a kilt aboon your knee
Sae list my bonnie laddie and come awa wi' me.⁶³ (Burke 49)

The two break into a harmony when they reach this chorus, and the song becomes heart-wrenchingly beautiful. The song emphasizes the promised adventure of joining the Black Watch: they will travel over mountains and over the mainland of Europe. The song was most likely written in the early to mid-1800s, but the exact date is unknown. The specific references to moving through Gibraltar to France and Spain date the song around the Napoleonic Wars around 1815, and the references to the feather in the bonnet imply that the song was written after the hackle was adopted in 1785 (theblackwatch.co.uk). The final line of the chorus makes joining up sound like going on vacation, or like escaping to a tropical oasis. “Enlist my bonnie laddie and come away with me” is very tempting when the men who were being recruited had to fight tooth and nail simply to survive. The men are joining up to travel and to escape their lives on the farm. The verses tell of the “danger” of staying at home if the horse were to frighten or the oxen were to run.⁶⁴ The risks of trying to make it as a farmer are not worth it, so they should simply go

ahead and join up with the Black Watch. The money they make could help support a lover and child and is better than weaving or making wool.⁶⁵ Plus, joining up promises adventure that could not be experienced by staying at home. As the song progresses the rest of the men join in on the final chorus, as Fraz and Kenzie, followed by Stewarty, Nabsy, and Macca, take their places in “around the edge of the [pool] table as if in the back of a Warrior” (Burke 50). As the men step on the table, the audience sees that the top of the table is spring loaded and collapses as they all load-up in unison. Their legs are hidden within the table, as each one sits on the edge facing inward. The action happens in the tight confines of the table, and audience members would see the back of three actors, and the faces of the other three through the gaps.

The Final Moments of Any Other Day

The moments before the bombing are drawn out to fully set the mood of the event and to expose the attitude of the surviving men. We as viewers know it is coming soon, for the men in the pub has indicated that they were ready to tell that part of the story, and yet Burke manages to build the anticipation of an ending that we already know. The scene “Ten-Second Fights” gives the audience insight to the silly and quite average day that turned into a nightmare. The men are bantering about foods that they want to have once they get home. Kenzie is refusing to play by the rules, and no matter what the type of cuisine they are supposed to be discussing, all he wants is “Cheese on toast” (Burke 53). The other men in his wagon, Stewarty, Fraz, Nabsy, and Macca, are all obviously annoyed by his dense refusal to play the game.

FRAZ. It’s no a fucking Indian, is it?

KENZIE. It’s fucking food.

MACCA. It’s no a fucking Indian.

KENZIE. We’re talking about food you want when you get home.

STEWARTY. Indian fucking food.

KENZIE. I just want cheese on fucking toast, okay. (Burke 54)

This conversation is then repeated, almost verbatim, when the topic of conversation is changed to Chinese food, or “Chinky” as the men call it. The scene serves as comic relief on one level. We laugh at Kenzie and his insistence on such a simple pleasure of home and at how upset Kenzie makes Fraz by refusing to play the game. Kenzie is deployed for the first time, and in this scene we can see that he simply misses home and what he is used to. He doesn’t need curry or crispy beef to be happy; he only needs cheese on toast, a pleasure that he probably took for granted before he left.

A key scene that explores the psyche of the men prior to the bomb focuses on suspended action in a long movement sequence. Nabsy has enough and starts laying into Kenzie. The anger he feels is not simply because Kenzie won’t play the game but is clearly linked to the tension that is building because the men are kept in such tight quarters in sweltering weather with nothing to do. The only outlet they have that is private are the letters from home, and now that the men are out in the middle of nowhere, and the wagon is stuck, those emotions are bound to come to a head. The Sergeant hears the ruckus and comes into the wagon and finds the two arguing:

SERGEANT. Have we got a fucking problem here?

FRAZ. No, we fucking haven’t.

SERGEANT. You fucking two. *Beat*

Ten fucking seconds.

They all get out of the wagon. Kenzie and Nabsy remove their helmets and square up to each other. (Burke 55)

The regiment has a system built into their day-to-day lives in which the men can blow off steam. Even though the men are stuck in the wagon on a deserted road there is time and space for the two to have it out. Under supervision, in this case from the Sergeant, the two men who are arguing are given ten seconds to fight one another without restraint. They can release their emotions and neutralize their anger, but it must be completed within the ten seconds provided. This practice gives the men an outlet for their anger, helping them not lose it during combat or at an inopportune moment when they need to be controlled and focused. We see Kenzie and Nabsy begin their fight and then Fraz counts down from ten. They kick and punch and fall to the ground.

As Fraz counts down the rest of the men join in, and the fight transforms from an energetic fight to a choreographed dance between sets of two men accompanied by music and a lighting change. Each fight lasts ten seconds, and we see on the video screens a countdown as Fraz joins the fray and quits counting. The fights take place between different pairs, and though the movement is repetitive (each fight is virtually identical), the location changes throughout and alters each fight slightly. One fight may focus around the wagon, so the pair must lean against it or roll over it, while another takes place closer to the ground. At times the men all begin to fight in unison, they punch at an imaginary opponent, lean back to dodge, hop forward for the next move, and then break into their individual fights once more. The lighting is similar to the blue light during “The Gallant Forty Twa” and many of the movements are reminiscent of the movements Fraz and Kenzie made during that song, only this time they are faster and more frenzied. The music, the countdown video, and the moment all “intensify to a climax” (Burke 56). As the movement ends, the pairs separate and return to their role as “audience” to Nabsy and Kenzie’s fight and we return to the Sergeant counting down, and their fight ends. The departure

from Nabsy and Kenzie's fight removes the audience from the "moment" and distances them from the experience of the men on stage. The movement sequence highlights the repetitive angst present from day to day and also helps to emphasize that the day Kenzie and Fraz die started out as a day like every other.

The focus shifts from the anticipation of the suicide bomb to the personal lives of the men in the wagon during the ten-second fights. The repetition of the fight over and over emphasizes that the day was simply an ordinary day and that there was no indication that it would be the last moment they would all spend together. This time it was a fight over cheese and toast, but in the past it may have been a fight over shower order or a disagreement over who should play the lead in an anticipated movie that they may never live to see. The men are young, they are full of energy, and they are aching for a fight. They were promised a certain type of job, and while we never see them question the purpose of the war, they do question why they are in a desert and being paid to simply sit and stare. We witness the men bond and fight, gain confidence and lose it, and finally we see them all fall apart when the suicide bomb finally hits.

The final pub scene before the bomb emphasizes that the bomb destroyed more than three lives when it went off but instead impacted every man in the unit. The men are on edge as the suicide bomb portion of their story approaches, especially Stewarty, who was wounded during the bombing, but not killed. The pub is set up differently this time, with six chairs in a straight line at one end of the playing space by the scaffolding, and a single chair just past center, where the Writer sits and asks the men questions. The soldiers are still in their fatigues, instead of having changed into their civvies, and the pool table is absent from the scene. The televisions are silent, and the pub atmosphere is strikingly different from previous scenes. The Writer asks the men what it was like to kill someone, and the responses are terse and emotional. Stewarty

becomes especially upset, accuses the Writer of not understanding, and suggests they get him drunk and “go out and find some cunt and kick them taw death.” At this point Rossco suggests that he, Stewarty, and Macca go outside to have a fag, and they exit (Burke 61). Cammy, Granty, and Nabsy stay to speak with the Writer and sit every other chair. Cammy attempts to artfully explain why Stewarty flew off the handle, and as he explains, Granty and Nasby move in unison with him to emphasize certain points. “Cammy. Some boys didnay take it too good ay. Writer. I understand. Cammy. You dinnay” (61). To accentuate Cammy’s point, each man stands and moves to the chair on his right, and sits again. The movement is quite simple, but the impact is huge as Cammy ponders the conversation for a beat and then says, “But dinnay worry about it” (61). It is as if moving chairs allows them to move on with the conversation and to not get caught up with their emotions as Stewarty had. The movement echoes the chair movement of the previous pub scene. It is clear that the performance of masculine stoicism is an act to cover up their true feelings regarding the situation at hand. When Rossco, Macca, and Stewarty re-enter, they all sit simultaneously in the remaining chairs. The scene is high tension, as Stewarty threatens to break the Writer’s arm while Cammy and the others must forcibly restrain him.

The men are broken—some literally and some mentally and emotionally, and they have given up on their role as soldiers. No longer do we see the fun-loving discussion of missed foods, but the remnants of the desert on their psyches. The scene not only serves to build up the tension surrounding the bombing, but also gives us vital information that will help us understand the bombing itself. Here they introduce the idea of the zap number and the role of the piper when a member of the Black Watch is killed.

WRITER. What was it like when one of you got killed?

- CAMMY. Well, when something like that happens the Pipe Major goes and plays on the spot where it happened.
- WRITER. No, I mean what is it like when it actually happens? At the time?
- GRANTY. Well, it's weird cos you've got a zap number.
- WRITER. A zap number?
- CAMMY. It's you first initials ay your second name, and your number. I was CA, Charlie Alpha, four, four, zero, two.
- GRANTY. So when something happens, it comes over the radio way the zap number ay the folk involved and then the code.
- CAMMY. P-one, immediate surgery. P-two wounded. P-three walking wounded. P-4 dead or dying. (Burke 62)

The scene brings context to the coming “Casualties” and describes two important elements of death within the unit. The order of the information given about death tells a lot about the men. The cultural tradition of having the piper play where the death occurred is more important than the technicalities surrounding the death. The Black Watch is a Scottish unit, and the traditions and customs outrank the formalities and the inner workings of the British military. One element is innate and important, the other is simply a result of modern warfare. We also see the men reduced to initials and numbers at death. They are no longer the men we have seen gallivanting across the stage and joking about porn, but are only the initials of their last name and a number that has been assigned to them. The Golden Thread does not extend to death.

The zap number system makes moments when a soldier is wounded or killed even more suspenseful for those who are listening to the radio. Granty emphasizes when describing the zap system to the Writer, “You hear the zap number and the codes and you’re trying tay think who

the fuck it that?” (Burke 62). In the play the names have been changed from the original interviewees, but many of the men in the Black Watch hail from the same region, and thus the same clan. The unit would contain numerous Campbells, Grants, Frasers, and Munros so the reading of a zap number beginning with CA, GR, FR, or MU could indicate a large number of soldiers.⁶⁶ Two of the main four clans are featured in the final three zap numbers after the suicide bombing, making the death of Fraz and the Sergeant all the more obfuscated. The zap numbers also eliminate the Mac and Mc prefixes of the Scottish names, thus in a way Anglicizing the soldiers upon their deaths. They can no longer be the son of Kenzie, or the son of Nab, but the connection to history and the past is cut. Though the Sergeant is named within the text, the audience and his men simply view him as “The Sergeant.” His zap number is clearly representative of his role within the unit, for as he dies we hear “Mother Uniform, three, three, six, two” (Burke 68). Unlike Fraz’s and Kenzie’s, we are not familiar enough with the Sergeant’s name to immediately translate his zap number into his identity, so by naming the Sergeant Munro, his zap number of MU, “mother uniform,” indicates to the audience who he is. The Sergeant is the mother of the regiment. He is the one who keeps the men in line, punishes them for their missteps, and encourages them to succeed. He is the men’s superior, and yet he is familiar enough with each of them that he is also their friend, or their family. The identities of the men who died, and who are fighting for the Black Watch, are associated with the heritage of the tartan and the history of the regiment.

As the audience hears the zap numbers be called, the tarp covering one set of scaffolding drops to the floor exposing Kenzie, Fraz, and the Sergeant hanging on wires (described as the “brilliantly staged scene in which three men are blown up by an IED” in the *London Telegraph*) (Spencer). They are suspended in mid-air as if we are seeing a freeze-frame from the explosion.

Each man slowly drops to the ground, with his limbs flailing in slow motion. Each one hits the ground as his zap number is declared P-four via voice over. Their bodies are covered in blood, as is the tarp, and though their bodies are whole, the effect of the lights and sound makes them seem mangled and destroyed. Their movement is simple, but shocking, as the audience both watches the men fall to the ground and their comrades, who were just chatting and poking fun at Fraz and Kenzie as they watched from afar, react to their deaths from the floor of the playing space. The men on the ground move in slow motion as the blast reaches them, and they are lit in a dim amber, while the three victims of the suicide bomb are lit from below with a vivid blue and white light. A Gaelic song, “A Thearlaich Òig,”⁶⁷ performed by one female voice, plays in the background as the men slowly fall to the ground. Though the Interpreter is also killed during this suicide bombing we only see the bodies of the soldiers. This highlights the relative importance of the locals to the soldiers and emphasizes the extreme cost of war to the local populace. Even though four men were killed, only three are destined to be remembered.

At the end of the play, the men comment on the role of soldiers in the army and return to the topic of conversation in Cammy’s initial monologue. All of the soldiers re-enter and stand in two lines while delivering tongue-in-cheek lines about the perfect nature of the British military. “Cammy. Scotland always had people willing tay serve in the army. [...] Rossco. We just love fucking fighting. [...]” (Burke 72). These stereotypes mirror the ones Cammy delivers at the beginning of the play, but this time the audience knows them to be false, or at the very least more complicated than they appear at first glance. Macca enters with a set of bagpipes, and the stereotype list transforms into a list of why they actually fight. As the men call down the line the reasons why they fight, Macca plays a dirge, “The Flowers of the Forest,” and walks over to the place where Fraz, Kenzie, and the Sergeant have died. Their deaths have occurred and have been

cleaned up by Cammy, but the full impact of their demise does not hit until Macca, the regimental piper, begins to play, honoring the men who have fallen. Macca completes the dirge, and then the Officer speaks a final line calling for the men to go into their final charge with honor, and with that the drums join in as Macca begins “The Black Bear” on his pipes. The Officer yells “Forward the Forty-Second,” and the men fall into formation and begin to march (72). The march begins as a traditional parade. The men are in three lines and march in step. Many audience members begin to clap at this moment because it is assumed the show is over and this is the curtain call. However, shortly after, the music begins to intensify and quicken and the men have to run to keep in time. The soldiers “stumble and fall” and the formation breaks apart (Burke 73). The men near one who has fallen quickly help him up and the parade continues. More and more men begin to fall and are picked up and at times dragged by their peers to keep pace with the music. The show ends with the men in silhouette, gasping for breath as the music ends.

The Tattoo we see at the end of the play is drastically different from the Tattoo at the beginning, and the tattoos serve as the framework for the critique of the nationalism projected within the play. The play starts with a waving flag and an upbeat tune, and the anticipation of Scottish military glory is palpable. However, by the play’s end we see no flag, and the music is heavy and oppressive. Here the trappings of the military are not necessarily equal to their successes, and we watch the men struggle to keep up the facade of successful soldiering. Cammy presented us with stereotypes and romantic images of the Scottish soldier, as the play began. At the end of the play, after we have developed an emotional attachment to the men and their work we realize that the men fight not for an idealized nation or nationhood, but instead, the men fight

for one another, and fight to simply survive. The romantic image of the Highland soldier is still there, but now that image has been tainted with the harsh realities of modern warfare.

As the NTS's first main stage play, *Black Watch* shattered expectations of audience members who assumed the national theatre would perpetuate traditional romantic images of the nation, and it set high expectations for what would be produced in following years. Many audience members may have come into the theatre assuming Scotland would be glorified, Robbie Burns recited, and a mad rush for the nearest pub would result at the end of the show. *Black Watch* challenges biases, both against the military and against Scotland, and encourages the audience to re-think the role of the soldier, the role of the tartan, and the role of Scotland in the history of Britain. Instead, the NTS complicates Scotland's image by modernizing or refuting traditions, and the audience sits gaping at the playing space as the show ends, trying to assimilate what all it has seen. *Black Watch* presents NTS's international vision of Scotland as a nation by acknowledging the plaid-wearing, whisky-swilling, and sword-swinging heroes of national lore, but goes on to present a more realistic view with "tell it like it is" candor of men who want to feed their families and who are tired of being jerked around by the British government. By presenting an honest representation of a particular cross-section of the Scottish nation, and by immediately rejecting the stereotypical ideal of the burly, kilted warrior-poet, the first main stage production paved the way for future NTS shows to question heritage and tradition and to find value in the everyday lives of Scots, no matter what their background or cultural history. This division in ideals fuels the border between romantic idealism and contemporary culture, more so than any people or landscape separates the people of Scotland. In the next chapter, I examine the tension between the nostalgic past and the prosaic present along the Border in David Greig's *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart*.

Chapter Two
“Border ballads, neither border nor ballad?”: *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart* and a Modern Mythos

“The Devil’s Ceilidh is a dance or party hosted by Satan and reputed to be held at exactly midnight on the winter solstice (Cunningham, 1976, p. 42), when a gap or gate opens up in time. The Devil roams abroad and human souls can be taken down to Hell before their time. The Devil hosts his Ceilidh with the intention of luring souls, usually maidens, into his trap” (Greig 35).

David Greig’s 2011 verse drama, *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart*, fuses the world of the nineteenth-century Border ballad with the world of the present day. The title character, Prudencia Hart, attends an academic conference on Border Ballads and finds herself snowed in at a small pub filled with conference attendees. As the night turns from academic arguments to debauchery, Pru abandons the pub for a local B&B where she is abducted by the Devil and taken to live in hell for millennia. She eventually escapes the Devil’s clutches through the help of her arch-nemesis and fellow academic, Colin Syme, and returns to her own time and research a changed woman. *Prudencia* premiered in the Victorian Bar in the Tron Theatre, Glasgow. The show toured pubs and community centers (and a few theatres) around Scotland, followed by a tour around the UK, United States, Canada, and Australia. The play employs a poetic conceit, allowing the story to resonate in terms of nationalism and Scottish identity. The conceit relies upon Prudencia and all her characterization—from clothing and chosen field of study to her favorite music—representing the sentimentalized past of Scotland, or the kailyard⁶⁸ school of thought, while Colin and his characterization represent the über-modern Scotland. When the two interact they seem to be incompatible. Colin dismisses Pru’s work as outdated, while Pru thinks Colin’s field of study is of no real importance. However, as the play progresses it is only through the merger of the past and the present that Pru is able to be saved from the Devil. Ultimately, the

play can be seen to emphasize how the acknowledgement of Scotland's cultural history will inform the success of a modern Scotland. Throughout this chapter I will examine Greig's poetic conceit of kailyard versus modernity and how it depicts and evaluates Scottish identity and, to a lesser extent, Scottish nationalism. In order to do this, I will consider how the conceit is complicated by the location of the play on the Border and how the Border between Scotland and England has functioned historically and continues to function. I will examine the role of ballads within the play, both as the structure of the show as a whole and the ballads within the ballad-play. Lastly, I will examine "surprises" in the text, and how these moments of unexpected joy/choreography/debauchery point toward a changing Scotland.

Pubs and Borders

The dichotomy of past and present is part of everyday Scottish life, not simply a theme in *Prudencia*. The best representation of this melding of past and present, of the romantic and the realistic, is the presence of Hadrian's Wall on the Border of England and Scotland. The Border is a place of unrest. The Border acts as a seam and simultaneously holds England and Scotland together, but highlights that the two countries are separate. This joint between the two countries is fraught with images of the new juxtaposed against the old, both culturally and physically. Hadrian's Wall, which spans "between the Tyne in the east and the Solway in the west," served as a Roman trade post between the north and south (complete with armed guards at regular intervals along the way) and as a convenient way to collect taxes in the northern part of the then Britannia (modern day England) (Oliver 42). Despite the pragmatic uses of the wall, "the wall was a line in the sand: where civilisation ended and barbarism began" (Oliver 42). Hadrian's Wall serves as a constant visual reminder of the separation between two cultures, and as a separation between the past and present. In the past the "Scots"⁶⁹ were barbaric and the "Britons"

were cultured, and stone was needed to separate the two. The wall stands as a way to remember the Roman empire, an empire that never sought to conquer Scotland and an empire that shaped modern England. The lack of Roman influences in Scotland allowed for the Celtic culture of Scotland to thrive, and as a result pushed England and Scotland further apart. Now the wall is hemmed in by traffic signs and flags indicating which side belongs to which nation. The wall is not even on the actual border, but instead lies further south, completely within modern England. However, the geographical location does not mean much when the cultural and sociological separation is clear between the two sides of the wall.

The Border in the play is no longer a barrier but becomes a permeable membrane through which culture is exchanged. *Prudencia* pulls forward the juxtapositions present at the Border and explores and critiques the imagery associated with the romanticized cultural past and banal cultural present. Greig acknowledges and engages with the Caledonia of the past while pushing forward portraits of modern Scotland (mostly embodied by Colin and his raucous party crew). It is through the simultaneous acknowledgment of the past and present that the play transforms the border from a barrier to an active space (Wastl-Walter 17). No longer does a wall separate civilization and barbarism, or the Romans from the Celts, but instead the wall serves as a threshold allowing audience members to engage with culture and debauchery simultaneously. The play does not simply open a door allowing the two nations to dialogue, but instead the border transitions from an “obstacle to mobility” into a place of exploration (Wastl-Walter 21). This transition takes into account the past and the iconic role of the Border, including acknowledging times of strife and danger along the seam. Often, when an iconic and long-standing border is critiqued, the complexities of the locale are lost because they are “unscrupulously exploited in nationalist ideologies, which hide them in the rhetoric of national

identities and heritage” (Wastl-Walter 21). In the world of *Prudencia* the Border could easily become kailyard and disappear behind thistles and tartan. Instead, Greig inundates the audience with differing, and at times contradictory, images of the Border. The play does not attempt to co-opt or exploit the national heritage but instead seeks to demonstrate how the past and present inform one another and to ignite conversations about the border and Scottish culture.

The pub serves as the ideal setting for starting conversations about Scotland and national identity. Conviviality and camaraderie are key to any successful pub, thus setting *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart* in a pub encourages casual discussion and a sense of togetherness throughout the audience. The play premiered at the Victorian Bar in the lobby of the Tron Theatre, Glasgow. As the show toured around Scotland, and eventually around the UK, United States, Canada, and Australia, it continued to be performed in pubs, or in a few cases, theatres transformed to look like pubs. In productions where the play was performed in a theatre, the space was treated like a pub, complete with bar and drinks available for purchase. The pub atmosphere was recreated as best as possible when the production could not be performed in an actual pub setting. *Prudencia* pays homage to the work of 7:84 and, specifically, the infamous *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil* (1973) through the use of the pub setting and by integrating a session into the show. The initial production and tour of *Cheviot* began and ended with a session and was performed in pubs and cultural centers, and it started a Scottish tradition of theatrical tours into the Highlands and to the islands. 7:84 established that performing in pubs was a simple way to take theatre to the people instead of expecting the people to traverse to the theatrical (and Lowland) epicenters. 7:84 worked to connect culturally divergent areas of Scotland. The group sought to create accessible productions that challenged the traditional values of both theatre and the role of Scots in Great Britain (Smith, “1950” 279-80). *Prudencia*, too,

seeks to bring the theatre to the people and to shatter traditional conceptions of Scottish identity and Border politics.

The pub setting allows for easy tours, and also forces audiences of the production to truly embody the setting. By setting the play in a pub, Greig eliminates the need for sets and allows the physical space surrounding the audience to become the mystical setting for the play, thus enveloping the audience in the events of the play. The interchangeability of the real pub and the fictional Kelso pub is very purposeful, as Wils Wilson, the director, describes: “There are two worlds, well, there’s more than two worlds I suppose. There’s the world of the pub which everybody is in, so the audience are in a pub and the people who are telling the story are also really in that pub” (Wilson). Though Wilson and the production team view the two pubs as interchangeable, the pub within the play is obviously not physically present, and yet it is still represented by the story. The Kelso pub and is what Henri Lefebvre would define as a representational space, or “space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of ‘inhabitants’ and ‘users’, but also of some artists and perhaps of those, such as a few writers and philosophers, who *describe* and aspire to do no more than describe” (39). The Scottish pub is a space directly lived through images of beer, whisky, cèilidhs, sessions, and camaraderie. Pru is so familiar with these symbols that she barely acknowledges most of them when entering the Kelso pub but instead scans the space for the signs of “culture” she wants to experience, such as the chalk sign hanging, “That said in pink letters bold and clear/ KELSO FOLK CLUB — FOLK NIGHT HERE!” (Greig 18). This sign (literally, in Pru’s case) pointed toward the type of “inhabitants” and “users” that usually would occupy the space of the Kelso pub. Those who care about folklore and tradition would inform the space, and the space, “an olde-worlde sort of venue,” would inform the occupants of the pub in turn (Greig 18). The Kelso

pub, and also the real pub the play is performed in, is the space of artists who both “describe and aspire to do more than describe.” This analysis of the play has a layered re-telling of Pru’s journey. The first layer is chronicled by the chorus of narrators and the second through my scholarly illustration of performance of Pru’s adventures in the imagined Kelso pub. Pru’s entrance allows for the pub-as-theatre-space to be transformed to the Kelso pub through the art of description. The narrators detail the ambiance, the height of the snow, and the other people sitting in the pub (who do not really exist). By drawing the space specifically, the narrators allow the audience to become inhabitants of not only the performance space, but also of the Kelso pub. The pub-as-a-representational-space is first lived and then goes on to be experienced.

The experience of the space relies upon the audience. They must allow themselves to be “removed” from the physical space of the Glasgow pub, Edinburgh pub, or Chicago black box and transported into the representational Kelso pub. Lefebvre links this involvement with the space with the imagination: “[t]his is the dominated — and hence passively experienced — space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate” (39). The transportation is nothing that shakes the audience out of their passive enjoyment of the show, but instead it too is a passive experience and one that relies on the audience’s willingness to envision a change in locale. The physical pub merges with the representational pub through the pub inhabitants’ willingness to suspend disbelief and go along with the show.

The movement of the actors in conjunction with Greig’s text is quite simple, but the shift in pub space eventually “overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects” (Lefebvre 39). The best example of symbolic usage comes early in the play, when Pru is driving to the pub. As Pru drives to her space at the bar, Paul McCole (who also plays Colin) carries her on his shoulders to imitate the movement of the car throughout the space of the pub (see figure 4). Once

Pru is situated on the bar, and the bar is transformed into her car through the chorus members' actions. McCole takes a broken rearview mirror and holds it up to Pru's left, allowing Prudencia (played by Melody Grove) to check her mirrors as she drives. Alister Macrae uses the bow of his fiddle to simulate the movement of a windshield wiper across the front of Pru's face. Annie Grace throws torn napkins at Pru and her imaginary windshield to symbolize snow. This snow



Figure 4: *Prudencia Hart 3* by Johan Persson, Top: Melody Grove, Bottom: Paul McCole

was made by audience members before the show began, and will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter, but the act of transforming a napkin into snow helps to connect the audience to the new imaginative space.

Small sound effects are also added, so the audience hears the swishing of the wiper blade and the sound of Pru's turn signals as she changes lanes (which are physically shown as flashlights held by Macrae and David McKay).

As Lefebvre would say, "Thus representational spaces may be said, though again with certain exceptions, to

tend towards more or less coherent systems of non-verbal symbols and signs" (39). The bar space as it is

used in *Prudencia* is not the same kind of space as a traditional theatre but instead relies on hints and intimations of new spaces and places. A torn napkin can become a blizzard in a representational space, or an actor can easily fluctuate between multiple characters because only the symbols of each character matter, not the person who plays them. The representational space of Lefebvre is the ideal space for *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart* for it allows the audience to be transfixed and transported while still passively viewing a theatrical production.

There are moments when the audience members help to create the scenes or are integral to the continuation of the representational illusion, such as ripping up napkins to create snow, lending their tables for platforms on which the actors deliver speeches (whilst holding tightly to their drinks), or acting as “props” for the actors to use throughout the piece. It is within the moment and space that the actors and audience create what Anne Ubersfeld defines as the theatrical locus, or the site in which “theatre literally *takes place*” and within that locus “confronts actors and spectators in a relationship that is closely related to the shape of the hall and the kind of society” (Anne Ubersfeld qtd. Knowles 63). The audience plays a particular role in *Prudencia* since they are not simply voyeurs, but active participants in the telling of the story.

The show sets up the integral audience role from before the show technically begins through specific choices when the audience enters the space. The seating arrangements would vary from venue to venue, but the objectives behind the seating would be the same: to create an egalitarian seating arrangement, to foster a sense of audience as group, and to emphasize equality between actor and spectator. The seating is general admission and all on the same level.⁷⁰ Susan Bennett discusses the social display typical at the theatre and how seating often emphasizes differences in socioeconomic standing: “Proximity to, and visibility of, the stage is usually proportionate to the price paid for the seat. The cheapest seats are farthest away, often with restricted view, and distance their occupants not only from the stage but from the rest of the paying audience” (132). The seats for *Prudencia* do not divide audience members by ticket price but instead are on a first-come, first-seated basis. However, this does not mean that someone rushing to the pub to see the show after a long day of work is doomed to terrible sight lines; instead the show is blocked to take place around the entirety of the space, thus allowing for all audience members to have good seats at some points of the play, and seats with restricted view at

other moments. No one seat is the best in the house, but instead the seating evens the playing field, allowing the audience members to all be treated as equally important to the show, and more importantly, to feel as if they are equally important to the show. The seating is at tables, in a pseudo-cabaret style, but the seats are not necessarily facing the “stage” but are set up as you would find in any pub, with the seats facing the other seats. Audience members are therefore looking directly at other audience members instead of at a neutral theatre space before the show begins. When I saw the show in Chicago at the Chicago Shakespeare Theatre (in their black box space), my husband and I sat at a table of four, joining another couple. A session was taking place at what seemed to be the front of the room, and since we were sitting at a table directly facing others, there was an obligation, or at least an urge, to be polite and engage in conversation with our table mates instead of reading the program.

Lastly, the audience members are made to feel equal with the actors by communing with them before the show starts. In *Theatre Audiences* Susan Bennett explains the purpose behind actors interacting with audience members before a show, be it in or out of character. She describes an experience at a specific show, but I believe her conclusions hold true when looking at the production of *Prudencia*. As the session occurs in the small stage area, the musicians/actors take turns coming to each table and speaking to each individual watching and listening to the session music. The actors in the play were the same people who are musicians at the beginning of the show, but during the session these roles are not clear (except to those who intensely studied the publicity photos). For the purposes of my examination, I am going to use musician and actor interchangeably, emphasizing musician at the beginning of the show since that is the “role” the actor is playing at the time, and persona the audience would have seen and interacted with during the session. Do note, however, that the actors continue to play instruments

and sing throughout the production, so the persona of musician is never dropped, but other characters instead are superimposed. The musicians' objective in speaking to the audience members (as far as the audience member is concerned) is to ask for assistance in making snow out of the paper napkins on the table. The conversation is similar at each table, and is often repeated, but it breaks the barrier between performer and spectator:

[...] they prevented audiences in formal auditorium arrangements from establishing their personal and private spaces in individual seats. It also allowed the Company [of actors] to 'read' the make-up of their audiences in different locations. The effect was to establish a collective atmosphere and to break the stage-auditorium barrier before it was actively in place. (Bennett 135)

The musicians not only get the audience members to rip up napkins, but also begin to develop the rapport that is so important for the way the show functions. For example, an audience is way more likely to allow an actor to simulate a lap dance on his/her lap if that audience member has previously had a conversation with that actor, no matter how short. The actors also are able to sense which audience members are more likely to play along with the more intense interaction (i.e., the lap dance) versus those who would rather watch and interact only by moving his/her drink so Colin can stand on the table. By catering the performance to the audience, the actors are forced to engage freshly with the text at every performance, instead of delivering a joke in the same way to every audience and hoping it lands at least the majority of the time. It is through the forced engagement that a temporary community is created between the actors and the spectators, for the two groups must rely on one another in order for the play to reach its conclusion. If either side breaks the bond of trust formed during the opening session, then the show cannot be

successful, for the illusion of transportation from the literal pub to the pub in Kelso will be shattered.

In addition, there is the importance of the pub space itself within each local community. If an audience member were to attend *Prudencia* at his/her local pub then s/he would have personal connections to the play's location. That pub may represent respite, joy, or solace, and then the play is layered on top of that already existing spatial relationship through the decoding of that space. In *Reading the Material Theatre*, Ric Knowles introduces Stuart Hall's concepts of "encoding" and "decoding" of cultural signs, but he applies them specifically to theatrical performances. The encoding process is one of production and preparation—rehearsals, theatrical technologies, professional/institutional structures, etc. (Knowles 18-19). In terms of *Prudencia* the encoding phase would include the fact that the show is produced by the National Theatre of Scotland and thus carries with it a national objective. Other encoding processes would be the way it is directed, the devising process used for movement, the knowledge that the space in which the show was rehearsed differs from the performance spaces, and the impact of costumes and music, among numerous other things. The decoding process then takes place on the part of the audience, and includes the actual performance, marketing, location of performance, physical spaces, and local or cultural context. The location of performance becomes especially important to decode *Prudencia*, for audience members will decode an actual pub differently than a black box theatre made to look like a pub. The two carry with them different cultural markers and will impact the way the show is received. Knowles theorizes that the performance and reception processes must work together in order to be "successful," which I will define simply as a performance that is performed and then received.

Everything NTS does is rooted in the community, from the stories that are told to the people who perform and the people who watch. To make this more specific, the Victorian Bar associated with the Tron Theatre is a bar that most patrons of the Tron would be familiar with, but most likely only in association with a theatrical performance. This bar is one that is also used for smaller performances, such as poetry readings, new play readings, and music sessions, so the performance of *Prudencia* would not be too far out of the comfort zone of many of the attendees of the initial performances (9-10 February 2011). However, the very next location during the initial tour was to Owen's Bar in Coatsbridge, a small town about ten miles outside of Glasgow (11 February 2011). Owen's Bar is exactly what it sounds like: a small, locally owned pub that has no history of performances taking place on the premises. *Prudencia* only played one night at Owen's Bar, changing the role of the bar for one evening from a gathering space, a community space, a local establishment to instead being all of those things plus a performance venue. Thus the space became more complicated; as Susan Bennett describes, "the milieu which surrounds a theatre is always ideologically coded" and "shapes a spectator's experience" (Bennett 126). Therefore, changing the pub space into a theatrical space changes the meaning of the space. If we think of Owen's Bar as the theatre, then its codes change from the original codes as a bar. This experience is then of course complicated when the play takes place in an artificial pub in a theatrical space. The main space is one of a theatre, but layered on top of that theatrical space is one of a pub, and on top of that pub space is the specific pub space of the Kelso pub. The space is being re-inscribed, for the play rewrites what the space is and how it should function. A theatre is re-written into a pub, and a pub is re-written into a theatre.

There is an issue with touring theatre that the performance loses a connection to place. This loss can be attributed to a variety of issues, such as the fatigue from repeatedly setting up

and striking the set, the pressures of the unknown space, or tired actors. However, the biggest problem is a loss of cultural specificity—actors and audiences can become disconnected from the original intention of the show and as a result lean toward generalizing and creating a universally relatable production (Knowles 89). “Theatre, as the most social and place-specific of the arts, bring with it the need for practitioners to take responsibility for the work they present, and for its material consequences in its actual social and cultural context—the here and now that makes theatre and performance different from most other forms of cultural production” (Knowles 89). This engagement with space is built into the production of *Prudencia*, allowing for an engagement with space that is reliant simply on the imagined reality of the pub in Kelso, not on the physical space given for each production.

Ballads and Football Chants

The ballad format utilized by Greig is Scottish in nature, mimicking the literary ballads made famous during the nineteenth century by Sir Walter Scott and Robert Burns. The play is divided into two acts, “Part the First” and “Part the Second,” mimicking the division style of longer ballads. And it is only certain scenes of “Part the Second” that break the rhyme scheme and utilize prose. I will explore these moments of prose in more detail later in this chapter. Upon seeing the show, one would not necessarily realize the specific way in which the text is written. There are no designated roles or lines assigned to each actor (at least until the final scene), but instead the play appears as narration, with a small dash indicating only those lines spoken by Prudencia. The text could easily be performed by a single balladeer, who would only need to adjust his/her voice to indicate Prudencia’s speech. However, when the play is performed, the lines are divided throughout the ensemble, changing the narrative voice and creating a story recounted by collective memory instead of by the single balladeer. Everything that needs to be

known is spoken, which seems obvious, but at times this includes telling the audience the punctuation which is used or indicating how a certain fact is known by quoting from a text, including citations, page numbers and editions. These moments take the audience out of the “text” of the ballad and remind them of Prudencia’s role as an academic, one who not only obsesses about these ancient ballads, but who also analyzes and critiques them.

The play, on one level, tells the story of a young academic named Prudencia Hart, who studies folk ballads, specifically the topography of hell as depicted in nineteenth-century Border ballads. Though Greig utilizes the nineteenth-century ballad form, which is also the form he chooses to have Prudencia study, the ballads of Scotland have been a valued part of popular culture since at least medieval times, and may even have some roots with the Picts. Scottish ballads gained popularity as cultural heritage during the Victorian Era, as part of Queen Victoria’s fascination and romanticization of Scotland and clan life (Lang v, Everett 152). As the ballads of the past gained popularity, more and more ballads were sought out, collected, written down, and then published in various collections. In 1895 *Border Ballads* preface, Andrew Lang described the typical collection process: “No questions of date and origin were raised, and, when oral version began to be written down, altered, edited, and published [...] the ballads were generally attributed to ‘the old minstrels’” (v). Lang emphasized the lack of known information about collected ballads, and implied later in the preface that the composer and the location of composition did not matter, but instead the survival of the words and associated tune was what was important. This recording process was met with a great deal of hesitation on the part of ballad singers and people interested in the longevity of the oral tradition. There was a widespread fear that the songs would cease to be sung once written down, and eventually that fear came to fruition; as songs were written down they ceased to be sung (Lang ix). However, the songs were

not dying out because they were being recorded, but instead had been dying out before the recording process had begun. The “Anglification of Scots” was causing a loss of oral folklore, and that loss was part of the reason collectors like the poet Sir Walter Scott sought to record the traditional songs (Elliot xii). Scott, a native of Edinburgh, was particularly interested in Lowland ballad traditions. He collected and published one of the first texts on ballads entitled *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* in 1802. Prudencia’s dissertation discusses this text, and we can see Prudencia not only as a collector of ballads, but as a person who wishes to revitalize the lost oral tradition. She appears to live in the past: she knows little of the contemporary world and prides herself on her exclusivity, and she is costumed in tweeds and a conservative blouse, placing her squarely in the world of the academic, a world which is imaginary and can easily ignore current events and sports scores in favor of immersion in the past.

The play opens with the performance of the ballad “The Twa Corbies,”⁷¹ or the two crows (sometimes called the two ravens). The ballad is written in Border Scots, a variation of Lowland Scots, and tells the story of the narrator coming upon two crows looking for dinner:

As I was walking all alane,
 I heard twa corbies makin a mane.
 The tane unto the ither say,
 ‘Whar sall we gang and dine the-day?
 ‘In ahint yon auld fail dyke,
 I wot there lies a new slain knight;
 And nane do ken that he lies there,
 But his hawk, his hound an his lady fair.’⁷² (Greig 3)

The crows spy a dead knight on the ground and spend the ballad discussing their chances of actually being able to eat the knight. The knight has three companions, his hawk, his hound, and his lady fair, but as the ballad continues the listener finds out that all of these companions have left the dead knight. The hound has gone hunting, the hawk has returned to the wild, and the lady has already found another man. The crows then determine to pick the knight clean, use his golden hair as added comfort in their nests, and leave his bones to be blown by the wind:

‘Ye’ll sit on his white hause-bane,
 And I’ll pike oot his bonny blue een.
 Wi ae lock o his gowden hair
 We’ll theek oor nest wham it grows bare.’
 ‘Mony a one for him make mane,
 But nane sall ken what he is gane;
 Oer his white banes, wham they are bare,
 The wind sall blaw for evermair.’⁷³ (Greig 3)

The ballad is not at all in the tone of the play that follows, which is an academic fairytale, so in some ways the ballad seems out of place, speaking of death and a body forgotten. Yet, I think the ballad brings to the forefront themes of the play that can easily be lost due to the romping nature of the show. Themes of a forgotten and decaying past, that same past which Prudencia is desperate to save, even though all of her fellow scholars have abandoned that past for fresher fields of study.

“The Twa Corbies” also sets the tone of the Border, because it is a stolen ballad from the English which was translated and rebranded as a Scottish ballad. The original English ballad, “The Three Ravens,” tells the story of three ravens looking to eat dinner, and when they spy the

dead knight, along with hawk, hound, and lady fair, they are prevented from dining. The hawk is flying overhead to keep the sun off the knight, the hound is standing guard to keep away predators, and the lady is weeping for her love. The lady eventually carries her knight on her back to the river, buries him, and dies of heartbreak by his side. The ravens in the English ballad merely serve as a framework for a true romance. The version I am using here was “communicated by Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, ‘from tradition, as written down by a lady’” (Lang xvii). The reasons for the changes are not agreed upon in scholarship. Many English scholars point toward the positive attributes of the English knight’s companions as a way of viewing the English as superior to the Scots. Andrew Lang stated: “The lady is faithful in England — ‘God send every gentlemen/ Such hawks, such hounds, and such a leman,’⁷⁴ whereas hawks, hound and lemans are all faithless in Scotland” (xvii). Lang continued by concluding the English version focuses on the “spirit of loyal faith” of the woman, while the Scottish version has a “bitter mood of tragedy” as the woman, and all the knight’s animals, leave him to rot (Lang xvii).

Though it is easy to view the hawk, hound, and lady as faithless in the Scots ballad, I have a hard time believing the Scots would go to all the trouble of mimicking a ballad if English praise were the only result. Instead, I believe the changes represent two very different mindsets between English culture and Scottish culture. The English version highlights a sense of romanticism and idyllic love, where women and comrades give up their lives for the knight-errant, even if the knight will not benefit from such a sacrifice. The knight ranks highest in the English chivalric society, and everyone else must serve his needs, even after death. “The Twa Corbies” tells a different tale, one of practicality and survival. Here, after the knight dies, all of his comrades move on with their own lives instead of wasting their lives for a dead knight. The

hawk, hound, and lady are all practical beings that do what they need to in order to take care of themselves and waste no time on romantic ideals and silly moments of sentimentality. Instead they all know what it takes to survive at the Border. It is the Scottish practicality that separates the “Twa Corbies” from the English romantic “Three Ravens,” for even though it is easy for the English to idealize the life of a knight, the Scots must always be pragmatic and focus on the prudence of survival. This interoperation of pragmatism links easily to Prudencia, who is pragmatic throughout the play, even to the point of carrying a headlamp in her handbag. Though Prudencia romanticizes the ballads of the past, she does not live within a romantic daydream but instead occupies a practical and no-nonsense space.

Though “The Twa Corbies” is not overtly political, it is still a song that is important to the nationalist identity of the Scots, especially when at the Border. The mere act of appropriating the well-known English song was subversive in and of itself, for now what formerly belonged solely to England was part of another culture. This act is similar to the stealing as depicted in the riding ballads. Francis Collison describes the phenomenon of intermixing English and Scottish styles when discussing riding ballads: “for though they possess the basic characteristics of Scottish melody they seem also to have acquired something of their style from the southern side of the Border as well—as if the raiders has [sic] lifted tunes as well as cattle!” (140). Though “The Twa Corbies” does not directly address raids on the English countryside, the act of stealing the song structure amounts to the same thing. The song was of course changed to become more Scottish and the tone became more bitter as a result. The song is also “translated” into Scots, the native dialect.

The seemingly simple ballad about two ravens opens the play *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart*. The ballad speaks of woes and sadness and in a way helps to create the setting

of the scene because it prepares the audience for high stakes, even though the surface of the play is somewhat silly. The play deals with life and death, or at least an eternity in hell versus a life lived and experienced on earth. Once Prudencia is kidnapped she must decide if she is going to give up and stay in hell and tend to the Devil's library or if she is going to endeavor to escape and attempt life on earth. Relating her predicament back to "The Twa Corbies," is Pru going to be like the comrades in the English version, who waste away next to their dead master, or is she going to be like the comrades in the Scottish version, who see that they must get on with their own lives and move beyond the dust they leave behind, no matter how much it may pain them? These connections may not be apparent as the play begins, but by starting the production with such a serious and heavy ballad, the stakes for Prudencia's journey are set to match.

Prudencia travels to Kelso, in order to participate in a plenary panel at an academic conference "on the linguistics and transmission of oral narratives/ And balladry open brackets (border ballads, neither border nor ballad question mark, close brackets)"⁷⁵ to defend the name of Sir Walter Scott and the influence of Border Ballads (Greig 6-7). Scott begins his famed *Minstrelsy* by presenting a clear and reasoned argument for the importance of Border ballads: "From the remote period, when the Roman province was contracted by the ramparts of Severus, until the union of the kingdoms, the borders of Scotland formed the stage, upon which were present the most memorable conflicts of two gallant nations" (Scott i). Scott draws his readers' attention to the fact that it is at the Border where decisions about the future of Scotland have always been made—from the building of Hadrian's Wall to the Battle of Bannockburn,⁷⁶ and it is again at the Border where Prudencia will debate the future of these ballads. However, the Border in Prudencia's world is not the same as the Border for Sir Walter Scott, for many things have changed and the antagonism between Scotland and England is still in existence, but not as

bloody as Scott may have witnessed. Therefore, the subversions against the English must take different forms, but they can still utilize the form of the ballad. Instead of altering the words to an English ballad to make it more woe-begotten, the National Theatre of Scotland produced a play where a young scholar must battle the Devil in order to earn her freedom.

Presenting along with Prudencia is a fellow scholar, Colin Syme, who records and analyzes football chants. The two are clear nemeses from the start, with Prudencia's love of the romanticized past clashing with Colin's obsession with modernity and technology. With the introduction of Colin, the poetic conceit is also introduced, and the audience can see the striking differences between Pru and Colin. Within the conceit Prudencia represents an obsession and romantic idealization of the past. She disregards all things that are modern as vulgar and dresses as a gung-ho professor, complete with tweed jacket, conservative skirt, high-necked tie-front blouse, and practical pumps. The only vaguely modern thing about her costume are red tights, which are nontraditional in terms of her professional attire. Instead of a coat Prudencia dons a long, dark green hooded cape along with red leather gloves. Her hair is worn up and perfectly coiffed, and her only make-up is a simple red lipstick. She looks as if she could just as easily be stepping out of a carriage as out of her car when arriving at the conference. Colin, on the other hand, arrives on his motorcycle, which he has recklessly driven through the snow. He is first seen by the audience with his helmet under his arm, wearing an unzipped leather (or at least vinyl) jacket, under which can be seen an untucked (and wrinkled) Hawaiian print shirt over black jeans. Colin looks nothing like a scholar and is known for his love of all things modern, such as mobile phone apps. He makes it clear that he believes Prudencia's field of study is a waste of time and that his study and hers cannot work together, "By collecting Scots poems, laments and sagas/ To create 'Scottish' identity 'every bit as artificial as Lady Gaga's'" (Greig

12). Thus we see the two time periods come head to head, the romanticized nineteenth century as embodied by Prudencia, and the ever changing present day as embodied by Colin.

The two both present their points at the plenary talk, discussing the importance of folk and folk studies, and after, a rousing debate between the two and a few other scholars. In Pru's eyes the poets she studies are historiographers, and their words are a time machine to the past. By studying the topography of hell she "can look at the collective psyche" of the nineteenth-century Border population—their fears, their hopes, their fantasies (13). Pru sees value in these explorations and discoveries, and the beauty of the verse. In *The New Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border 1805-2005*, Walter Elliot, who met with David Greig and Wils Wilson when they were in Kelso researching for the play, describes the role of the poet:

poets give a contemporary eyewitness account of what is happening but also tell of their own feelings/thoughts and how these changes impacted their own lives.

Poets commemorate and comment on the current scene of their time. It is a bonus that we are allowed to see their times through their eyes. (xiv)

It is the feelings and the thoughts of the poets that draw Prudencia in, and the lack (or what she perceives as a lack) of these feelings in football chants and modern songs that pushes her away. Pru and Colin find themselves snowed in, so they naturally seek shelter in a pub (while Colin downloads a new bed and breakfast app which will alert him if there are any vacancies in town).

Despite advertising a traditional session, the pub decides to host an impromptu karaoke night where everyone present is expected to sing. Prudencia wants to leave instead of sing, but she is informed that it is unsafe for her to leave the pub because it is midwinter's eve, also known as the Devil's Cèilidh. In performance the ensemble speak these lines as written to the audience,

citations and all. They remind the audience of Prudencia's knowledge of history, and also keep the audience in the loop about key details of the plot:

Footnote to the 3rd Edition

The Devil's Ceilidh is a dance or party hosted by Satan and reputed to be held exactly midnight on the winter solstice (Cunningham, 1976, p. 42), when a gap or gate opens up in time. The Devil roams abroad and human souls can be taken down to Hell before their time. The Devil hosts his ceilidh with the intention of luring souls, usually maidens, into his trap. (Greig 35)

Prudencia, feeling pressured to sing, and tired of having her interests in folk studies used against her, seeks refuge in the ladies' room, where she finds a card for a local B&B on the wall.

Prudencia abandons the others at the pub and wanders through the snow to find the B&B. As Pru begins to find herself lost she hears a woman, surrounded by children, singing the ballad

"Blackwaterside," which is a well-known ballad of unclear origin, but it is either Irish or English.

The ballad tells of lovers who shared a night together, but when morning comes the girl is sent home to her father, and the lad declares he'll marry her when fish fly and seas run dry. The comfort and familiarity of the ballad causes Pru to approach the woman and ask for directions.

Instead of directions the woman gives Prudencia a warning to not go to the B&B. Soon after, a man, calling himself Nick, finds Prudencia and, claiming to be from the B&B, walks her in from the cold and snow. The two discuss folk studies and Nick suggests that she take a look at his library. The library is huge, filled with any and every book imaginable, and Prudencia soon discovers she can never leave the library again. Nick tells her, "We don't have such different roles/ It's just—/You're a collector of songs, and I'm a collector of souls" (Greig 52). As Nick

leaves the library Prudencia realizes he is the Devil, and that she has been abducted as part of the Devil's Cèilidh.

Coming Undone

The stage directions describe Prudencia's change in attitude at her captivity from fascination with the Devil's library, to depression, and to obsession. They also indicate the large amount of time that Prudencia stays in the Devil's library. Of course, to the audience Prudencia is only in hell for a matter of minutes, but she is actually there for millennia upon millennia. With each scene Prudencia continues to fall, and the relationship between her and the Devil shifts slightly, at first "*She falls. She falls through years... Years and years pass. She falls from rejection of her surroundings to curiosity about them. She is caught*" when she discovers some of the wonders the library holds, such as a record of Robert Burns singing "My Love is Like a Red Red Rose," and she begins to catalogue the treasures she finds (Greig 55). "*She falls from wild curiosity into a routine of work. She is caught,*" and takes a thousand years to catalogue a third of the library (56). The actions continue as such, and each time she is caught at the end of the fall, caught by her growing relationship with the Devil and trapped by it until she is finally able to release herself from his grasp: "*she falls from awkward formality to being totally completely unselfconsciously at home; she falls away from work into boredom; she falls from stillness to stillness*" (Greig 58, 59). The shifts in time is a moment where the description in the text supersedes the actual performance of the change in time. The text indicates huge changes in Prudencia's mood and her response to the world around her, while all of the time emphasizing her fall. However, within the actual performance the time transitions become comedic as Annie Grace presents a calendar to the audience, emphasizing the change in year. The changes begin slowly, from 2010 to 2011, and then jump centuries and eventually end with an infinity symbol.

Each jump in time elevates the humor and takes away from Prudencia's fall. The only hint the audience has toward her impending undoing is the change in Pru's clothing, as she removes her shoes, jacket, skirt, and lets her hair down from its tight buns.

It is during these scenes in hell that the play shifts from verse to prose. The conversations between Pru and the Devil are short, and at times awkward, but far from the rhythmic couplets in "Part the First." Prudencia notices the change in language, around the same time she notices her own PhD is missing from the library. She is only reminded of her book when looking through *Border Ballads Neither Border nor Ballads: Discuss!* (which is also dedicated "to the Memory of Our Dear Friend and Colleague Prudencia Hart") and finds that Colin Syme has quoted extensively from her text in his paper "The Pastoral Tradition as Expressed in Modern Terrace Culture or 'Sheep Shagging Bastards'" (64). She reads a quote aloud to the Devil: "It's interesting that folk representations of Hell are often accompanied by the idea of the Devil forming a powerful erotic attachment for his human captive. In this sense we might say that the topography of Hell is also the topography of unrequited love" (65). The Devil does not agree with her conclusion; after all, he has "lived" in hell for eternity and claims their situation is not a ballad, so her conclusion does not apply. At which, Prudencia states: "Not yet," and Pru presses towards the moment of her undoing.

—What would happen if we talked in rhyme?

She moves towards him.

Well, I must be going—is that the...hour.

—Don't go, my dear, my darling—flower

Of my heart.

She moves towards him.

Now look Prudencia, don't you sta—begin. (Greig 65)

Prudencia forces her speech into simple sentences with which it would be a easy to rhyme, to which the Devil responds with a concerted effort to deny the couplet. The couplets are obvious, and anticipated on the part of the audience. The phrases “is that the time” and “don't you start” are expected by the audience, and when those sing-song rhymes are denied, the anticipation for the meter and rhyme to return is increased. It is important to note that not all audience members will have noticed the dropping of verse into prose because the change in form comes after the interval. Thus the audience had 15 to 20 minutes to re-accustom their ears to prose speech while grabbing another drink or taking advantage of the free whiskey samples, so this moment also helps to remind the audience of the lyrical nature of the show. Pru reveals why the Devil is so desperately avoiding the rhyme, “Because—as every author knows—/ If you surrender your thought to metre/ You surrender yourself to the poem's beat, or/ Rhyme or formula or words or sound./ The author is lost and creation is found./ The poem finds itself—its own *autonomia*” (66). The Devil fears the loss of control, and as a result his power to keep Prudencia in hell. She begins to catch him in the rhyme; every few lines he caves to the couplet and she comes closer and closer to requiting her love. “*She moves to him. They fall through the years. Through years and years. They fall into one. They are undone. She is caught*” (Greig 67).

The moment of Prudencia's undoing is but an instant, but holds within it a complexity of meaning. First, her undoing happens simultaneously with the Devil, the two requite their love, spend a night in unfastened passion. The two are then undone in different ways. Pru is freed from her prison in hell, her prison in prose, and has a short window in which she will be able to escape. Her bounds have been broken. The Devil is undone because his plans are ruined, and he must now fight to keep Prudencia in his grasp or lose her forever. The undoing is a relaxing of

bounds, a changing of mentalities, and a breaking of hearts for the two involved, but just as the lover must leave his girl in “Blackwaterside,” so must Prudencia leave her lover after only one night spent together.

Awakening from her undoing, Prudencia escapes from the library and runs back through time, in an attempt to return to the life she once knew. She finds herself caught between the Devil and her freedom, and must have a knight come and save her. Colin Syme steps up and rushes to her side from the pub. Colin is called to Pru’s side through the “Ballad of Co Lin”

One Colin Syme

There’s only one Colin Syme

One Colin Sy—ime

There’s only one colin Sy—ime (Greig 71)

The ballad resembles a basic football chant and is repeated over and over as Colin readies himself to go. The chant energizes him and gives him the courage to seek out Prudencia. Once he arrives at Prudencia’s side he then steps into the world of a ballad, specifically the ballad of “Tam Lin.”⁷⁷

The ballad battle scene is depicted on stage as taking place atop a pub table, with Prudencia in the middle and being pulled “off” the table to either side by the Devil and Colin. She is pulled back and forth in an almost cartoonish manner, highlighting the intense struggle between the two factions, but at all times it is very clear that the actors are recreating the turmoil felt, and there is no attempt at realism. This same disregard for realism is apparent in the traditional Scottish ballad the final battle is based on, “Tam Lin.” The ballad tells the story of Tam Lin, a boy who is stolen by fairies at a young age, and Janet, a landlord’s daughter. Janet defies the wishes of her father, and the warnings of lore, and enters the plain of Carterhaugh, a

field forbidden to women. Whilst there, she plucks an enchanted rose which summons Tam Lin to her side.

“Why pu’s thou [do you pull] the rose, Janet,
 And why breaks though the want [twig]?
 Or why come thou to Carterhaugh
 Withoutten my command?”
 “Carterhaugh, it is my ain [own],
 My daddie gave it me;
 I’ll come and gang [go] by Carterhaugh,
 And ask nae [no] leave at thee.” (verses 6-7, Georges 61)

Tam Lin inquires why she is there, and Janet insists she has the right to be in the forbidden space. The ballad then is interrupted with three small stars between verses seven and eight, and it is within this gap that a romantic tryst occurs, and as verse eight begins, Janet runs home to her father’s house. Upon arriving it is clear that she is pregnant, and the implication in the ballad is that Tam Lin is the father:

Out then spak [spoke] her father dear,
 And he spak meek and mild;
 “And ever alas, sweet Janet,” he says,
 “I think thou gaes wi [are with] child.
 “If that I gae wi [am with] child, father,
 Mysel [myself] maun [must] bear the blam [blame];
 There’s neer a laird [not a lord] about your ha [hall]
 Shall get the bairn’s [child’s] name. (Verses 13-14, Georges 61)

The “amorous encounter” is left up to the imagination of the listener, or reader, but it is very important to the rest of the plot of the ballad. This is the same as Prudencia’s undoing. Though we as the audience do not witness Pru’s romantic tryst, it is the moment where she is able to finally conquer the Devil and escape to freedom. Tam Lin too escapes from his entrapment with the help of Janet, who yearns to have a father for her child, and thus plucks another rose in Carterhaugh to summon Tam Lin once again to her side. She learns that Tam Lin once was human but was abducted in his youth, and that every seven years the fairies must pay tithe to hell, and they usually do so by passing off a human abductee as a fairy. Tam Lin fears he is the next offering. In order to stop the offering process, Janet must pull Tam Lin from his “horse while he rides in the fairy troop on Halloween at midnight (verses 25-26), holding him fast as he passes through a series of repulsive or dangerous shapes (verses 31-22)” (Georges 60). She then must bathe him in well water and cover him with her cloak to fully transform him back to a human. Janet is able to do all of these things successfully and brings Tam Lin back to the world of humans, leaving the queen of the fairies regretting that she did not remove his eyes, and thus his knowledge of her world.

The parallels between “Tam Lin” and the tale of Prudencia are obvious, but at the same time the choices Greig made to re-imagine “Tam Lin” are worth some examination. First, in the original tale a man is captured by the fairies and is found to be worth a sacrifice to the Devil, because he is “sae [so] fair and fu of flesh” (Georges 62). Yet, in Greig’s tale the one who is “sacrificed” to the Devil is a woman. Of course Greig’s play takes into account other Border lore, such as the tradition of the riding ballad, which often featured a maiden being captured by a raider, from both sides of the Border. Here the story of Tam Lin combines with the riding ballad, for Nick appears because it is midwinter’s night, allowing for the Devil to walk about the earth in

search of souls to collect, and he collects (or in the language of the riding ballad, abducts) Prudencia and takes her to hell. In “Tam Lin,” the fairies capture the human and then sacrifice their captive to the Devil, making the Devil a passive entity in the story. Greig’s Devil is one of action, and one of cunning. Prudencia takes the role of the hero, the one who needs to be saved and also the one with the knowledge to save herself, even if she needs outside assistance. Tam Lin is the main character in the ballad and is the character with the most power and knowledge even though Janet is the one who technically saves him. Janet would be powerless without the explicit directions provided by Tam Lin. Janet could be replaced by any person willing to experience Tam Lin’s many transformations and to bathe him in cool water. It is not their love or their connection by sharing a child that allows Janet to save Tam Lin, but instead it is Tam Lin’s knowledge and precise control of the situation that allows him to become human once more. The same can be said of Prudencia. It is not because of some deep-seated love of Colin that she is saved, nor because of Colin’s own strength, but because of Prudencia’s knowledge of the ballad form, the specific story of Tam Lin and her clear instructions to Colin that allow him to act appropriately and in turn pull her from the Devil’s grasp. Prudencia’s love is also for the Devil as compared to her savior.

In terms of both Prudencia and Colin representing the past and present, respectively, the saving scene moves beyond the ballad of “Tam Lin” and also comments on future of balladry, folk studies, and Scottish culture. It is only through the combination of the past and present that Prudencia can be saved. Prudencia knows what she needs to be saved and calls upon a willing participant to come and save her. That willing participant ends up being Colin Syme, who is called to her side through a football-style chant (spoken by the audience). Prudencia must utilize Colin’s modern interests to garner his attention, and once he arrives Colin too must lower his

pride and be willing to learn about the past, about a ballad that will save Prudencia. The significance of what he had dismissed as “tosh” is now directly in front of his face as he reaches out to hold tight to an eel, a fish, a burning fire, and eight other horrendous transformed Prus



Figure 5: *Prudencia* by Drew Farrell, Left to Right: David McKay, Madeline Worral, Andy Clark

(Greig 76-77) (see figure 5). After Prudencia is saved, she recites Colin’s football chant back to him, “‘There’s only one Colin Syme,’ she said, kissed him, then faded” (Greig 78). Here again there is a gap in time, much like the gap in “Tam Lin,” and the gap in time when Prudencia is undone. The audience is not sure what takes place between Colin and Prudencia, but only knows that Pru and Colin have both collapsed into the snow:

Fell back in the snow unconsciously

And Colin for a second stood before—exhausted—so did he

ONE COLIN SYME

THERE’S ONLY ONE COLIN SYME

ONE COLIN SY-IME

THERE’S ONLY ONE COLIN SY-IME. (Greig 78)

When scene seventeen begins immediately after the final singing of the “Ballad of Co Lin” the stage directions indicate “*Prudencia and Colin awaken in the snow. Both are dishevelled*” (Greig 78). The two collapse from their exhaustion from the trials of the Devil, but the chanting of Colin’s sweat-soaked homosocial ballad implies more than his conquering of the Devil. “The

Ballad of Co Lin” does not carry with it overtones of chivalry and respect but instead machismo and conquest. The singing of this ballad as the two pass out acts as a way to imply that the two passing out together in the snow, while scantily clad, may result in another “amorous encounter.” This encounter, or at least the implication of such an encounter, is brought to the forefront of the story when Prudencia and Colin question their own actions. The use of the / below indicates when both Prudencia and Colin speak simultaneously, and throughout the play Prudencia’s lines are indicated with a dash; otherwise lines are not usually indicated. Here the two discuss what may have happened as they awaken naked and in the snow in an ASDA⁷⁸ car-park:

—What happened?/What happened?

I don’t remember./ I don’t remember.

I was tremendously drunk.

—Me too.

—Tremendously —tremendously drunk.

[...]

—Did we...?

Beat.

I don’t know./ I don’t know.

Gosh./ Gosh.

Bish bash bosh./ Bish bash bosh. (Greig 79-81)

This scene not only indicates that a romantic, or at least carnal, tryst took place between Prudencia and Colin, but the change in language indicates a true merger of the past and the present through the “merger” of the two characters. The two begin to speak utilizing the

language of the other. Colin and Pru both exchange phrases that are characteristic of one another, the innocent and cutesy “gosh” of Pru, and the dismissive “bish bash bosh” of Colin.

Contemporary Cèilidh

When Colin and Pru return to the pub, the ambiance reflects the merger of old and new. Karaoke is no longer preferred over a session, but instead the two are working together to form a new type of cultural creation:

Professor Macintosh led the ceilidh
 Playing comic songs on the banjolele
 Siolaigh sang an Irish Gaelic song
 Step-dancing naked but for a green thong
 Which both helped her interpret an ancient verse
 And demonstrated the quality of her Erse. (Greig 81)

The academics remaining in the pub are participating now in a cèilidh, a traditional Gaelic social gathering of music and dancing. The type of gathering that Pru would love to study and analyze in her ballads, but here Professor Macintosh is playing the banjolele, or a banjo uke, a small banjo type instrument with a fretted ukulele neck. The banjo was one of the newest instruments to be played at cèilidhs and sessions. Thus Greig’s decision to modernize the banjo to the banjolele highlights a contemporary reinterpretation of traditional songs and tunes, and yet the traditional verse is maintained as sung by Siolaigh in Irish. The verse continues, “Colin and Pru melted easily into the crowd,” highlighting that both the nerdy Prudencia and cocky Colin can both disappear in a crowd that is celebrating the past and the present simultaneously, neither extreme need feel out of place.

As the play draws to a close, Prudencia is goaded into singing a karaoke song. This time



Figure 6: *Prudencia Hart 12* by Johan Persson, Center: *Melody Grove*, Musicians, Left to Right: Annie Grace, David McKay, Aly Macrae

instead of seeking refuge in the ladies', Prudencia looks out the window and sees the Devil outside, peering in at the festivities. He cannot come in and instead must view from afar. Seeing the man she loved and left, she is led to sing: "And Prudencia—in that moment—knew/ To find your song—you first find who to sing

it to—/And hers was to him—her companion of two millennia” (Greig 82). The song that Prudencia picks is very much in keeping with the opening ballad of “Twa Corbies,” for once again it is a stolen song that is translated and re-branded as a new song. The stage directions indicate the song chosen for Pru to sing is Kylie Minogue’s “I Can’t Get You Out of My Head” (see figure 5). As Pru sings, she sings the “traditional” English words, but on the coasters distributed to the audience the song is translated into Scots: “I canna get ye oot ae ma heid, boy, your love is all I can think aboot. I canna get ye oot ae ma heid, boy you’re mair an I dare tae think aboot.” The translation is not subversive like the translation and adaptation of “Twa Corbies,” but the idea of stealing and adapting popular culture from the mainstream English culture is still strong among the Scots, especially the Scots along the Border. Using a song by Kylie Minogue is especially powerful because Minogue is an artist who has been co-opted as a “British” singer and songwriter, even though she is Australian. There is a connection between her forced identity as British and the often forced identity of the Border Scots as northern English, or only as British.

Pru's choice to sing a love song to the Devil is also clearly representative of not only Pru's relationship with the Devil, but also, at a more national level, Scotland's relationship with England. When the play premiered in 2011, the freedom Scotland desired was one of cultural freedom as is demonstrated in the discussions of music and literature throughout the play. The cultural freedom also brings with it cultural recognition as a free entity, or at least as one separate from the other. When Prudencia escapes the clutches of the Devil, she still loves the Devil, just as the Scots still have affection and devotion to England, the country with which they have shared their lives since 1707. The Devil cannot join in on the cèilidh because he is from a separate culture, one that does not understand the cèilidh and the revelry into which Prudencia and Colin so easily disappear upon their return. The Devil is a constant outsider, so no matter how many Scottish books he reads and how many Border ballads he memorizes, he will never be Scottish and never be able to enter the pub and blend in. The Devil's Englishness separates him forever from the Scottishness of the pub and the revelry inside. Pru sings that she "canna get ye oot ae ma heid" because no matter what, the Devil has made an impact on her life and has shaped who she is at the end of the play—just as England has shaped modern day Scotland, for better or for worse.

The play's allegorical significance increased with the revival from January through March of 2014 as the themes of cultural independence within the play shifted to themes of actual independence. During this short tour, Prudencia was fighting to escape for her complete freedom from the Devil. When Scotland's independence was on the line, the Border again became a place of tenuous activity. True, there were no longer raiding parties stealing supplies, women, and songs, but it was on the Border that the people would most be impacted by independence. The tour only visited four locations in Scotland: two venues in Glasgow, one in Edinburgh, and one

in Perth. All of these locations were Lowland locales, but none along the Border. Instead the show stayed in the areas most densely populated and told the story of the Border. After the failed Referendum, *Prudencia* was revived once again for a national and international tour.

The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart speaks to the goals of the National Theatre of Scotland by celebrating and exploring Scotland's past, as well as challenging views about its present and its future. Prudencia goes head-to-head with many devils: the devil of the kailyard school of Scottish history, the devil of disregarding contemporary Scottish customs as brutish and classless, and the ultimate devil of English cultural superiority in balladry and in life along the Border. In confronting these devils and coming to terms with the authentic and rich culture of the Scotland in which she lives, Prudencia acknowledges and accepts the multifaceted Scottish identities present within her own culture. The NTS, in turn, emphasizes that there is not only one valuable Scottish culture—the high culture of Sir Walter Scott and romantic Border ballads does not outweigh or have more meaning than the low culture of football chants and karaoke, but instead, each thread works together to create the fabric of contemporary Scotland. *Prudencia* and the NTS emphasize that something as ordinary as Irn Bru is just as important as the “Address to the Haggis” for the formation of Scottish identity. In the next chapter, I develop the concept of Scottish identity by considering the importance of Gaelic culture throughout the Hebrides, and on the Scottish mainland in David Harrower's *Calum's Road*.

Chapter Three

“I hate to tell you, Calum MacLeod, but they are leaving anyway”: *Calum’s Road* and the Everyday Hero

“Never ever, not once in all those years, did I ever see my father sitting down. Not once,” Julia MacLeod remarks to open the play, *Calum’s Road*. The stage is set with black boxes of varying shapes and sizes, which are stacked toward the back of the stage, and a man is lying in his wheelbarrow, down center, as if asleep, or perhaps even dead. As Julia speaks the man opens his eyes and smiles at Young Julia, played by a different actress and asks, “What are you doing with yourself, Julia?” and Young Julia, cheekily replies, “I’m busy, Father” while she wanders aimlessly across the stage. “Are you now?” Calum asks, incredulously. “I’m on my way to being busy, Father.” And so the play begins with Julia serving as the chief witness to and the core narrator of Calum’s life (which in turn keeps her quite busy). The remaining ensemble oscillate between playing distinct characters within the narrative and serving as supporting narrators.

The narrators tell of the life of Calum MacLeod and focus on his construction of a 1¾-mile-long and 10-foot-wide road built over a period of approximately ten years. The road was built for the simple purpose of improving travel across his island of Raasay, in the Lower Hebrides, with hope that the improved living conditions would encourage people to remain on the island. The play is Brechtian in style, utilizing obvious stage mechanisms, double-casting (with costume changes in front of the audience), a simple utilitarian stage, the use of a chorus of narrators, and music throughout. The narrative is told out of order and repeats many facts over and over. It is known before the play begins that Calum’s Road will be completed, so play focuses instead on building Calum as a tragic hero rather than focusing on the road he builds. There is an accretion of scenes, narration, and monologues that build to the next construction scene, with some adding directly on top of the first, while others go back and smooth or refinish

the surface of moments previously visited. The audience sees him meet his wife, write letters to the Inverness County Council's Transport Committee, reluctantly send his daughter Julia to school on the Isle of Skye, and interact with his neighbors. Director Gerry Mulgrew describes Calum's story as one of epic proportions and one of ironic failures: "The story is full of ironies, of course, and Calum himself seems somewhat reminiscent of Don Quixote taking on the world, but there is no denying the sheer chutzpah of the man who was crofter, fisherman, knitter, lighthouse keeper, writer and solo road engineer" ("NTS Calum's Road"). Mulgrew's statement encapsulates the essence of Calum's journey—it was one fraught with failure and disappointment but ultimately was the story of a hero. Touching on themes of Scottish national identity, the story of Calum's life also examines government roadblocks, the rapidly declining population, and the waning popularity of Gaelic. In this chapter, I assert that the purpose of the production is not merely to share a story about a famous islander, but instead seeks to re-kindle an interest in Scottish heritage through a connection to material environments and contemporary lore. The character of Alex, a young man who once met Calum as a child, serves as a representation of the audience. His curiosity about Calum guides him throughout Raasay and ignites his passion for re-connecting to his heritage.

The play *Calum's Road* was adapted by playwright David Harrower from the nonfiction book of the same name by Roger Hutchinson.⁷⁹ *Calum's Road* opened in Glasgow at The Bridge in September 2011. The initial tour lasted three months, culminating in a production at the Raasay Community Hall in November 2011. The show was revived and toured to different Scottish cities in 2013 for a shorter six-week tour. For the purposes of this chapter, I am referencing the text used for the second tour.⁸⁰ The scripts are quite similar, but some scenes have been deleted and the scene order was adjusted at certain points as well. I chose to use the

second tour script for this chapter because it is the most up-to-date, and also it records when each actor is speaking as the narrator, allowing for a clear division between actor as character and actor as a means of advancing the story or commenting on the action.⁸¹

Playwright David Harrower utilizes the multiple narrators to create a chorus-type commentary on Calum's actions. The narrators are unreliable, in the sense that not all of them agree on the specific details surrounding Calum's building of his road. In one way the absence of consistent facts allows for the physical road to take priority over the vernacular surrounding the building of the road. The remembrance of the past pushes the focus on Raasay into the present, and helps the audience to contemplate the future of the island. The emphasis is on preserving the road and the work it represents, not simply the facts that figures associated with its construction. The symbiotic relationship depicted between the vernacular and the physical road emphasizes a key element in the formation of contemporary societies from verbal cultures to more nationally conscious cultures. The physical road in turn helps to maintain identity of Raasay: "[i]n order to keep alive the vernacular forms of identities, people try to preserve the material environments of the past, giving newfound importance to the role of heritage" (Claval 87). Thus the stories and lore of the past must be kept alive, but also the physical representations of those events gain more significance as the stories fade into the background, or exist mostly in texts and on the internet instead of within the minds and hearts of the people within the community. This act of preservation of the material object often comes with an associated melancholy, for it represents a simultaneous breaking-up of an older culture through the use of a wide-spread national identity.

Harrower's narrators toy with the inconsistencies of vernacular culture by emphasizing the lack of concrete details surrounding the building of the road. The timeline for construction is never solidified, though it took ten to fifteen years depending on the start date, anywhere from

1963-1967. Though the story is a true one, the lack of “facts” surrounding the building of the road allows it to tip over into the fantastic as one man—a man who is depicted as larger than life—accomplishes the task of a lifetime. The actors serve as a chorus of sorts throughout the play; they share story-telling responsibilities, but their main purpose is to lift up and celebrate Calum. Their narrative style relies on repetition and allows each version of Calum’s tale to build upon the last:

BEN. Our story begins one blustery morning

LEWIS. Our story begins one blue sky cloudless morning

CEIT. One rain-drenched wind-blasted morning

ANGELA. On the island of Raasay (Harrower 2-3)

With each re-telling moment of the story, the audience is transported from the theatre to a realm of lore, where each re-telling is remembered a bit differently, and the truth doesn’t so much matter as the tale itself. Calum’s story exists as an oral tale, just like the folktales of the past, each of which depict men and women who are renowned, exaggerated, and misremembered. We as the audience are hearing a compilation of all these versions and are left to suspend judgment and accept that the truth is inaccessible. Calum’s larger-than-life depiction paints him as a tragic hero as compared to an easy kailyard⁸² description, which would celebrate his success and romanticize his life. Instead Calum is connected to the earth and the sea, and also to his hard work.

The NTS and David Harrower’s focus on the image of Calum’s Road and heritage serves to re-imagine the role of Raasay within Scotland itself. Vicky Featherstone, the initial artistic director of the NTS, emphasized the direction of the NTS was “more about future work rather than about heritage” (qtd. Reinelt 236). Though *Calum’s Road* celebrates a hero of the past, it is

constantly looking forward to how his legacy impacts the lives of people today throughout Scotland. National theatres in Europe often act as a stand-in for the nation-state; the assembled audience represent the nation as a whole and it is that assemblage that often is the most important. Loren Kruger suggests “national assembly, rather than the linguistic or cultural consistency of the repertoire, is the essential point of theatrical nationhood” (39). This builds on the fact that national theatre assumes, as Steve Wilmer attests, that the nation shares a historical, linguistic, and cultural past that holds true beyond contradiction. Instead of ignoring the contradiction of language throughout Scotland, the NTS embraces it in the production of *Calum’s Road*.

Calum’s Road, as it was produced in 2013 by the NTS, seeks to connect the experiences of Raasay (and by extension the Western Isles) within the world of the Scottish mainland. This connection is done primarily through the use of Gaelic throughout the show and the connection of Gaelic to young people like Alex. Gaelic is considered a national language in Scotland and is displayed on signage throughout the Islands and Highlands, but it is only spoken by a little over 1 percent of the population of Scotland, as of the 2011 census (“Gaelic Language”). The last census in 2011 indicated that Gaelic’s decline has started to slow, and though Gaelic is not yet gaining ground, the loss is not as rapid as it once was. The first full staging of *Calum’s Road* coincided with the 2011 census, which later indicated an increased interest in learning Gaelic with younger generations (“Gaelic Language”). Though neither Harrower nor the NTS have addressed the connections with the census, the inclusion of a young man, Alex, with interest in Gaelic language and culture aligns with the beginnings of a Gaelic resurgence.

Calum as Folk Hero

The massive amount of documentation around Calum and his life contributes to the narrative of Calum as folkloric hero. The documentation started through the oral spread of his story; this was followed by newspapers and interviews and finally the artistic representations of his life in the book as well as in song. It is through a documentary that Alex re-discovers his heritage, and an interest in Calum's life story is sparked. Alex shares his experience discovering Calum's fame around the mid-point of the play. Up until this monologue, the audience simply knows Alex is obsessed with seeing Calum's road and with getting answers about living on Raasay from his dad, but there is no explanation why. Alex explains,

I saw him on tv. Calum. Late one night. I'd had a few in the pub. Got home to Finnieston with a kebab and sat down in front of the telly, flicking through the channels and got BBC Alba.⁸³ Ten minutes of drunkenly laughing at *Speaking Our Language*⁸⁴ and then...there he was suddenly. Pushing his wheelbarrow along this remote road. There was a Gaelic voice-over so I didn't know what was being said. And then I remembered we met him that time. Me, my mum and my dad were walking along the road. [...] I went online after it and Googled him and YouTube and Wikipedia and found a book written about the road and then I found the blog and then watched the documentary again on iplayer the next day, sober. All the time with this immense pride that I'd *met* him. *I* met him on *his* road.

(Harrower 24)

Alex was not raised to respect and honor Gaelic culture, the culture specifically associated with the use of the Gaelic language and Celtic heritage, but instead was taught to ignore its existence. He did not inherit his father's overwhelming embarrassment at being from Raasay but instead

was raised to be just like the other kids within the city. His disregard for his heritage is clear when he drunkenly laughs at *Speaking Our Language*, a television show designed to help teach Scots his father's first language. Instead of looking upon that program with familiarity, Alex finds the language to be comical and probably outdated. However, the arrival of Calum onto the TV screen shifts Alex's point of view. As soon as he sees Calum, he remembers a day in his youth when he was on Raasay with his parents, a time when they were still married, and meeting Calum on his own road. The important part of Alex's monologue is not that he met Calum, but that once his interest was piqued he was able to easily find more information on Calum and his life.

Alex's interest in the road indicates a shift in how humans connect to their past. Alex connects to his personal past through a mass-produced form of heritage: "With the increased importance of the archivist as opposed to oral form of memory, all landscapes, past or present, are transformed into potential forms of heritage" (Claval 90). Since there is no longer a living connection to the past in Raasay for Alex, he must connect to the island through archivist means. Thus the past can only be brought to the forefront through geography, geology, archeology, etc. In Alex's case the archivist activities can be expanded to include the simple Google search and watching a documentary on television. Alex may not be uncovering anything new about Calum MacLeod, but his active search for more information connects him to the past, or at the very least stirs the latent memory that he once met Calum, and re-kindles an interest in his own heritage and connection to Raasay. Alex's monologue continues and emphasizes connection to Calum and his story, and by extension the island of Raasay itself: "But I wasn't suddenly wanting to discover my heritage or feeling rootless and disconnected in the urban, godless south but.... I felt...and I do not make a habit of using this word. A connection. Here and

here. Heart and head. Heart saying: these people are part of you. This island's part of you. Head saying: So why have I never been told?" (Harrower 24-5). Alex's hesitancy to claim a connection to Raasay indicates his lack of understanding surrounding why he would be attracted to learning more about his heritage. The desire to quell the disconnect between his heart and his head is what pulls him to make the journey to Raasay when the opportunity arises.

Alex claims a connection that he is unable to define and that I view as a connection between landscape and memory. The memories brought to light by landscapes are both "visual-factual," which we hear Alex describe when he pinpoints Calum on the rural road with his wheelbarrow (O'Keeffe 6). These visual-factual memories can be shared among groups of people, for Iain, a former neighbor of Calum's and childhood friend of Julia, probably remembers a similar image when recalling meeting Calum that summer's day. However, landscape also brings to light "sensual-emotional" memories, which are entirely individual (O'Keeffe 6). The overwhelming connection Alex feels toward Calum is due to his memory of



Figure 7: Calum and Young Julia by Drew Farrell, Left to Right: Angela Hardie and Iain Macrae

his experience meeting the man, as well as the environment in which he met Calum. Alex's parents were still married, he was on holiday to an exciting new place, and he remembers the kind old man paying particular attention to him. The road acts as a symbol for Alex's sensual-

emotional memories, for it reminds him of his interaction with Calum, his one experience with

Gaelic, and his singular trip to the island of his heritage. The road is a visual connection to the past, both for the island and for Alex himself.

Heritage is fully capitalized on as Calum is introduced as a folkloric tragic hero, documenting his lineage and claiming his rights to the land he loves. A narrator presents the genealogy: “Calum son of Donald and Julia. Husband of Alexandrina. Or Lexie as she was known on Raasay. Father to Julia” (Harrower 3) (see figure 7). With this introduction, Calum is entered into the heroic tradition that traces lineage and emphasizes that a person is only as important as his or her ancestry and that each individual strives to better the family tree. This tradition is especially common in Viking lore (e.g., Thorolf, son of Kveldulf or Thorstein, son of Egil in *Egil's Saga* (circa. 1220-1240)). Connecting Calum to his parents, and in turn to his wife and daughter, the story becomes a snippet of an epic, a moment that we share with our hero, but the audience understands that the story continues, and was preceded by greatness. Calum was a sickly and weak child, born on 15 November 1911 to Donald and Julia MacLeod in Glasgow, a city that he hated his entire life. Donald was the grandson of Charles MacLeod, a man who was passionate about bettering Raasay. Donald argued for fair crofting rents and tenant privileges in 1883 (R. Hutchinson 30), and by connecting Donald and Calum within the narrative of the play, David Harrower emphasizes the character of the MacLeods. Though the line is skipped over rather quickly, the lineage emphasizes the importance of Raasay and the push by MacLeod men to gain rights from the lairds and governments who controlled the island.

Calum's lineage also connects him to the people who left Raasay for a better life on the mainland, making him a hero of flawed origin. His parents had left Raasay in search of work and a livelihood. They were only two of many who left the islands, without any real intention to return. The islands were dying as the cities were thriving. However, the family did return to

Raasay, to Donald's father's township of South Arnish, upon a doctor's recommendation to remove young Calum from the "urban fumes" (R. Hutchinson 30). "Julia. The island called him, he used to say. Raasay called me back./ Calum. Aye. It called me back. It brought me back to life. /Julia. It was a simple enough thing to do, he'd say. Come home. A child could do it" (Harrower 8). Calum views the island as the one that saved him, and in turn he attempts to save his island but ultimately fails to do it alone. It is only because Calum's parents returned to Raasay that he was able to grow up to be the hero of the play.

Calum's reputation as a folkloric hero within the play is then further constructed by the stories told about him by characters in the play, and specifically by Alex's re-telling of videos, music, and television specials that celebrate Calum's achievements.⁸⁵ Calum-the-hero comes from a lineage of warriors and poets, and it is through his narrative that he comes to represent the people of Raasay and the working class of Scotland. In much of Scottish literature, and especially in stage depictions of the past, the Scottish hero was synonymous with the Highland warrior or sometimes rural poet. Calum is not what we usually expect out of the warrior heroes of Scotland. His lack of tartan and sword does not forfeit him hero status but instead broadens the definition of the hero in Scottish folklore and contributes to the Scottish national identity. Trish Reid suggests that "typically, the construction of national identities relies on the circulation of narratives—part truth, part legend—that invest nations and nationalist projects with confidence and intent" (Reid 18). The layering of truth and legend to create the larger-than-life image of Calum allows the NTS to project a certain type of Scottish identity. This identity embodies characteristics such as hardworking, devoted to the land, but willing to change and work for the betterment of the country. Calum grapples with the greatest enemy of all, the British Government, when he spars with the Inverness County Council's Transport Committee, and

though he does not defeat the enemy, he finds a way to not let his enemy defeat him either. The road represents Calum's triumph, much as the William Wallace tower represents Wallace's prowess on the battlefield, but instead of being erected in memory of the hero, the road was cut, laid, and loved by the hero himself.

In order to properly place Calum into the lineage of Scottish heroes, one must first examine the major heroes of Scotland. This list is far from exhaustive but instead discusses key figures in two major categories of folkloric influence in Scotland—the warriors and the poets—in order to place Calum into a new category that combines the two in contemporary society. To begin, the most common image associated with Scotland is that of the Highland warrior. These ancient clansmen, such as the thirteenth-century warriors William Wallace and Robert the Bruce, or the eighteenth-century outlaw Rob Roy,⁸⁶ are immortalized in poetry, song, drama,⁸⁷ and stone monuments.⁸⁸ William Wallace is a cultural commodity that represents a certain time and a certain event. Wallace bore with him a certain version of Scottishness, and the same can be said for Robert the Bruce or Rob Roy. These men were warriors who fought for Scotland's independence against the dogmatic English hordes.⁸⁹ We imagine them as bulky men, clad in kilts, brandishing claymores, cutting through four wimpy Englishmen at a time.⁹⁰ The chapter on Wallace and Bruce in popular historian Neil Oliver's⁹¹ *A History of Scotland* is entitled "The Hammers of the Scots," further compounding this image of the early warriors being men possessing a pounding fury. Oliver even highlights the importance of Wallace in terms of national identity: "William Wallace whose resistance to the nation-breaking King of England hammered national consciousness into the Scots" (80). The verbiage of Oliver is key, and perhaps a bit hyperbolic, but emphasizes the threat of the English to break apart the nation of

Scotland (even though the idea of nationhood did not exist in the thirteenth century) and the power of one man (Wallace) to pound national pride into his fellow Scots.⁹²

In *Calum's Road* we see the same singular power of a man be identified and celebrated. It is through the actions of one man that Raasay is remembered, and it is his belief in the island, much like Wallace's belief in Scotland, that sets him apart from others living on Raasay. Harrower frames Calum's heroism by painting the lack of a road as a crime, and Calum as the man who would fight for justice:

Calum. To just *end* a road like this. To just give up knowing there are over a hundred men, women and children living across there. A failure of nerve, it was. A crime. We were not worth the time or expense. An inhumane crime.

ALY. Calum turned and faced home.

Julia. Faced his beloved Arnish.

ANGELA. Then, alone in an empty landscape, he began to build a road.

(Harrower 4)

Calum emphasizes the importance of a road. It is a connection of one group of people to another, and it is also a way to prove worth to the island and the people that inhabit it. His declaration is framed to highlight Calum's heroic status. First he names the injustice, looks at the reason that injustice should be fixed as he turns to face his home, and then alone decides to do something about that injustice, and he immediately goes to work. The audience does not see Calum hesitate or seek help. Instead he is painted as the singular hope for the survival of Raasay.

Throughout the play, however, we learn that Calum is not a hero simply for his physical commitment to shaping the land, but also through his actions in preserving its unique culture and

language. Calum's prolific letter-writing and essays recording Raasay life connect him to the more contemporary heroes of the Romantic and Victorian poets, such as Robert Burns⁹³ or Sir Walter Scott. "Rabbie" Burns shaped contemporary Scottish literature by writing in Scots, the Scottish vernacular. His anti-aristocratic verse and working-class roots allowed his readership to identify with him and with his subject matter. Burns was the "apotheosis of 'the lad o'pairts,'" or the self-made man (Devine 294, Oliver 398). He was not ashamed of his lowly upbringing but instead found beauty and pride in the simplest of elements, much like Calum, and by celebrating those moments in his poetry and songs he also preserved a part of Scottish heritage that was on the verge of becoming extinct. At the centenary of Burns' birth, Lord Rosebery⁹⁴ praised Burns and attributed the preservation of Scots to the poet:

For Burns exalted our race: he hallowed Scotland and the Scottish tongue...The Scottish dialect as he put it, was in danger of perishing. Burns seemed at this juncture to start to his feet and reassert Scotland's claim to nation existence; his Scottish notes range through the world, and he has thus preserved the Scottish language forever—for mankind will never allow to die that idiom in which his songs and poems are enshrined. (qtd. Devine 294)

Not only is Burns given credit for elevating the Scottish people and saving the Scots language, but he is also the first nationalist. It was Burns who claimed an identity that was distinctively Scottish. It is through Burns' narrative and his reputation that this national identity was built, and as a result other Scots were able to identify with him and by extension identify as Scottish. His clear connections to the land, to the common people, to everyday events and cultural signifiers such as harvest and whisky allowed Burns into the hearts of the Scottish people. He was like them. Though Wallace, Bruce, and Roy were all exciting and romantic, they were not identifiable

by the average Scot but were instead associated with the past and were associated with the rugged Highlands where few of the city-dwelling Scots had ever ventured. The heroes needed in Victorian Scotland were not ones brandishing the claymore but wielding the pen, for the English were no longer a physical threat, but were a cultural threat. The language was under attack, the tartan had only recently been re-instated, and the Scots were moving to London—or even further abroad—in order to find work and make a living. The cultural revolution was beginning, and the seeds of national identity were being planted.

Calum MacLeod is the embodiment of both the ideals of the warrior and the poet to young people like Alex. The mythical Calum trades in his long sword for a pic and wheelbarrow, his kilt for a cormorant⁹⁵ sandwich, and he writes strongly worded letters instead of giving speeches to the troops. Though Calum does not literally cross swords with anyone, or compose verses that will be sung for generations, his work on Raasay extends far beyond the changes he does to the landscape and also includes detailed recordings of the land as he knew it. Calum is a modern warrior. Calum's fight is against the Inverness County Council's Transport Committee and against the physical terrain of Raasay itself.

Young Julia. My father wrote letters all his life.

Calum. Dear Sir

Young Julia. Sent to Inverness County Council. Or as he referred to them

Calum. A hotbed of Corrupt Socialist Councillors living the life of Riley
funded funded [sic] exclusively by the hard-working, routinely-
ignored taxpayers

BEN. For months after this letter is sent, a reply from the Council's
Transportation Committee arrives

LEWIS. Dear Mister MacLeod...

BEN. Basically, it said-

LEWIS. We can't afford this road, there isn't the need, other communities across the Western Isles have greater claims, etc etc.

Lexie. Calum opens this letter on the morning of our wedding. He spends part of his wedding night drafting a vociferous, grammatically perfect reply. (Harrower 27)

The key to Calum's heroism is not only that he builds the road the Council refuses but that he takes the time to inform the Council of their duty to his people and their betrayal of their kin. His letters are carefully written, insistent, and without error. The Calum of the play refuses to be dismissed as a dumb bumpkin from the rural Western Isles. Instead he presents himself as an educated and passionate man who will fight for his cause. Beyond letter writing, the real-life Calum was bilingual and composed essays about Raasay in Gaelic, which were later collected and translated into English by his daughter Julia. His command of the Gaelic language was a pragmatic sort of poetry. He wrote to preserve his language, and he wrote to describe the world he lived in. Calum, too, was "the lad o' pairs" or self-made man. The narrative of Calum MacLeod's life is representative of the narrative of Scottish nationalism itself because Scotland lacks a clear biography, and it is through identification with Calum and his plight that Scots are able to construct their own national identity.

Through Calum's story the people of Scotland are able to relate to their own identities, their own histories, and their own connections to the land. Benedict Anderson describes the need to connect a specific person to the history of the nation and why those people chosen are so important to the imagined community of the nation. Anderson claims the nation is, at its core,

estranged from its own history. I would go one step further to claim that the nation only knows select versions of its own history, so in order to build connections with the past, one must construct contemporary identity with clear connections to the past and to known nationalist themes. Since the nation has no clear beginning and no clear end, it is impossible to tell a narrative that encompasses the “life” of that nation.

Personal narratives give a clear framework to the life of the nation, so in terms of a contemporary Scotland, Calum’s life story not only is about him but is now a representative identity of nationhood (Anderson 204). Unlike the nation, Calum’s life began in 1911 and ended in 1988, and his life story must fit between those years. The narration follows the life cycle, so even though the play itself is not linear, since the story is based on a real person, the audience knows the basic trajectory. Calum was born to parents that the audience is introduced to by name. He lived and worked many jobs, many of which we see on stage or hear about him working. We meet his wife and his daughter, and since we see his daughter as an adult, the audience knows that she too grows old and the lineage of Calum continues. There is also an assumption that Calum dies, for he is spoken of at times in the past tense, so even though we see him walk and dance in “real time” while building the road, it is clear that he meets the same end as all humans do. The adherence to the lifecycle makes the story of Calum identifiable to all who are watching. His identity can easily become their identity for he was not born into a wealthy family or given undeserved opportunities, but instead Calum worked for all he achieved and though his achievements were small and localized to his tiny island, they were achievements that mattered to him and to his family. In some ways Calum’s life can be viewed as the life of a saint, for we see him suffer in the face of adversity and respond by speaking up for his community and doing what is “right” even though the work is hard and may go unappreciated in his lifetime. In

the production, the fame that Calum receives after building his road is not what is celebrated. Instead the man himself, and his fame, is questioned by the characters within the play.

Calum as Construction

The literal building of Calum's road thematizes the construction of a nation throughout the play.

On one level the road is literally built, though on stage with acting blocks and a bit of the audience's imagination, but on another level the road represents the slow work done toward building a nation. Calum first digs out the road, then adds gravel, and finally the road is tarmaced. The construction of the road is a process, and each step overlays the next, and even though we cannot see the cutout soil and the markings in the turf done by Calum's shovel, it is through his foundation that the final road is able to be produced. Even before Calum began to dig and hack, the road existed below his work in the form of the old track that had been used "by the people of North Raasay for hundreds of years" (Harrower 3). The mud and dirt track marked the landscape and followed the hills, "up and down it went and, at, even the sheep cursed it" (3). Even though the track needed to be replaced, it held within it the past of Raasay, secrets that had long since been forgotten but within the track are remembered as the play re-constructs the road and examines each secret.

The layering of the road is mirrored in the way the audience is taught about the road's construction through formal layers within the script. These moments are identified as Calum's Road 1, Calum's Road 2, etc. These moments simultaneously introduce the audience to the mythology and specific challenges Calum faced while building the road, and to a different facet of Calum, the hero. These formal layers emphasizes Calum's connection to the land and to his own construction process. His alterations to that land come in small chunks, and little by little he changes the landscape through his building process.

The first formal layer, the scene of Calum's Road 1, introduces the audience to the manual Calum used, *Road Making and Maintenance: A Practical Treatise for Engineers, Surveyors and Others*⁹⁶ (Harrower 8). The manual becomes key to the building of the road, for at times Calum follows the advice religiously and at other times completely rejects the advice in favor of more practical means. In "Calum's Road 1," the audience learns how Calum laid out the plans for the road and see the first time Calum rejects the advice of the manual. The text suggested that the most practical route should immediately be obvious upon viewing, but to take into account the layout of the land. The guide does not take into account the hilly and steep terrain of the islands, for often the entire view of the landscape is obstructed by a hill or crest. Calum weighs this advice and chooses to go with a more pragmatic method. Ceit Kearney, as Julia, and Lewis Howden, as a narrator, describe Calum's methodology,

Julia. To begin his road my father deviated slightly from Aitken's advice. He scared the sheep. And noted how, as the sheep scattered and fled, they unfailingly took the shortest route between two points.

LEWIS. With this ascertained, Calum marked and pegged the full length of the road, day after day, his postbag over his shoulder, using a trowel, two miles of reel, and hundreds of silver fish hooks.
(Harrower 9)

By using the sheep, Calum is able to really adhere to the formation of the land. By trusting his own eyes, Calum may overlook a small hillock or a grade that is invisible to the naked eye but difficult to traverse. The sheep are familiar with the stretch of the path, and since sheep are naturally lazy creatures they take the path of least resistance. Calum is contending with the

geological fabric of the island, and by respecting the natural shape of the land he is able to craft a road that is less of a new addition to an ancient island, and more of a re-shaping of a natural track. He is only one man, but yet he receives assistance from the land itself—and from nature—in order to build this road. He is a hero for his efforts, but we as the audience clearly see that he is not enough to build the nation. Calum is a hero larger than life at this moment, for he is so fully connected to the land that he can anticipate its needs better than a professional builder.

The geographical connectivity between the Hebrides and the mainland Scotland reveals the first layer of shared national identity. The rocks connect the road to a geographical history long since forgotten, a time when Lewis, Skye, Raasay, and the mainland were all connected. The play specifically refers to “Thousands of years of Lewiston and Torridonian rocks” (Harrower 3). These rocks are the literal bedrock connection between Raasay and the other islands and therefore a connection in culture and heritage, even if that heritage is hundreds upon hundreds of years old. In Roger Hutchinson’s account of Calum building the road, he tells of Calum once digging up a “perfectly formed and preserved Neolithic axe-head” (R. Hutchinson 138). Calum later recalled the story in 1984 to writer Ian Grimble and describes how the stone felt very different from the stones he knew, “I have handled millions of pieces of stone in my time and I never never seen anything like this—it is not Raasay stone by any means. I believe it to have been made in the Lake District in Stone Age times, although how it got to Raasay, I don’t know—although they have also been found in Denmark” (138-139). The stones define the land, and it was by touch and feel that Calum knew the axe-head was not native but instead was from outside the region. During this re-telling Calum also emphasized that he had seen a similar stone in a book before, so he took the stone home and compared it to the book, which is how he identified it as the Neolithic axe-head. This act of scholarship only further emphasizes Calum as

a hero who is more than brute strength, but is also an intellectual. The axe also links Raasay to an even deeper shared heritage, one that connects stones to the Lake District and to Denmark. The axe-head is a stone of conquest, a stone that has come in and forced itself upon the landscape. The purpose of the play is not to sow discord but instead to build a bedrock of shared experiences and history between the different Scots who are watching the show. The simple emphasis of geological connectivity allows for the concept of national identity and common experience to be built upon and expanded as the play continues.

The play focuses on the natural secrets that Calum encounters and overcomes: mud, roots and many rocks. He fights these natural elements while he is trying to preserve the landscape. His campaign to build a road creates a tension between the past and the future, as well as between the ease of staying and leaving. Julia describes her father's challenge, "And more mud and hundred year old trees and deep buried roots. It was a fight my father had. A battle. A *campaign*. Buried roots and rocks and rocks. Thousands of years of Lewiston and Torridonian rocks. Nothing to him. Nothing stood in his way. No-one. He would not let them" (Harrower 3). Julia uses language of war to describe her father's actions; he has to *fight* the terrain and to tame it to his will, and Calum is clearly the warrior hero before our eyes. It is an uphill *battle* as he hacks away at old trees and moves rocks from place to place. The land that he loves so much has become his enemy. It is preventing people from staying on the island, so he has to choose sides for this battle and the land lost to the people.

Calum not only battles the landscape, but also battles the infrastructure on the island and the oppressive past that it represents. In the scene "Calum's Road 3," Calum goes about the task of destroying a wall that separated the crofting grazing lands from the private hunting grounds of the last landlord of Raasay, George Rainy. Calum MacLeod and the majority of the farmers on

Raasay are crofters. Crofting, established in the 1800s in response to the Highland Clearances, is a form of land tending and subsistence farming unique to the Highlands and islands of Scotland. The core of crofting is sharing the land, so each croft is founded on the areas of best land, those places that are most suited to agriculture. The large sections of untillable lands, usually hilly areas, are then shared by crofters for communal livestock grazing. To share these areas one must “rent” a section of the grazing land, and usually this rent was paid to the local laird, or in this case the landlord. Sharing resources in this way helped communities to survive and maximized the use of good land for farming. Overall, the soil on the islands is rocky and hilly, so little is good for farming.⁹⁷

The last laird of the island, John MacLeod, emigrated and left the Raasay estate in 1843. Due to extreme levels of debt, the estate was sold to an English merchant, George Rainy (N. MacLeod 95). Rainy spent a good deal of money on the estate, and much of that went directly to the people, but his commitment to the island could not make up for the fact that during his tenure over 330 people were forced to leave Raasay for Skye or the mainland⁹⁸ (N. MacLeod 100). Rainy continued to try to reduce the population and banned the tenants from allowing cottars⁹⁹ on their land and banned marriages without his permission. When marriages occurred without Rainy’s permission, the couple’s property was destroyed, sometimes their livestock taken, and anyone who sheltered the couple could suffer the same (N. MacLeod 100-101). The play explains a bit about Rainy, calling him the infamous Raasay landlord, and describes his wall that was six feet high and ran “across the narrowest stretch of the island and was where Rainy herded the entire population of South Raasay so he could hunt and shoot and graze his animals in peace” (Harrower 49). The taking down of Rainy’s wall is emblematic of Calum’s heroic struggle. This wall symbolizes yet another Englishman making decisions for the people of Scotland. The wall

has to be removed, at least in part, for the road to be completed. Calum is assisted by the Crown when it comes to destroying his island, for the Department of Agriculture supplies him with a compressor, explosives, a driller, and blaster so he can “create aggregate and gravel for the road’s foundations and surfacing” (Harrower 49). The same government that refuses to invest time, money, or manpower to build the road between Arnish and South Arnish is all too willing to supply tools “[t]o blow up those parts of Raasay which Calum required blowing up” (Harrower 49). Calum decides that he will not simply blow up the wall, for in some way that seems too easy to defeat such a large presence in the island’s history, “Instead he dismantled it by hand, stone by stone. To this day no one knows how he celebrated the toppling of Rainy’s wall” (Harrower 49).

The layering of the road is then re-constructed through the format of the play. The scenes are episodic and take place in both the past and the present. Each major scene, such as the actual building of the road, the memory of the blizzard, Iain and Alex’s visit to the croft, and the personal history of the MacLeods, gives the audience only part of the story, and with each re-visit the audience is given just a little bit more information. Some scenes simply continue where they left off but others repeat and expand upon the original information given. All of the different storylines layer onto one another and eventually work toward the conclusion, where each storyline finally comes together to create the full narrative. The set reinforces this layering technique by being made up of many-sized acting blocks that could be shifted and re-arranged much like the turf around the road. The smaller blocks are used as props, thrown into Calum’s wheelbarrow, or are used to create stairs.

The music use throughout the play parallels Calum’s task of single handedly building a road. A single musician, Alasdair Macrae, played all the music live, and was situated on the side

of the stage during the action of the play. For most of the musical numbers, Macrae would utilize live-looping to create a fuller sound and to give the impression of more musicians when it was him alone. To do this, Macrae would live record a short section of song on his guitar or a vocal track and would then play back, or loop, this short recording and would layer another track on top. Both tracks would then play simultaneously, which is referred to as overdubbing, and he would often record another layer on top again. Each layer featured a different instrument, or harmony vocals. By utilizing live looping, Macrae was able to build the music, just as Calum built his road, layer by layer. The work would have been easier with a band, for each person could play their own part and the song would be complete from beginning until the end. By utilizing the live looping, Macrae had to work harder than if he were a singular player with a band. He needed to be proficient on the guitar, with his vocals (and all the given harmonies), and must time his layers just right in order to produce the complex sound. The process of building the song with each performance reflected back clearly to the repetitive labor Calum endured.

The final example of layering emphasizes the importance of the MacLeod and Nicholson families on Raasay through use of double-casting within the play. By having Ceit Kearney play both Julia and Lexie, and Scott Fletcher play Alex and Young Iain, the younger generation becomes more deeply connected to the island simply because the audience can see their connections through their parents. This is especially true for Young Iain and Alex, for even though Alex was raised on the mainland and had nothing to do with real life on Raasay, the audience knows he is connected to the island because of the experiences of his father on the island, as they see the same actor play both father (when he was a boy) and son.

After all of Calum's work to build the road, the council that denied the road in the first place comes back and claims the road as their own. The council pays to tarmac the road, and

later the road is declared a world heritage site and as a result becomes a tourist attraction. Now Raasay is flooded with tourists, but its year-round population remains a total of three. As Iain and Alex approach their croft, they pass the sign for the road. Alex wants to take a picture, to see the road he has learned so much about through the blog he follows and the TV. Iain sees beyond the exciting attraction and looks at the sad truth that the road made no difference for the island.

Iain Calum`s Road... A bloody sign..! The bloody Council have put that up..!

Alex It`s a famous road.

Iain The same Council that refused to build the road.

The road is projected on a screen behind the actors who are sitting on two theatrical blocks—Iain sitting on the left and miming driving while Alex sits in the right hand seat and looks around as they drive. The projection is a picture of the real sign that demarcates Calum`s Road on Raasay. The audience sees the sign and the road that is the focus of the entire narrative, and yet they see it only as an image (see figure



Figure 8: Calum's Road Prod. 3 by Drew Farrell, Left to Right: Lewis Howden and Ben Winger

8). The real road is not there. The real road is what exists in the life of Calum and his family. The real road is a part of Raasay and can never be removed from its landscape. The real road is ephemeral, and yet the road is used as a marketing ploy.

Alex It brings people to Raasay. And they need to know where it starts.

Iain A bloody photo opportunity. Look at them all blocking the way.

Alex What would Calum say?

Iain They`re visitors. Gone in a hour or two. They`re not stayers. That`s
 who he built it for. But no-one did stay. (19)

The road fails to live up to its purpose. Instead of making life easier on the island for the weaklings, it makes it easier for people to leave the island for now they can pack up their cars and drive to the ferry port located in South Arnish. Prior to the road's construction, belongings were abandoned, and the families left by boat for the shores of Skye. Now the all that remains on the island is a photo opportunity at a road that has a quaint story attached to it, but the island is mostly abandoned. The only people the road allows to stay on the island are Calum and Lexie. Upon Calum's death he is driven by hearse to the cemetery in South Raasay in Clachan. Before the road was built, a car could not drive to Calum's home, so his ancestors were all taken by boat around the island to the larger town of South Arnish in order to be buried. Calum is never removed from the island that he loved but can stay part of it forever. Scene 41 "Calum's death" revisits the birthday-to-death-day framework put around the narrative of Calum as hero. The narrators inform the audience of his death and again remind them of his lineage, his prodigy, and his legacy: "ANGELA. Calum MacLeod 1911 to 1988. Calum the Road. Calum son of Donald and Julia. Husband of Lexie. Father to Julia. CEIT. Calum MacLeod — the last man out of Arnish" (59). His death simply serves as the end of his narrative and is not treated as a somber or tragic occasion, but instead as an inevitable conclusion. Calum MacLeod's death signifies the end of a man, but also the end of Raasay culture as he knew it.

Calum as Scotland

Calum represents the history and biography of Scotland, so as the audience watches him change, grow, and modernize, clear connections can be made to the modernizing landscape. Just

as Calum builds his road, so does the play build on itself through the use of repetition and revisiting key scenes throughout the play. The scenery and music also build on themselves, starting out simple and then expanding and becoming more and more layered as the play goes on. The same cannot be said exactly for the identity of Scotland as a nation. There are key dates, but not one in which Scotland was born, for the nation shaped itself over centuries. As a result, the narratives of Scotland's heroes tell the stories of the nation, stories of its birth, its triumphs, its failures, and the times it came close to death (Anderson 204-205). The overall emphasis is not that the nation has one singular story but that instead nationhood is made up of hundreds upon hundreds of stories that build upon one another to construct a "national identity."

The use of projections throughout the show helps to ground Raasay as a physical space and give the actual road focus throughout the performance. Since the majority of the audiences who see *Calum's Road* have not actually been to the physical road, the production team is challenged to ground the story in a reality that very few audience members actually knew. The depiction of Calum as a hero needs to challenge the stereotypical exaggerated, sentimental depictions of rural life often present within Scottish theatre. The kailyard approach of sentimentalizing rural life is an easy way to depict a certain subset of national identity that to city dwellers is a quaint, charming escape from the trials of city life. However, these types of depictions do nothing to celebrate the various cultures that actually exist across Scotland but instead "evidence a destructive false consciousness, a neurotic and infantilised national psyche" (Reid 7). The projections help to shatter this false consciousness by depicting the actual island. The audience is given a picture of the brutality of the island as well as its beauty. These images help to emphasize the amount of work that living in the islands takes. The image of Calum's Road on Raasay is especially important, for it shows the sharp incline and winding curves as the

road disappears over a hill. By grounding the play within the physical world, the projections help to dispel the sentimental and quaint view of island life.

The importance of depicting Scottish life accurately has only increased since devolution in 1997. Before devolution, many Scottish plays toyed with realism by utilizing location-specific dialects, such as the gritty Glaswegian as compared to the softer Lowland dialect common in Edinburgh (D. Hutchinson 225). Working-class and political theatre became popular in the 1970s and pushed the envelope with the tours of *7:84* (Smith, “1950” 277). Productions of *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil* depicted life in the Highlands to Highlanders and city dwellers alike. The depiction was not romantic but instead focused on the injustices done to the rural people. All of these changes in stage portrayals of Scottish life paved the way for the stage depictions of a devolved Scotland. Gaelic plays even found a short renaissance as the Gaelic theatre thrived in the early 1980s (Smith, “1950” 286). Shortly after the referendum leading to devolution passed, David Harrower, along with *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart* playwright David Grieg, wrote an article in *The Scotsman* arguing for cultural transformation of the stage. They opined, “To redefine ourselves we need to understand ourselves, exchange ideas and aspirations, confront enduring myths, expose injustices, and explore our past” (qtd. Reid 82). Harrower and Grieg then went on to create plays that challenged cultural and social norms and that allowed for new stories to be told.

Calum’s Road serves as an ideal example of how theatre can work to achieve such a cultural transformation. The audience is introduced to life in the Western Isles, from rides on the ferries to the use of Gaelic and the eating of cormorant sandwiches. Life is not depicted as romantic and exciting, but hard and tedious. In this way the play “confronts enduring myths” of the rural life and seeks to clarify the role of Raasay in relation to mainland Scotland. The very

story of Calum and his road works to “exchange ideas and aspirations” as the audience learns some Gaelic and sees Calum fight for what many mainlanders take for granted. Given the perspective of an islander who loves his home produces sympathy for Calum’s plight and respect for the work he did. Calum’s individual story exposes injustices in the system of governance. Some injustices are as simple as questioning why the Council of Inverness has jurisdiction over the Western Islands when the inhabitants should be able to create and manage their own budget. Others are more complicated, such as how could the council see all of the work that was done to create this road and then claim it as their own through the naming of a national heritage spot and marketing it for tourism. Finally, the play “explores our past” by giving the history of one man, and in a way giving the history of an entire island. We see the island’s population dwindle, the educational laws force children from their homes, and parents struggle to provide opportunities and education for their children. The struggles presented can both be related to on some level, and are foreign on others, but no issue and no topic is shied away from. Instead, the quaint story of an old man who builds a road is elevated to the story of the Last Man of Arnish, who builds a road to revitalize his community, to honor his daughter, and to care for his wife. The play is simple on the surface—a man wants to build a road—but within the simplicity is layer upon layer of meaning. Each layer explored is representative of how Calum builds his road. First he digs out the turf itself, shaping it into a road, then layers it with gravel, and finally it is paved with tarmac. This layering motif is used throughout the play, to build the road, to build the set, to build the music, and finally to build the meaning.

The play utilizes double-casting by having all actors play multiple roles, save the actor portraying Calum. By doing this, each character is represented by slight costume changes, such as the addition of a green coat to transform Old Julia into Lexie. It is obvious to the audience that

the same actress is portraying both Julia and Lexie, and through this layering we see the play transform into the live folktale. The lineage is clear as daughter plays mother and son plays Father (in the case of Iain's story). The audience also then must pay closer attention to note who is playing whom at each moment, and as a result the play becomes less passive. The audience is also activated through the use of repetition throughout the show, which acts as an educational, or even liturgical, element. Some moments are repeated to set the scene or to act as markers for the non-linear transitions in time, while others operate to slowly teach the audience information, such as a few phrases in Gaelic, so that by the end of the show the audience can repeat the Gaelic along with the actors in a call-and-response moment.

The involvement of the audience during the educational moments shifts the focus from Calum's story and allows the message to resonate on a more community-focused level. One of the simplest layerings in the play is that of Gaelic over English. Much of the production is performed in Gaelic, but with supertitles on a screen or repetition of the conversation in both English and Gaelic. The effect is educational as the performers build upon the knowledge of simple words in English and in effect teach those words in Gaelic to a willing audience. Calum introduces each element, such as "Bara," and another character responds with the same word, and the translation: "Bara. Wheelbarrow" (Harrower 4). The call and response is repeated throughout the show, with different characters being taught the key words of the play, and each time these same words are literally building a vocabulary between the two worlds of the stage and the audience. By the end of the show the audience should be able to say the Gaelic words along with the actors, though they are at no time required to, in a pseudo-liturgical style of call and response. On one hand this elementary instruction is simply charming. One hears the words, such as *slausaid*, and then sees a physical representation of the word as Calum holds up his

shovel. The staging clearly mimics early language primers and never attempts to teach the audience more than a few key words. The play builds a common vocabulary that bridges the cultures of mainland Scotland and the Gaelic-speaking Western Islands. The once silly educational method *Speaking Our Language* on television is now utilized in a productive way that creates a shared communality that is linked to the fixed words and earthy productivity of Calum's occupation.

The lack of Gaelic in the islands was not always a problem but instead reflects one of the major consequences of modernity on the island. The first impact of modernity can be traced to a short period of time in the eighteenth century when Protestant organizations, such as the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SPCK), attempted to eradicate Gaelic because of its connections to the Celtic, and therefore pagan, past (Moore 84). The pagan roots did not align with Christian morals and, by extension, Protestant views of decorum. However, the efforts of SPCK were ineffective in the islands, especially the Outer Hebrides, because so few people spoke English at all, but some impact was made in the Highlands where more people were bilingual. In a second attempt at modernizing the "pagans," the SPCK then started to champion and support the use of the Gaelic language, and by the nineteenth century, the bible had been translated into Scots Gaelic, and the once-Catholic islands were converted to Protestantism.

Calum's story is so unique because of his residence within the Lower Hebrides. The chain of islands is divided into two major sections, the Outer and Inner Hebrides. These divisions don't mean much in terms of cultural or ethnic differences but instead were divided by geographers according to their shape. The Outer Hebrides are long and thin islands while the Inner Hebrides¹⁰⁰ vary in shape and size. The most famous, and also most densely populated island is the Isle of Skye, of the Inner Hebrides. Calum's island of Raasay is located between

Skye and Mainland Scotland, with a ferry that runs from South Arnish to Skye's largest town of Portree. The only way to access Raasay is by boat or ferry from Skye, for there is no direct route to the mainland from the tiny island. The second largest island of Lewis is also accessible to Raasay, and these large islands are mentioned throughout the play as places that are more civilized and more modern than the provincial Raasay, and with significantly larger populations. The islands can be looked at as individual entities, each with different cultures and clans, and though some of the historic clans may have occupied two or three islands, such as the MacLeods, generally their territories did not expand too much farther (Moore 65). The islands were unified, in a way, by the spread of Christianity from the Irish monks who built a monastic center on the inner isle of Iona. Though *Calum's Road* doesn't address religion or faith directly, it is important to note that it is through religion that the islands united, and also through their Catholicism that they were initially persecuted by the mainland. The Hebrides united with Scotland in the fifteenth century, but few occupants of the island feel truly united with a country that views them as backward and quaint. As a result, many of the inhabitants of the islands view the mainland as heartless and cruel and celebrate the importance of family and the Gaelic language over modernity and material wealth. It is through this tension that the play is able to layer the identities of Islander over Scot, simple farmer over fierce business man, or Gaelic over English.

The Catholic lineage of the islands was lumped in with the pagan nature of the barbaric terrain, and since both couldn't be eliminated the SPCK settled for ousting the Catholics but keeping Gaelic. The church continued to support the Gaelic language and The Free Presbyterian Mission Hall in Torran on Raasay only conducted services in Gaelic during Calum's lifetime¹⁰¹ (R. Hutchinson 34). Gaelic was so pervasive that when Calum MacLeod attended school, "children at the age of ten and over...had the barest knowledge of the English language" (Rita

Campbell qtd. R. Hutchinson 33). We see this reflected in the play when Calum writes to the council; each time he has Lexie double-check his English grammar even though Calum is a skilled writer.¹⁰²

The language barrier is not new to the Scottish stage but instead has been a source of humor and plot points for dramas since the nineteenth century. In certain plays the Gaelic speaker, the Highlander, is the smarter man, fooling and frustrating the monolingual Lowlander through sentences of mixed Gaelic and English speech. In other plays, such as Archibald Maclaren's *The Humours of Grennock Fair* (1789), the Highlander is given short shrift for having no command of English, and the typical "lost in translation" humor results. In the following scene the reactions of each man are based in phonetics, so the audience would have an idea of what Ramble, an English speaker, is intending in terms of his reply; Gaelic audiences in turn could see the humor in Domhnul's responses. The real humor, though, can only be understood by the few audience members who spoke both English and Gaelic (Bell 138).

Ramble He does not understand me, if I thought he had a comrade that did,
I would call him.

Domhnul Callum! An aithne dhuit fa Callum 'n donnas duille agum nach thu
fhein Callum, oh laochain, thoir dhomh do lamh.
['Callum! do you know Callum? I don't think but you're Callum
yourself, Oh my good fellow, give me your hand.']

Ramble You want to go to law! Well my friend who hinders you?

Domhnul Mata, 's duillich leam fhein nach'eil bearla agam air fon a ghille
choir fo, 'on tha me creidsin gu'n do chail e a ghaelic, —s'urrin mi
beagan a'radh, no agus yes, agus to be sure, agus a leite fin.

[‘Well, I’m sorry that I can speak no English upon this honest lad’s account, for I believe he has lost all his Gaelic, —I can speak a little, such as no and yes, and to be sure, and the like of that.’]

Ramble I’ll tell you what it is friend, I have a little business to transact here, and I suppose you mean to prevent me.

Domhnul Ciod a their mi, nios?—yes.

[‘What shall I say now? — Yes.’]

Ramble Yes! (Bell 138)

The Gaelic in *Calum’s Road* is not used as a point of humor, but it still clearly connects to iconic English-Gaelic scenes such as the one above. In *The Humour of Grennock Fair*, the Gaelic Domhmul comments that Ramble “has lost all his Gaelic” and implies that Ramble must have known how to speak and understand Gaelic, but that in his life, the life of an Englishman, he has lost touch with his native language. Of course historically Gaelic was never spoken in England, but the impression of a language known and lost is still present within the humorous dialogue. The Scot can speak a bit of English (yes, no, etc.), but his lack of ability to understand Ramble is not due to a lost education, but instead a lack.

The conversations between Calum and Iain touch on the same lack and loss of language. The audience sees and hears how Iain has lost his language in conversations with Calum and the ferryman, Angus. Iain and Alex arrive on Raasay and the ferryman recognizes Iain. They have a short conversation, mostly in English, but once Angus notices Alex he greets him in Gaelic, and receives a blank stare in return.

Angus (*looks at Alex*) *Leat’s an gille?*

Iain ’S ann

Angus *De an t-ainm a th' ort?* No Gaelic?

Iain He grew up in Livingston. It'd only have set him apart. He wasn't
interested either, so... (12, italics mine)

As Iain drops off, the shame from his lost connection to his language shines through. The justification for not speaking Gaelic was simply that it would set Alex apart, that he would be mistaken as a man from the Islands or the Highlands and not as a Lowlander. The conversation is also not translated for the audience. It is not until Angus translates for Alex “no Gaelic” that the audience is brought in on what the conversation is about. The audience shares Alex’s perspective of wanting to understand but being unable to because of a language barrier. Iain’s shame only adds to this frustration, at least on the part of Alex, for the opportunity to understand was passed over, and it was not his decision. Failure to teach younger generations the language is at the heart of the Gaelic language decline and a direct victim of the power of modernity. The younger generations needed English to survive in the world and to conduct business with the rest of Britain, but English was taught at the cost of Gaelic and the connection to an entire culture was lost.

Calum’s road was built to keep people connected to their home and their culture, and along with that he desired for fellow Islanders to stay connected to their own language. In scene 33 “Divorced man’s food,” Alex recalls the one time he met Calum and expresses his little knowledge of the Gaelic language:

Alex I remember him talking to me, speaking in Gaelic.

Calum *(takes out his shovel) Shuaslaid. (Alex repeats each) Tuagh. Pic.
Bara.*

Alex *Bara.* Wheelbarrow.

Calum Is your father not teaching you his language? (47, italics mine)

Alex and Calum exist in separate times, so even though the audience sees Calum interact with Alex it is all through memory. Alex's recall of *bara* emphasizes that he remembers the few words that Calum taught him, and those few words just happen to be the few words the audience is taught as well. Calum questions Iain's role in Alex's language acquisition, for Calum obviously sees teaching Gaelic to Alex as Iain's responsibility.

Calum as Failure

Calum MacLeod as hero gains significance as we look back through his life and add significance to every interaction and decision. For example, the play posits Calum's wife, Lexie, as the inspiration for his obsession with the road. He is satisfied with the dirt track until he meets a fine woman from Skye who is disgusted that her high fashion shoes are covered in mud. It is Lexie who lays the foundation to build the road within the mind of Calum. She may not shovel an ounce of gravel, but it is her insistence that he do what is right for the good of the island that forces him to act. We see this foundation being laid during their first interaction, before the two are married: "This isn't exactly a place anyone wants to come to. For a start, you can't *get* here. ... How



Figure 9: *Calum and Lexie* by Richard Campbell, Left to Right: Iain Macrae and Ceit Kearney

long have you petitioned for a road? Since, what?, the beginning of the century?" (16). The lack of a road does not keep people on the island, but it does prevent new people, those who are used

to modern conveniences such as cars and bicycles, from settling on the island. Lexie goes on to point out that her ankles cannot handle the strain of walking on the mucky road.

The visual representation of Lexie and Calum together emphasizes the changing times on the island. The script does not mention her attire, but Lexie is costumed in a green coat with a fox pelt stole around her neck. She is also wearing a red hat with a feather, leather gloves, earrings, and kitten heels (see figure 9). Lexie is not the sort of woman who is used to walking about in the mud. She comes from Portree and is used to the luxuries of a city, the luxuries of modernity. Of course to the majority of the audiences throughout the Scottish mainland,¹⁰³ Portree is quaint and rural as well, not a bustling city like Glasgow, Edinburgh, or even Inverness. However, since Lexie is depicted as such a fashion-forward individual, she changes the perception of the Isle of Skye. She looks especially modern and out of place juxtaposed with Calum, who is clothed as a traditional crofter (even though she meets him while he is out delivering the mail). Calum is wearing a long-sleeve, button-up shirt, with a knitted waistcoat over the top, and a pair of overalls. He has a scarf tucked under his shirt, keeping his neck warm, has on heavy work boots, and is wearing a bunnet. At first glance he looks as if he is coming out of a different time period, but in actuality all that separated the two of them up until this point was a couple of miles of sea. They share the same culture, they share the same language, and yet the two couldn't appear more different.

Lexie is the clear voice for progress, while Calum is a voice for tradition. As their conversation continues Calum states, "People will leave if there is a road. People could just come and go as they pleased. The ties of family would be tested" (16). He sees the building of a road as a way for the people of Raasay to escape. He can see the stark differences between himself and Lexie, and by admitting that people would leave he also suggests that life on Raasay is not

ideal and he can see the appeal in her way of life as well. For if Raasay were as ideal as Calum suggests then a road would not encourage departure but instead would simply make life easier. Lexie counters his weak argument and shows him a piece of paper denoting the number of pupils enrolled in the school she has been hired on to teach and states, “The school roll for North Raasay is down by fourteen pupils from last year. /I hate to tell you, Calum MacLeod, they are leaving anyway./ *Tha eagal orm, Chaluim ‘ic, Leoid, gu bheil iad a’ fagail co dhiu*” (16) The final line is said to Calum in Gaelic, the language he knows best, emphasizing to him the severity of the exodus of his people. The translation of this key line is shown as a supertitle, as was the beginning of the conversation, and could easily be missed by audience members who are not paying attention to the supertitles since the scene has transitioned into English. The fact that the final line is so important and is heard by Calum and those who speak Gaelic alone indicates that the impact of the people leaving the islands affected those audience members and Calum alone instead of the remainder of the audience. Though the play attempts to create an inclusive environment surrounding the Western Islands, it simultaneously points out that some of the issues faced by the islands can only be truly understood and empathized by those who are native to the islands themselves.

Some sort of change comes over Calum from when he first talks to Lexie to when he begins the road. The play skips around, showing the road completed and being paved before the audience sees Calum write to have it built by the Highland Council, so there is never a doubt in the minds of audience members that the road would be completed, and that Calum would be the one who would do it. It is never addressed why Calum changes his mind, but there is an implication that Lexie’s words convinced him, for he only states, “I have been swayed” (26). The next time Calum discusses the potential for a road is during scene 18 “At the school house.” This

scene also begins in Gaelic and utilizes supertitles for the first portion, then transitions into English, this time ending in English. Calum asks Lexie to sign a petition to build a road, and we witness Calum building the foundation to his letter-writing campaign. We also see the establishment of Lexie as the support to his campaign and the one who looks over all his work before he mails it away, as she looks over his cover letter for the petition. The audience is told by Young Julia and Calum and Lexie of the letters written by Calum on the behalf of Raasay and the rejections he receives in return. Calum MacLeod even crafts a letter on the morning of his wedding, and still after four years and seventeen letters piling up, nothing has been done. Calum, in his last efforts at the end of the scene emphasizes that the road in and of itself is not the major issue at stake; what's at stake is the need to be acknowledged as important. "A mile and three-quarters. It is all we are asking. We need our road. So my people can start to believe they have not been abandoned. They have not been forgotten" (28). The Hebrides as a whole have been rejected and ignored for centuries by the government located on the mainland of Scotland. Raasay, in particular, was the victim of many governmental rejections and delays. Roads were approved and built on the neighboring islands of Skye, Lewis, and Harris, but the many requests for a road by Calum MacLeod of Raasay are denied. The rejections reverberate for they emphasize that the small crofting island does not matter as much as the larger, more populous islands, that the people who live and farm and fish the waters of Raasay are lesser than the people of Portree or Stornoway. If they can not be treated fairly then why stay in Raasay? And by extension what pride would they have in being from Raasay when it is so clear that they are viewed as less than human? How can these people feel a part of the Scottish nation when the nation so clearly rejects them?

One of the major sources of tension within the play is the betrayal Calum, and by extension his daughter, feel when others choose to leave Raasay. The road that is built allows for travel across the island, allows for modernization, allows for lives to be saved as a doctor can now drive to a call, but it also allows for one to more easily leave the island. The theme of leaving is touched upon again and again in the play as Calum and Julia come to terms with the ever-changing world of their beloved island. Calum is the first to comment on people leaving home, but he assumes that it occurs in cycles and all those who leave will eventually return home. His understanding of abandoning one's community is for temporary reasons like famine, disease, or politics, and when the impacts of whatever caused one to leave are lifted, then one is allowed to return home again:

The recurring pattern of the twentieth century, Julia, is one of people leaving home. A one-way exile. All across the world. To fight in their nation's wars, to find jobs in the cities, to seek out food to feed their families. But the tide will change, mark my words. People cannot stay that long away from their homes without it doing them untold psychic harm. They will start to return. They will answer a calling within themselves. They will come home. A pilgrimage home.
(Harrower 8)

What Calum fails to take into account are the changes coming with the modern world. His personal experience of his parents leaving and then returning colors the way he views the exodus of his fellow islanders. Now they are not leaving because of a brutal landlord or a famine, but they are leaving to keep up with the changes of the world. Modernity is passing Raasay by and the islanders either have to choose to live in the past or move away. The "untold psychic harm" Calum refers to is not strong enough to make people move back but instead simply instills a

deep-seated yearning in their souls, much like Alex's, and a guilt for having given up when a few were able to hold out against the onslaught of the modern world, much like Iain.

Despite Calum's faith, the people of Raasay keep leaving in droves; he and Julia both view these families as "weaklings," and the road is built to make life easier for people like them. Throughout the play Calum celebrates the island for saving his life and devotes his occupations to serving the island in return. Calum is the postman, one of the lighthouse keepers, a crofter, a letter writer, and road builder. Everything he does is hard work and feeds directly into the production and success of the island. Calum loves the strange food that is available on the island, such as cormorant, which Julia hates. He doesn't care for modern conveniences and is content living the way his parents did. Calum is not like everyone else on Raasay, who find the harsh weather and backbreaking work to be more than bargained for, especially when compared to the life of a shop clerk or teahouse owner in Portree or Glasgow. In scene 22 "A leaving boat," Julia and Iain watch a boat leave the island. Julia is outraged that anyone would dare leave the place she calls home, whereas Iain can imagine the attraction of going elsewhere. Julia serves as the conduit for Calum's views on those who leave as she casts judgment on the family:

How could people leave? The island that gave them so much. Housed them, fed them, kept them safe. And leave for where? Glasgow? Portree? Or even worse – the south? The south of Raasay. Oh, that was the greatest betrayal. Of course he would never say it out loud about the ones who left. But people knew he thought it. It didn't endear him to some, to be honest. But he would never say such things out loud, no. That was left to an eleven year old hothead. (32)

Julia is unforgiving. She sees the island as a mother figure, one that houses, feeds, and provides safety, as compared to one that destroys, challenges, and starves. She is still too young at this

point to understand the need to leave such a secluded place and find a career and home elsewhere. Within a few scenes the audience sees Julia be sent away to school in Portree because the council closes the Raasay school. She doesn't want to leave her island, but in the end she doesn't come back to live and stay. As Julia grows older she comes to realize that Raasay does not offer all of the answers to the modern world, but her father never comes to that same conclusion. His rhetoric continues from Julia's monologue to a moment with the three of them watching the boat leave, and Iain is waving at the family to Julia's chagrin. She responds, "Stop it. Stop waving. I don't like it. You turn your back on them. That's what you do. You turn your back. (*Iain stops waving*) Now, turn your back. Nicolson, turn your bloody back on them!" (32) Iain eventually turns his back and becomes keenly aware of what will happen if he were ever to leave the island. Julia goes on to tell him that if he ever leaves that she would never speak to him again. Iain does leave, and he holds with him that guilt of being a "weakling" and abandoning his island. Unfortunately, Calum does not finish his road in time to keep his neighbors, and later, his daughter, on Raasay. Instead, once he road was finished very few were left to enjoy it, for the world continued to modernize and leave Raasay behind. Calum's too-late completion of the road emphasizes his role as the tragic hero. He accomplishes his task, but the people he wanted to help traverse the island are no longer living on it and as a result the road only serves as a symbol of his efforts.

The play does not end on this sentimental note about the life and accomplishments of Calum MacLeod, but instead the final scene is a call to action for the audience to do as Calum did. It started with one man, but ultimately the island and the road needed a community. Scene 42 "It ends," catalogues all of the troubles and strife that have kept the Scottish nation down for hundreds of years, declares them over, and calls the community to come together to force that

change. The narrators describe that a song is being sung that you know the lyrics to and have known all your life, but “now, it’s your turn” to take over the singing. The play ends, “Let’s hear your song” as Calum’s heroic lineage is passed on, not to his daughter, but to each and every audience member. The final scene emphasizes the simultaneous role of community and isolation. So much of the Scottish experience is one of an isolated or rural existence, and *Calum’s Road* celebrates that isolation by connecting it back to a shared experience. This play may be about one man and one road, but his experience is so like those of many Scots who have worked hard and have been defeated. There is a futility to Calum’s building project, as his road ultimately only serves three people.

It is within Calum’s futility that he is made into a hero, and through such futility that Scotland as a nation will continue to fight and persevere, and perhaps even one day to thrive. Calum’s story is not one of valiant success, but instead we celebrate his efforts to save his family and maintain his island’s population, and we are invited to ache for his failure. His failure is not his alone, but a failure of Raasay, and a failure of Scotland. The NTS emphasizes that the problems on the local level are the problems of the nation, and that the two are always connected—by people, by experiences, and by a certain level of shared cultural heritage. When that shared level of cultural heritage is removed, however, the connection between the people and the issues at hand becomes more tenuous. Raasay has the benefit of an inescapable proximity to the mainland that provides a common framework for kinship and shared experience, but other more remote places named as part of Scotland, such as the Shetland Island or the Orkney Islands, are more removed and often gravitate toward cultural practices more in keeping with Scandinavian countries. In the next chapter, I examine the role of the performance piece *Ignition*

in the Shetland Islands and consider the role of Shetland within a Scottish nation that shares little to no cultural heritage with the remote islands.

Chapter Four

“So Whaar Noo?”: *Ignition* and Pluralizing Identities

In 2013 the National Theatre of Scotland embarked upon one of its longest in-residence performances to date, *Ignition*. The six-month-long performance focused on the relationship between Shetlanders and their cars and explored the bittersweet connection between heritage and modernity. Spearheaded by the National Theatre of Scotland and Shetland Arts, the performance served to celebrate the unique lives of Shetlanders, all the while also emphasizing the imagined community of the Scottish nation despite geographical and cultural distance. The unique performance was comprised of many separate events, each serving a different sector of the Shetland community. Director Wils Wilson and associate director John Haswell designed an immersive experience which included numerous public events, pop-up events, workshops, residencies, and ultimately a culminating community theatre performance in order to involve as many Shetlanders as possible in the production to create community investment in the project's ultimate success. Mark Brown of *The Telegraph* concluded, “I couldn’t claim to have seen a truly coherent theatre work. What I had experienced, however, was the often emotive culmination of a big-hearted project which has palpably tapped a nerve in its host community.” Though the project lacks a coherent narrative and singular message, it ultimately celebrates the Shetland Islands and the unique contribution they make to Scottish culture.

The move to engage and celebrate Shetland through a National Theatre of Scotland production brought to the forefront the fraught relationship between mainland Scotland and the Shetland Islands. The mainland of Scotland is quite small; it takes less than seven hours to travel by car from its farthest points. Many Scottish tours, in fact, cover much of this territory during an overnight tour—starting in Edinburgh or Glasgow, overnighing in Inverness, and returning home, with touristy stops every few hours. The Shetland Islands, however, are not as easy to

view within a short weekend holiday. Instead they are a fourteen-hour ferry ride northwest of mainland Scotland. Once one arrives on these remote isles the views are breathtaking—steep cliff faces overlooking blue-grey water, neolithic ruins from the Viking era, and oil platforms off the coast. These unique islands take almost four hours to cross at their farthest points, and yet they are often mislabeled or simply left off of Scottish maps and, likewise, overlooked by mainland Scots. Their remote location lends them to romanticization, dismissal, or disdain by mainlanders, and as a result the people of the islands do not feel connected to everyday Scottish life. The Shetlanders resist Scottish attempts to push “tartan” culture upon them and instead celebrate their unique material export of the Shetland sweater and other knitted wool goods. The material representation, and lack of official tartan, separates Shetland from the Celtic traditions of the mainland Scots (Moore 28).¹⁰⁴ So much of Scottish culture involves the tartan that any moment, such as a wedding, formal feast, or graduation, is automatically different when the tartan and kilt are removed. The very organization of this dissertation assumes the importance of the tartan in everyday Scottish life, but that assumption is rejected by Shetland. Instead, Shetlanders dress up as Vikings for cultural festivals.¹⁰⁵

In the midst of the ongoing political milieu surrounding claims to Shetland’s oil, the National Theatre of Scotland teamed up with Shetland Arts to create a community-centered performance piece, *Ignition*, which focuses on the fraught relationship between Shetlanders and their cars. Shetland’s locale is often romanticized by mainland Scots, and dismissed as backward and quaint. Sweaters and ponies dotting the craggy landscape are viewed as vestiges of the past, and their prevalence around the islands indicate a lack of progress. Guidebooks and newspaper articles juxtapose the natural landscape with the importance of oil, rendering the islands in an unclear time period, for they simultaneously exist both in the past and in the present within

popular culture. The *Ignition* project merges these two views of Shetland and explores the natural landscape and the changes made by oil by specifically by focusing on the role of the car and transportation throughout the islands. The goal of the performance is not to evaluate the impact of oil's discovery on Shetland's culture and community but instead to celebrate the unique aspects of the northern islands—both old and new—while pushing the limits of national identity to emphasize that the Shetlanders are indeed a vital part of contemporary Scottish culture.

Castin On¹⁰⁶: Shelandic Geography, History and Culture

The Shetland Islands have a visibility problem with the rest of Scotland. Mapmakers often combine the Shetland and Orkney Islands, or sometimes leave the Shetlands off all together (see



Figure 10: Map of Scotland with the Shetland Islands properly placed.

("Scotland Topographical Map," by Eric Gaba is licenced under GNU FDL)

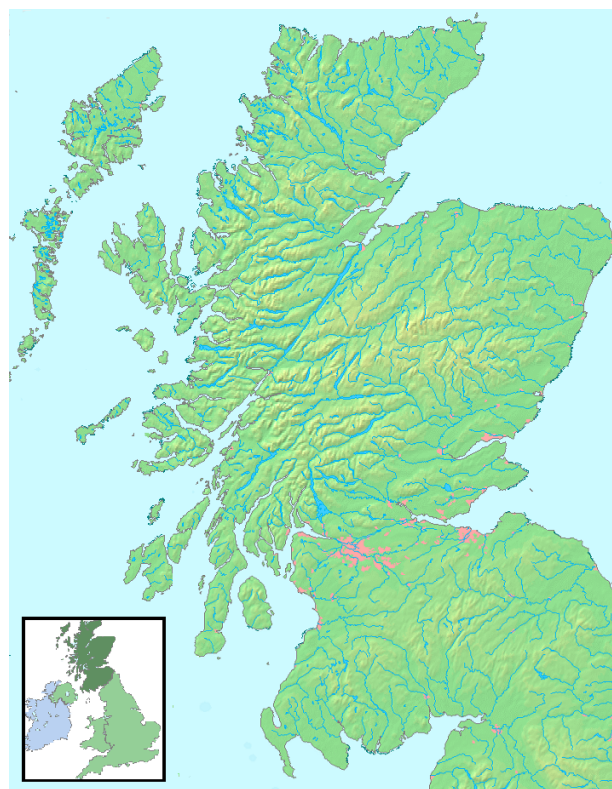


Figure 11: Map of Scotland with Shetland removed (public domain).

figure 10 versus figure 11), because of the massive amount of ocean between Unst (the northernmost island) and the Scottish mainland. Their remote location makes these islands look and feel inaccessible to the mainland, and as a result, also removed from Scottish culture. To arrive at this archipelago of more than 100 small islands, one must endure a fourteen-hour (200 mile) ferry ride north of Aberdeen, Scotland, in often-rough seas (Ritchie 10, Moore 5).¹⁰⁷ Of those 100 islands, only 15 are inhabited, and most of the residents occupy the largest island of Mainland¹⁰⁸ (Moore 5).

The Shetland Islands' far north location also translates into a different history of inhabitants than mainland Scotland, starting with the Picts in the early Medieval Era and Celtic missionaries throughout the sixth century. Eventually Vikings used the Shetlands as a waypoint between the homeland of Norway and lands to be conquered, such as Ireland and Northern Scotland (Nicholson 23). Many Norse people settled in Shetland instead of moving on to Iceland or Greenland, and as a result Norse history and folklore dominate the islands. Very few Scottish traditions have influenced the islands, and as a result, though the two locations are technically one nation, the cultures have evolved differently.

Shetland was used as a bargaining chip between Scotland and Norway throughout the middle ages, and even after it fully belonged to Scotland few Scots bothered settling there. Scotland was mortgaged the Shetlands and Orkneys after the battle of Largs against the Norse in 1263 at the annual cost of "100 marks"¹⁰⁹ (Nicholson 23). Even with this small sum, Scotland reneged on its payment, and the northern islands belonged once more to Norway, and it was clear that Scotland did not want to retain the Shetland Islands. Later, in 1468, Princess Margaret of Denmark married Prince James (eventually James III) of Scotland. Princess Margaret's dowry included the crown lands of Orkney and a small monetary sum of 60,000 florins,¹¹⁰ of which

10,000 were due the first year. Norway failed to pay the full monetary sum, so Shetland was again used as a bargaining chip and was pledged to cover the remaining 8,000 florin debt¹¹¹ (Nicholson 24). The mainland Scots did not, and still for the most part do not, feel that the acquisition of Orkney and Shetland was much of a gain. Nor do the Shetlanders feel valued. As a result of this begrudged union, the people of Shetland are viewed as outsiders, as islanders who have no culture, and even as heathens.¹¹² This act of marginalization of the Shetlanders has in turn caused them to resist being a part of Scotland. If Scotland didn't want them, then of course they didn't want to be a part of Scotland.

Shetlanders' cultural connections to the Norse are highly romanticized, but that romanticization is understandable. The Norse occupied Shetland until 1469, and not only did they utilize the islands as a military center, but families also settled throughout the island chain and the language and institutions of Norse culture became prevalent (Nihtinen 73). Shetland's history is easily defined as "a succession of people who came by sea, who settled and built up a way of life only to have it replaced by the culture of new arrivals" (Nicholson 28). When Shetland was sold to Scotland in 1469, the Norse language and traditions still remained, and it was not until 1611 that the Norse laws were banned and replaced with Scottish laws. Even though the laws were replaced, very few Scottish people, save a few nobles, moved to the islands, and as a result Shetland continued to be occupied by Norse people and "ruled" by the Scots. Though the two cultures and geographies were technically one nation, they never truly bonded and created a shared culture. The relationship between Shetland and Scotland is analogous to the relationship between Scotland and England. Despite Scotland and England officially uniting in 1707, there has never been a true "British" society and culture created: "Scotland has lacked real political agency and has turned instead to over-inscribed historical

narratives for a sense of cultural identity. Moreover, Scottish culture has become distorted and stunted in the process” (Nihtinen 52, Reid 7). Scotland is constantly overshadowed by big brother England and is often conflated with England by outsiders, and the use of the terms “Great Britain”¹¹³ and “United Kingdom” caused Scotland to disappear as a distinct nation. The people of Scotland also have struggled with national identity as a result.¹¹⁴ What does it mean to be both British and Scottish? The cultural roots, practices, and expressions are not the same, so enacting two identities simultaneously causes muddled expressions, all of which are neither clearly British nor Scottish. Of course the political merger created an even greater divide because Scotland and England continued to operate as separate entities and “retained many of the institutions of self-government, particularly its own church, educational and legal systems” (Nihtinen 52).

The two nations operate separately in many ways, and now so especially with the devolution of the Scottish Parliament in 1997. Scotland is also viewed as a lesser entity as compared to England. For example, the money printed at the Bank of Scotland is often refused or at the very least questioned in London and other central and southern English locales even though the money printed at the Bank of Scotland is just as valid as the pound sterling from the Bank of England. For English shopkeepers to question the validity of a Scottish customer’s money is not only embarrassing but a clear reflection of the cultural separation between England and Scotland, and the supposed superiority of England. After four hundred years of union, the disparities between the two nations are becoming too much to bear, and the Scots are standing up to their entitled older sibling for equal treatment, or better yet, complete freedom from the British family.

Shetland has a similarly complicated relationship to Scotland, and by extension England. Shetland and Scotland continued to function normally after their union in 1469 and keep, for the most part, out of one another's business, but Shetland's identity shifted. Now the Shetlanders are Scottish and not Norse. Further complicating the cultural shift, Shetland shares more cultural roots with England, both having Viking pasts, than with the Celtic Scotland. Shetland's reaction to becoming part of Scotland was also similar to Scotland's reaction to joining England. Scotland's pride in tradition became emphasized and heavily marketed (leading toward tartantry,¹¹⁵ the kailyard,¹¹⁶ and lauderism¹¹⁷), and Shetland exemplified its pride in the romanticized ideals of the Norse. It is this history that serves as the basis for much of the *Ignition* project.

Shetland's interest in its Norse past became prevalent in the late nineteenth century. It was the first time that writers and scholars had really paid any attention to Shetland as an entity separate from Scotland. Thus the interest in Norse life was a form of counterculture, a way to reject the "dominant" Scottish culture, but without having any real political impact (Nihtinen 75). The interest in culture and language shifted to commentary on the "oppressive nature of Scottish rule, and 'a tendency to ignore, regret or reject the Scottish contribution to Shetland society'" (Nihtinen 75).¹¹⁸

For centuries Shetland has been considered to lack meaningful culture, and as a result the *Ignition* project was infused with cultural tension, for the Shetlands have not only been home to political alienation but also home to artistic alienation. The knitted handicrafts and breathtaking landscape were dismissed in the past as nothing more than tourist attractions, and as a result few major Scottish artistic creations attempted to capture and embody the Shetlandic lifestyle. Hugh MacDiarmid asserts that the Shetland Islands "are the subject of practically no writing except

guide-book stuff, and certainly of nothing worth a moment's consideration in poetry or descriptive prose" (51). MacDiarmid, a celebrated nationalist poet, on the whole leans toward sharp critiques, nonetheless this critique is for the most part true. The history of the Garrison Theatre (located on Lerwick) is indicative of the Shetlanders' desire to have artistic venues on the islands, and the islanders' inability to support them. During World War II, the Lerwick Drill Hall and Gymnasium was converted into a theatre by the ENSA¹¹⁹ and was used as a space to entertain troops. The theatre fell into disrepair after the war, however, and was renovated in 1989 and again in 1995-6 (ShetlandArts.org). Shetland Arts formed in 2006, took over this space—now the Garrison Theatre (along with two other performance venues)—and became the central organization responsible for music, art, theatre, and cinema production within Shetland.

In the same year that Shetland Arts was founded, NTS performed its 2006 *Home* series: a production event featuring ten locations across the Scottish nation. In the *Home* project the locations were all on the mainland, with the exception of *Home* Shetland, which was an interactive multimedia event onboard a ship that travelled between Shetland and Scotland's mainland. *Home* Shetland was lauded as "a perfect choice of the 'launch' of the National Theatre of Scotland in Shetland, and the performance transported the small audience groups on a stunning and very personal emotional journey" (qtd. Wilmer, "Subversive Affirmation" 93). The 2012-2013 National Theatre of Scotland and Shetland Arts performance piece, *Ignition*, can be seen as a form of artistic claiming. The act of artistic claiming comes from the shift in identity focus spurred by the NTS productions around the nation. "A new Scottish consciousness has emerged. Scots began to re-examine their past, and to seek alternative historical narratives, different from those that had been accepted for so long" (Robert Leach qtd. Wilmer, "Subversive Affirmation" 93). The re-examination of cultural identity on the mainland thus pointed toward

the need to re-examine cultural relationships between the mainland and the Northern Islands, and in this case specifically, Shetland. *Ignition* seems to claim Shetland as its own through the communal creation of art and through audience involvement and attempts to re-write the antagonistic history of the past with a new account of cooperation and mutual support.

Despite the desires to foster Shetland's way of life, the population in Shetland began to decrease as more and more people moved toward cities throughout the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s (Nicholson 38, 44). The population depletion was much like the depletion seen in the Hebrides and discussed in the previous chapter on *Calum's Road*. However, unlike in the Hebrides, Shetland saw a cultural revival in the 1960s that helped slow the population decline. The knitwear industry grew, allowing for more women to stay in Shetland and have full-time jobs. Crofting was revitalized and shifted from "subsistence agricultural to an economy based on raising sheep and cattle for sale" (Nicholson 42). The fishing industry was assisted by grants and loans, primarily from the Highlands and Islands Development Board¹²⁰ (est. 1965), which provided for building more fish factories and resuscitated an almost dead industry. Other more specialized crafts began to grow in popularity as well, such as silver work (specifically Shetland Silvercraft at Weisdale), stone polishing, and mink farming. Young men who left to join the Navy were now returning to their home island to invest in industry instead of staying on Scottish mainland. Scotland, and the islands themselves, changed, "Property was reflected in the ever-growing number of new houses built privately—old croft houses were either rebuilt or replaced with new bungalows in which case the old building became a garage or store" (Nicholson 43). The change over from croft houses to bungalows reflects the change in industry. No longer were Shetlanders scraping by and merely surviving through crofting, but they were beginning to thrive.

The commitment to maintaining Shetland culture influenced the population over the past half-century. The population decline that had steadily continued for over a century began to reverse in the 1970s. In 1971 oil was also discovered in the North Sea, shifting the focus of the British Isles and making Shetland central to the needs and economy of Britain. This discovery was also the first moment when Scotland, and by extension England, paid any heed to the islands as part of the UK. At this point Shetland had belonged to Scotland for a little over five hundred years, and it was only just beginning to draw attention from those in power. Oil changed the way the islands functioned, shifting the production from woolens, crofting, and fishing to work on oil rigs and in the oil industry. The changes throughout the islands caused many Shetlanders to fear about the future of the traditional industries, and many business owners lost workers to the higher paying oil industry (Nicholson 79-80).

By the 1970s, the oil industry dramatically shifted the cultural and economic lives of Shetlanders. The domestic material production (such as woolen goods) and community-centered agriculture (specifically crofting and fishing) gave way to the needs of the oil industry. Fishermen gave up their boats for the more lucrative jobs on oil platforms and in the local refinery. The focus on the tourist industry also increased as more businessmen and visitors arrived in the islands requiring hotels and purchasing knitted goods as souvenirs.¹²¹ “[Change was] reflected in the large number of motor cars on Shetland’s road. In 1970 they numbered 4,741 giving a ratio of one car to 3.6 people and making Shetland one of the most car-minded counties in Britain” (Nicholson 43). The islands shifted focus to the creation and sale of goods to keep up with the new demands of the islands. Cars were needed to quickly travel across the island and to carry shipments of sweaters, silver, and other goods to the mainland of Scotland (Nicholson 43). The old croft houses being turned into garages exemplify the shift by having the

house of agriculture and sheep herding become the protective covering for the modern vehicle. Agriculture was replaced by industry and its outward manifestations altered the physical landscape and rendered it strange. Throughout *Ignition* the changing landscape is explored, critiqued, and celebrated. *Ignition* embraces the varied relationships with cars and provides a unique opportunity to involve Shetlanders who witnessed the immense transition from antiquated to modern life at an accelerated speed. The performance explores what the islands were before oil and the changes they have gone through since, with a specific hope for more positive changes in the future.

Even though the *Ignition* project focused on the impact of the car and highways, the advancement of Shetland cannot be solely attributed to the discovery of oil in the North Sea, for Shetland's economy and population were stabilizing prior to the oil boom in 1971 (Nicholson 79). Shetland is often reduced to its oil production by popular news outlets throughout the UK, especially in light of the recent vote for independence, and as a result the handicrafts and cultural enterprises have taken a back seat to the liquid gold. However, the oil discovery did not revitalize Shetland—instead the hard work of the people and a devotion to the traditional industries of Shetland kept the islands afloat, so to speak, even through the economic and population downturns of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Nicholson 79-80). This desire to maintain Shetland and to revitalize its industry made it so young men and women who left the islands for schooling had opportunities for success upon their return. The communal work to maintain and advance the islands is a key difference between Shetland and the Hebrides. The distance from the Scottish mainland may have also contributed to the desire for Shetlanders to work together and provide good lives for the community at large, for leaving, whether permanently or for supplies, requires fourteen hours on a ferry and multiple days of travel.¹²²

Fears of losing industry and domestic production translated into a renewed desire to promote and strengthen local culture, especially music. The Shetland Folk Society (formed in 1945) began working to promote the Shetland dialect and Shetland music throughout the Shetland Islands and also worked to put on lectures, concerts, and fund publications for the masses in order to “break from nostalgically historical and antiquarian approaches to tradition, while at the same [time] the revival of a distinct Shetland culture” and promote the culture’s importance to societal change (Nihtinen 97). The need to preserve and promote Shetland culture did not die down after the initial oil boom but instead still runs strong today with more recent organizations such as Sing Shetland, Shetland Folk Dance, the Story Telling Group, and Shetland Arts working alongside the Shetland Folk Society (Nihtinen 98). The oil boom also ignited a greater interest in national politics by both mainland Scots and Shetlanders in the 1980s. The Scottish Nationalist Party’s newly coined phrase “It’s Scotland’s Oil” began to echo throughout the UK. Shetlanders did not feel compelled to join in the campaign because it was clear the majority of the oil was destined for the shores of England and mainland Scotland (Nicholson 87, Moore 27). Shetlanders were not concerned about the oil’s use but instead focused on the impact of oil on their shores. As a result the Shetland people actively controlled the way the oil industry interacted with their islands.¹²³

On 18 September 2014, Scottish Citizens voted whether or not to revise their national identity by redefining their relationship to the rest of Great Britain. The results were close. With almost 85 percent voter turnout (the highest in Scottish history), 55.30 percent voted no, while 44.70 percent voted yes.¹²⁴ The results for the northern islands of Shetland, however, were nowhere near as close, with 63.71 percent no and 36.29 percent yes, the fourth lowest yes vote in the nation¹²⁵ (BBC.com). Days prior to the official vote, Shetland made it clear that if Scotland

became its own nation that the islands may do the same in turn.¹²⁶ This news was not unexpected since Shetland has been officially toying with independence since 1989, and regularly votes against Scotland's separation from the United Kingdom.¹²⁷ Despite petitions for Shetland and Orkney to become more autonomous, the Scottish National Party (SNP) Government and the Labour Party are slow to give the islands more sovereignty and self-governance.

The SNP is holding a gun to the islanders' heads and saying 'I will not do anything for you unless you vote yes'. It is like the proverbial English colonial governor telling the natives what to do. People in the islands are very independent minded and they do not like being treated like this. (Tavish Scott¹²⁸ qtd. J. Brown)

Scotland is treating Shetland in the same manner as the English have treated Scotland for over 400 years. Scotland's blatant disregard of Shetland's cultural heritage and unique needs is especially ironic when compared to the relationship between England and Scotland. The Independence movement (and the Jacobite movement before that) formed as a way to reject the treatment from England. The Scots who believe in independence seek fair treatment for the Scottish culture and want an equal voice in making decisions that impact their own lives. Yet, when Shetlanders want an equal voice in what happens to their islands and decisions that impact their way of life, the SNP majority government refuses to compromise (Addley). Instead of being inclusive and understanding, the SNP government may be putting the delicate relationship between mainland Scotland and Shetland in turmoil.

The question of independence raised complex issues of identity for most Scots around the country, who needed to take stock of their own allegiances to London and Scotland. Independence is especially fraught within the Northern Islands.¹²⁹ The local Liberal Democratic chairman in Shetland, Theo Nicolson,¹³⁰ when speaking of his own identity, described the

complex identity of most Shetlanders to the *Guardian* in 2014. Nicolson defined himself as a “Shetlander, and then British.” When asked if he felt Scottish, his reply consisted of a long pause and he acknowledged he did, but only because his mother was Scottish. He went on to explain his hesitancy, “We’re so different here in Shetland. Our history; we were part of Norway of course and we’ve always had a strong Norse background. We don’t have the tartan culture here” (Addley). Nicholson emphasized his complex identity as Shetlander and as British. Shetlander encompasses a combination of Norse and Scots, but the emphasis does not lie with relation to Scotland. His rejection of “tartan culture” clearly differentiates the islands from the mainland. Though Shetland does have a registered tartan, it does not reflect the islands, but instead serves as a reminder of the island that controls them. The tartan ceases to be a symbol of rebellion and culture on Shetland and instead represents oppression and control. The rejection of the tartan serves as a clear place for the *Ignition* project to focus their visual style. The production does not utilize any plaids or tweeds, and in fact is the only production discussed within this dissertation that does not costume with these woven fabrics. Instead, the wool and knit culture become central to the imagery and creation of *Ignition*.

The connection Nicolson feels toward Britain is stronger than any connection he feels toward Scotland.¹³¹ Nicholson’s feelings toward Scotland and England are not unique, but are the dominant feeling throughout Shetland. “In Shetland we have perhaps traditionally viewed ourselves and being not quite Scottish” (*The New Shetlander* qtd. Nihtinen 247). The dominant feeling is not complete rejection of Scottish culture, but there is no embracing of Scottish culture either. Instead there is a call for a middle ground, where both cultures can simultaneously exist and where identities can become more complex. “As devolution is established and as there are perhaps increasingly thoughts about what it is to be Scottish, then it would be an enormous

mistake to try to define a single Scottish identity. Many Scottish communities, while holding so much in common, also have their own identities” (*The New Shetlander* qtd. Nihtinen 247). With such tense relations between the Northern Islands and the Scottish mainland the National Theatre of Scotland and Shetland Arts collaborative performance piece *Ignition* shifts from local entertainment to political peacekeeping. The performance re-examines the complex identity of (non)Scottishness prevalent throughout Shetland and seeks to celebrate those things which make Shetland unique. The celebration shifts the political discussion from separation to cooperation.

Celebrating and “claiming” Shetland can easily become a dark underhanded claim to Shetland’s oil. Since 1976 the islands have been able to support themselves financially without much help from Edinburgh due to the remarkable profit made from the oil industry across the islands (Addley). Shetland’s oil resources are important to Scotland and a very obvious reason as to why Shetland was the focus of so many NTS performances during the theatre’s short tenure. However, I don’t believe the claim to oil and resources in the Northern Isles should detract from the legitimate desires on behalf of NTS to celebrate the people. Instead the two claims can be seen to complement one another. Oil has influenced, shaped, and in some cases destroyed Shetland culture, but Shetland more than likely would not be thriving and attracting visitors to the remote north without the discovery of oil. Thus by claiming Shetland artistically, one has to claim the oil, claim the handicrafts, and claim the fishing industry, for all of these elements make the contemporary Shetlanders who they are.

Da final purl: *Ignition* and Shetland

*Ignition*¹³² was not the performance of a singly dramatic work but was instead a cultural installation, with artistic events occurring on the Shetland Islands for a total of seven months. These encompassed school-specific events, including the workshops teaching parkour, “pop-up”

events featuring the White Wife, and public events that emphasized community involvement (including a knitting community and the final drive-in style performance) (L. Ward). These events worked to shift the relationship between Shetland and mainland Scotland by highlighting similarities, through the shared cèilidh culture and cooperation between the NTS and Shetland Arts, while simultaneously celebrating difference, such as acknowledging the Shetlander Viking heritage and integrating the unique tradition of the Shetland Sunday afternoon tea into the cèilidh. The production seeks to celebrate a separate form of Scottishness, much like the other productions discussed within this dissertation. However, Shetland is singular in this aim because in celebrating the Shetland Islands' "Scottishness," the NTS production also seeks to claim Shetland as Scottish, through the act of inclusivity. It is a small act of cultural re-framing, but it pushes Shetland into the shared community of Scots that the NTS is striving so hard to represent and speak for on stages within performance spaces across Scotland. The cultural claim is not one of consolidation but instead is clearly one of celebration and inclusion without the pressure of converting or changing Shetland in any way.

The challenge for the *Ignition* project is then to simultaneously convince Shetlanders that they are a vital part of mainland Scotland and to persuade the mainlanders that the Shetlandic population is valuable and equally important to the identity of Scotland. By centering the performance around the death of a local young artist in an automobile accident, director Wils Wilson¹³³ and associate director, and Shetland native, John Haswell, emphasize the melancholic nature surrounding the relationship between mainland Scotland and Shetland. The initial marketing on the NTS website also reiterates this mood when describing the program,¹³⁴ "Over the course of seven months from October 2012, all 23,000 inhabitants of Shetland are invited to explore our bittersweet relationship with the automobile - how it shapes us, defines us, supports

us, frees us, challenges our attitudes towards our dwindling resources and, sometimes, kills us” (“Ignition”). The bittersweet framing is emphasized, and yet the performance is already celebrating the complex nature of Shetlanders. By including the population in the advertisement, the inhabitants of Shetland are reminded that though they seem to live in a remote and isolated location that they are surrounded by quite a few people,¹³⁵ and also the advertisement points out to mainland Scots that Shetland is surprisingly populous. The catalogue of relationships with cars then opens up the performance from Shetland to a more universal understanding. Though the situation with roads and oil is truly unique to Shetland, the relationship with the car in the modern world is not. So no matter how removed and community-focused the show attempts to be, the ultimate stories and memories that arise will have a level of universalism. It is the combination of universal message and individual connectivity that attempts to re-frame the average Shetlander’s national identity from one that is anti-Scottish to one that embraces at least a small bit of their Scottish identity.

The creative work around *Ignition* began in 2008 with the death of nineteen-year-old Stuart Henderson in a head-on collision. He was a member of the Shetland Youth Theatre and was particularly interested in backstage work. Associate director John Haswell approached Vicky Featherstone, who was the artistic director of the NTS at the time, and proposed a collaboration between Shetland Arts and the NTS that would address some of the issues that led to Henderson’s death. Haswell particularly wanted to avoid addressing road safety but instead wanted to focus on the role of the car, and more specifically the car in Shetland (John Haswell, Wils Wilson, *Ignition* documentary). Featherstone then contacted director Wils Wilson and asked her to join the project. Wilson was chosen because she directed *Home* Shetland during the

NTS inaugural performances in 2006. Wilson and Haswell collaborated and shaped the project for approximately two years before the *Ignition* project began.

The focus of *Ignition* is on the world that Stuart Henderson inhabited. The performance seeks to add his story to the experiences of other Shetlanders through tales of love, loss, reunion, and nostalgia. Melancholic and nostalgic desires fueled the project and ultimately shaped the culminating performance. The call for participation, as posted on the NTS webpage, pushed the Shetland community to share stories that are beyond the everyday comments on the weather and tide. The NTS sought stories that could contribute to a complex composite portrait of the of the islands, tales that could challenge the ideas of national identity among both Scottish people on the Shetland islands and on the mainland.

Haswell and Wilson radically rethought the notion of ethnography as a part of community theatre by making the collecting of Shetland's stories not only research but an integral part of an interactive performance. They cast English performance artist Lowri Evans to collect stories while portraying a figure from recent legend in the Shetlands known as "the White Wife."¹³⁶ The White Wife did not exist until about twenty years ago, making her the ideal figure to roam the countryside, hitching rides and collecting stories about cars and roadways (English). In tales of the White Wife, she travels with lone male drivers at night on the Isle of Unst. It is not completely clear in the lore where she comes from or who she is. Some claim she was



Figure 12: *White Wife2* by Simon Murphy, featuring Lowri Evans

killed in a car accident and thus roams the highways, while others assert someone she loved was killed on the road and she haunts the highways looking for him. Evans hitchhiked across the three largest islands (Mainland, Unst, and Yell) as the “Hitchhiker in Residence” (see figure 12). Evans lived among the people of Shetland and travelled in the cars of strangers who were willing to pick her up. Her questions revolved around the relationship with the car, but many stories catapult into love, loss, hope, remembrance, and nostalgia as she travelled across the winding roads of islands. One man listed the cars he’s owned alphabetically, while others simply reflected on their first cars or a specific experience driving the lonesome highways.

After about two months, the White Wife expanded her methods for collecting stories, offering Sunday Tea in an RV to the people of Shetland parked at pre-determined locations. During this same time the White Wife also collected stories from passengers on public buses and on the inter-island ferry. In each iteration of the White Wife’s travels, she engaged with the travelers and drivers, specifically by listening to their stories. Finally, the performance culminated in an immersive car-theatre experience where the audience was surrounded by “the movement discipline of parkour, music, hitchhikers, dance and text” (“Ignition”). The final performance combined what the community could produce and emphasized the unique aspects of the island. Young people learned parkour through an *Ignition*-sponsored camp, and their new skills were combined with an existing ballroom dance group to create a unique performance piece. Other pieces referenced the White Wife through hitchhiking, and music was integral to the entire piece. The culminating performance will be discussed more in-depth later in the chapter.

The cultural re-framing of national identity in Shetland was also a media event. The performance, which included all modes of story collecting, community events, and the final performance, took place only throughout the Shetland Islands. *Ignition* did not tour Scotland as

the majority of the NTS shows do but instead was rooted within the community that produced it. Overall, this rootedness made for a limited audience for the production, due to the remote location of Shetland. However, through the technologies of Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and the NTS's Wordpress blog, mainland Scotland and the rest of the world was introduced to *Ignition* performance and to the unique lives of Shetlanders. The performances that made up the *Ignition* were not filmed and then placed online, but instead snippets of the happenings were tweeted or blogged about. As a result the majority of the Scots on the mainland only had access to a taste of the experience and were marginalized from the immersive experience itself. This performance inverted the marginalization between Shetland and Scotland by placing the Shetlanders in the privileged role and leaving the mainlanders out of the action.

The media events surrounding the live performances across Shetland capitalized on the marketing of *Ignition* to Shetland locals through those same media while simultaneously connecting those living beyond the islands to the performance process. The blog, tweets, posts, and videos were not created *for* the mainland Scots, but reached them and linked them to the performance. The virtual world was an intimate conversation with the Islanders. The blog did not go too far out of its way to describe or make sense of observations throughout the islands but instead documented and celebrated what it found. The audience of outsiders on the mainland were merely given contextual hints and needed to create their own view of the performance and its individual pieces. Though there is a critical resistance to discussing site-specific work without viewing or participating in said work, I believe discussion and analysis of *Ignition* from an outsider perspective is valid. I did not see this production, nor did most of the population of Scotland. Thus, not only am I an outsider, but most Scots are as well. My discussion of *Ignition* takes the stance of the majority “audience member” throughout the project, which is the

mainland Scot and others following the project online (through the official blog, Twitter, and Facebook) but do not have access to the actual production. I therefore focus mainly on the production as observed through media, advertisements, and marketing. The blog, tweets, and Facebook posts act as a re-performance, allowing those who do not live in Shetland to become part of the community viewing and producing the initial performance. My analysis of *Ignition* considers both the performance itself in terms of structure, community involvement, events, and site-specificity, and also the observation of after effects, or the response to performance, the Twittersphere, the publication of the “Car Yarns” collection,¹³⁷ the commemorative DVD for participants, etc.

Ignition created a virtual community, one that both acknowledges Shetland’s unique aspects and traditions but one that also emphasizes Shetland’s Scottishness. Benedict Anderson emphasizes that national fervor is fostered by a shared sense of personal identity, and this identity is shaped in three major ways: by systems of production, communication, and language (43). The reflection of Anderson’s theory can be seen throughout Shetland. The majority of people are crofters who either changed careers to support the oil trade or who opened specialty stores to support the growing tourist population. The isolation of the island prioritizes local forms of communication over national communication—prior to the internet, a newspaper from Aberdeen would be old news by the time it arrived in Shetland. Anderson underscores the technological aspect of communication with an emphasis on print, but I believe in a community such as Shetland the lasting power of the oral tradition takes the same place within the community as contemporary print or technological sources. The Sunday afternoon tea, for example, places community members together to share the news and happenings of the week.

Finally, the unique language in Shetland sets it apart from the rest of Scotland. Their language is a combination of Norse and Scots phrases and dialects.¹³⁸

Paralleling the push to have Scots recognized as an accepted form of communication, the Shetlandic dialect is slowly gaining popularity in text and speech. The Shetlandic dialect is considered a dialect of Scots, and Scots is most commonly classified as a dialect of English. Thus Shetlandic is doubly removed from the “mother tongue” and viewed as doubly inferior.

But in the global market, with its emphasis upon “branding”, Shetland will perhaps have to work harder to be understood as well. More seriously, what should be clear to us all is that this little gathering of land in the north Atlantic is unique and precious, its music and its language, its songs and its dances. And when the prestige of the local is raised higher, people will perhaps feel more at their ease speaking and writing Shetlandic. (Robert Alan Jamison qtd. Nihtinen 219-20)

The *Ignition* project celebrates unique language and expression found on Shetland simply by using the stories told and utilizing their original phrasing. The community-based production method also allows the natural dialect to survive, for the community writes and performs the final performance. Instead of the NTS “parachuting in” and overlaying the community with a performance, the company, and especially directors Wils Wilson and John Haswell, emphasizes that the performance must come from within the community itself. The culminating performance is then both site specific and community specific (Wils Wilson, *Ignition* documentary). The community specificity allows for language and shared experience to connect the otherwise seemingly disjointed pieces. Jacqui Clark, a creative artist involved in the organization and performance of *Ignition*, claimed the ultimate result from the community focus was that final performance felt like Shetland. The NTS was not attempting to force the Shetland Islands to

become more Scottish by throwing tartan and thistles their way but instead sought to acknowledge the heritage and voice of the Shetland Islands and to emphasize that it too is a version of Scottishness (Wils Wilson, *Ignition* documentary). At the end of the NTS *Ignition* documentary, Jacqui Clark reflected on what she will remember most from the project and emphasized the intentions of the NTS: “Not only the National Theatre of Scotland came in here, um, and didn’t parachute in and didn’t inflict they really did come in and embrace the Shetland community and let the Shetland community share *their* car stories and *their* car journeys so that the actual end product and the whole project really did feel as if it was Shetlands and that for me is the greatest thing” (Jacqui Clark, *Ignition* documentary, emphasis in original). Clark, a Shetland native, throughout her final reflection emphasized the role of the Shetlanders in the production and the support NTS gave to allow the islands and their people to be the focus of the performance.

The ongoing mission of NTS is to celebrate the diversity and unique cultures found throughout Scotland, and artistic goals in Shetland are not removed from this mission. The NTS founding manifesto states, “As well as producing our own work, we will collaborate with the best companies and individuals working here already.” Thus by traveling to Shetland and collaborating with Shetland Arts, the NTS is striving to uphold its manifesto to collaborate with local artists and companies and to not superimpose its mission but instead to merge the goals of both NTS and the collaborating artist. The focus on a marginalized community is clearly a political move, one of revision that attempts to better the relationship between Shetland the Scottish mainland. The imagined community of Scots created through the marketing and recording of the *Ignition* project goes beyond cultural regionalities and instead seeks to finally connect the Highlands, Lowlands, and Islands.¹³⁹

The survival of an oral culture made The Islands of Shetland the perfect backdrop for *Ignition*. Oral culture is unique in Orkney and Shetland because of their shared histories. Any written documentation of the Orcadians or Shetlanders can only be found in the literary works of other nations, specifically in Norse lore (Macdonald 42). In the unique combination of Norse culture and isolation, the oral culture in Orkney and Shetland has survived and even thrived. On the mainland of Scotland, most Norse tales were lost with the decline of the ballad tradition (Macdonald 42-43). The oral tradition was preserved due to a Celtic socialization tradition “comparable to that of cèilidh in the Highlands and Islands,” which consisted of “sharing of songs, tunes, stories, skills and popular wisdom at gatherings” (Macdonald 43). The late bloom of technological advances in Shetland and the Orkney Islands probably also contributed to this phenomenon, as getting together as a community was one of the only forms of entertainment when road access was limited and the weather prevented travel between the islands for much of the year. It was through this cèilidh tradition that the Norse legends were preserved in Shetland and Orkney and that a culture of storytellers was born. Even after roads were built and paved throughout Shetland, the oral culture within Shetland was maintained. Communities throughout the Shetland Islands still gather on Sundays for tea to share stories and experiences, whereas this tradition has all but died out across mainland Scotland. *Ignition* capitalizes on the importance of story sharing and community congregation to celebrate an age-old tradition, but with a contemporary twist.

The White Wife has been wandering for so long that she has begun to rot and is always depicted as smelling foul and having her clothes melting away. Wilson and the production team chose to go in a completely different direction with the White Wife, and instead of costuming Evans as the rotting woman in contemporary legend, they went back to even older folklore, and

dressed Evans as a woman from the Celtic tradition. The image of the White Wife relied on the iconic vision of femininity and beauty in the Celtic mythic traditions: pale skin, dark hair, and blood red lips. Evans was costumed in a long, Edwardian, white dress, covered by a hooded white cape that trailed along behind her as she hitched and that became more and more bedraggled the longer she traveled. Evans' costume completed the anachronistic image of the traveling woman, placing her out of time and space and emphasizing more romantic qualities that exist in the contemporary myth. Her costume also hinted at her identity as a ghost, and hinted at gothic significance.

Placing Evans in white served many purposes. First, it made her easier to spot on the road, especially at night when her flowing cape would catch the reflection of headlights, but also the pure white in contrast to her ruby lips emphasized the character's purity and innocence. She was unblemished except for the dirt of the road, and her experiences were those that the drivers give to her—she was the canvas on which the tales could be composed. Evans' costume also reflected the naïve assumption of an outsider visiting Shetland: she wore a romanticized cape and dress to islands where many believe life is picturesque—consisting only of sweater knitting and sheep herding. While her romantic Celtic garb seemed at first to reflect the nostalgic idealization of the Shetlands that its people wish to put behind them, by the end of the performance, the White Wife's costume reflected a national vision of contemporary community. It is her conversations with the people of Shetland that allowed the White Wife to strip off that romantic image and change into more contemporary dress by the final performance.

Altering the lore also served many purposes, just as the costume operated on different levels. On the surface the change served an aesthetic purpose for the success of the hitching phase. Drivers were much more likely to pick up a friendly-looking (and beautiful) woman in

antiquated garb than a contemporary, rotting woman. Beyond the appeal of a lovely hitcher, the change in costume also blended the Celtic aesthetic and the Shetland lore, creating a new image that represented both simultaneously without favoring one over the other. This same blending of culture was then reflected in the objectives of the performance, by simultaneously celebrating Shetland and merging those Shetland traditions with Celtic traditions. The *Ignition* White Wife hitchhiked during all times of the day and all conditions of weather; she didn't restrict her choice of drivers to only lone men at night, and as a result she continued to distance herself from the myth, creating her own image and role in Shetland's society throughout her 157 encounters while hitchhiking.

The small changes in the folkloric image of the White Wife allowed NTS to revise the folklore and to reframe ideas of the past in Shetland. *Ignition* reached back to the Norse roots of the islands and profits from the tourism that supports the islands today. In some ways the White Wife, though a part of local lore, acted as a tourist during her story collection travels. Wils Wilson mentioned that when casting the White Wife they specifically wanted someone who had never been to Shetland before and who had no expectations of what the islands would be like (*Ignition* documentary). Evans' Englishness allowed her to play tourist without the tenuous connections to Scotland and Scottishness. If a Scottish actress played the White Wife she too would have been a tourist, for the culture and location are so far afield of what can be found on mainland Scotland, and inversely Shetlanders visiting the mainland would probably feel as if they were in a foreign land in Edinburgh. The regions of Scotland differ dramatically, and the more miles that separate those regions, the more they diverge. The challenge therein was to create a mood of exploration for the mainland Scots at home who were following the project but to not isolate the Shetlanders in such a way that they felt as if they were not Scottish as a result.

The production needed to emphasize the openness of “Scottishness” and to maintain that being a tourist throughout your own nation leads to understanding and enriched experiences, not isolation and alienation.

In order to ease into cross-cultural experiences within one’s own nation, the “outsider” perspective of the English Evans as the White Wife was used. She traveled about the isles with ease and acceptance, her motives were (for the most part) unquestioned for though she was clearly an outsider, and she was viewed as one who shared an identity with the native Shetlanders. Britishness is an identity most Shetlanders take for granted—Queen and governmental decisions make little difference to the small collection of islands but do provide stability in the form of currency, armed forces, economics, a judicial system, etc. (Nihtinen 155-157). Thus their Britishness is not something really forced upon them but something that simply provides security and comfort while they remain removed from the day-to-day lives of the majority of the British citizens. Many Shetlanders are also connected to Britain through military service. This is in sharp contrast to the contested identity of “Britishness” in mainland Scotland, where Scottishness is touted as the primary national identity, and Britishness is secondary (Wilmer, “Subversive Affirmation” 95).

In designing the performance NTS, desired the White Wife to be a performer who had never been to Shetland before. Native to Manchester, Evans’ dialect informed each and every driver that picked her up that she was a tourist. She did not assume that they share a culture or a heritage, but she wanted to learn and explore. Evans’ desire to learn and listen about clear separation of her culture from the culture of Shetland allowed for her to be the ideal White Wife. By not being a native Shetlander, the stories that she collected shaped her impression of each

location and each bend in the road and allowed for the performance to be devised solely from material shared by native Shetlanders.

Hitchhiking was not limited to individual cars on the road but was expanded to modes of public transportation, including buses, inter-island ferries, and taxis, in December 2012. The focus for the bus story collection was to share stories about the need and use of public transport. For one week, Evans rode on buses as the White Wife, each day focusing on a different route, and on occasion two smaller routes within one day. She spoke to large groups of people across the isle or individually when sharing a seat, and shared tea with drivers between routes. As she spoke to people, she wrote on the bus windows with chalk pen, as a sort of live recording of conversations.¹⁴⁰ These windows with words were read by passengers and captured by cell phone cameras; one bus driver asked Evans “leave them on the windows, I want to read them when I finish- find out what my passengers have been saying” (“On Da Buses with the White Wife”). The mere act of recording these stories on the windows allowed the driver (and passengers) a “window” into the lives of the everyday Shetlander—from hopes and dreams to frustrations and disappointments.

The buses were transformed, and the text of their stories were literally written on the landscape as the bus drove by. “The moving landscapes, layered with pieces of text transformed the bus into an installation” (“On Da Buses with the White Wife”). The mere act of interpreting the landscape through overwriting it with words acts as a type of claim on the land itself by the artist. “It is up to the artist to learn how to read and write the complexity of the language of the land. [...] The Shetland moorland is alien and otherworldly, aeons have passed during its formation and the artist must ask himself or herself how to set about wrapping this landscape in words or just capturing it with the strokes of a brush” (M. Smith 9). The artist can claim the

landscape simply by taking the time to understand it and to reflect it to an audience. The islands hold many mysteries, and in revising the way the land is viewed, Evans highlighted the beauty and wonder of the everyday. It is a subtle claim, but Evans' writing on the windows changed the way the landscape is viewed. It caused passengers to re-observe what is so often overlooked. The writing on the bus windows was representative of the goals for the entire project—to allow for daily lives and seemingly average objects to be seen in a new light and to be re-appreciated as something completely different. She thus took the normal and raised it to the level of art through a simple act that elevated the banal to the extraordinary.

In order to collect more stories and to explore an additional form of transportation, Rob Evans¹⁴¹ (dramaturg) and Jacqui Clark (creative artist) spent the afternoon of 14 December 2012, in a taxi control room, chatting to drivers about their experiences in cabs. Instead of riding along with the drivers, they were able to talk to drivers during their time off. The final “hitchhiking” events took place on the inter-island ferries during February of 2013. During these trips, Lowri Evans collected stories from passengers as they (and their cars) moved from one island to another. No matter how devoted one is to one's car, the car can only serve him or her while on each island and fails him or her once the shore is reached. The sea is inescapable: it supplies the oil, which runs the cars and ferries, but it also controls travel, creates weather, and isolates each island from the others. Only ten of the one hundred islands are populated, and some are very sparsely populated, and the ferries are the only way to connect those living in the most remote of places to the city centers, to the modern ways of communication. The ferries reflect the immense change that has swept through the islands in the last sixty years. Previously, “Shetlanders [had] identified much more with their village or parish, to the extent of fierce rivalries with other villages or parishes. There were many stories about these disputes and some areas had been

worse than others” (Nihtinen 156). There was little accessibility to the other islands, so each community kept to itself, which resulted in more stable populations and a more stable culture. Once travel between islands became easier, these strong ties to community began to loosen and inter-island communication became the norm. Lowri Evans’ collection of stories on the ferries acknowledges the importance of connectivity between the islands, and by collecting the stories on the ferries instead of on one island or another, she does not privilege one community over another but instead gives preferences to the space between and to the story itself. The landscape on the ferries is completely different than on the bus, because of the water, tide, weather, and lack of connection to a specific place. The landscape is fluid, and the stories reflect that fluidity as they pass from story teller to story collector.

The Sunday teas in the RV acted as a bridge between the cèilidh culture of mainland Scotland and the traditional Sunday afternoon tea in Shetland. The mobile “cèilidh” allowed people to come in out of the cold and to share their stories, and to share them as a group instead of individually with the White Wife. When looking at the tea as a cèilidh, I am considering the original definition of the word, which encompassed all social gatherings or events. Dancing and revelry was not required, and the historical cèilidh often revolved around storytelling and the community. The *Ignition* team re-created this historical cèilidh by creating a space where sharing and storytelling was the epicenter of a community event. The “Sunday Teas on Wheels” also allowed for more story collecting. The Sunday afternoon tea is a unique Shetland event where community members gather at the community hall and pay a few pounds for tea and fancies (small tea cakes). The money goes toward the upkeep of the community hall and allows for community members of all ages to get together and share stories of the past week (“Our Shetland Sunday Tea”).

The cèilidh/tea acted as a way for Evans and her crew to become more active within the community and the traditions therein. The National Theatre of Scotland blog advertised the Sunday tea in order to find participants who yearned for the traditional cèilidh experience: “It felt like it was my [Lowri Evans] turn to do the driving and looking after, and in the finest Shetland tradition, a Sunday Tea seemed the perfect way to say thank you. And to save our guests travelling, we would not only serve the tea, we would bring it to you” (“Our Shetland Sunday Tea”). Evans served tea to anyone who booked ahead, or at times even those walking by, who wanted to stop in for a warm cuppa. At one point she served an entire group of motorcyclists who just happened to be passing through. Anyone who came into the RV for tea would be asked to share a story, about their relationship with cars, with the road, with travel of any kind, and the tea would end with a “wee sing-song.” Tea attendees, Evans, and her driver would play instruments and sing well-known songs and end their time together just as the traditional Sunday afternoon tea would end.

The music serves as a unique way to link together the story-collecting portion of the performance with the community events and ultimately the final performance. Composer, Hugh Nankivell, who wrote the original music for *Home Shetland*, returned to Shetland to head the musical component of the performance. Nankivell hosted open music sessions across the islands and one family music session where all age groups were welcomed. During these sessions Nankivell brought some of his own music in for the community to play and sought collaboration for writing some new songs. The main thrust of the workshops was to co-create a song, through collecting music and ideas, that would represent the drive from Skaw to Sumburgh (*Ignition* documentary). Skaw is the northernmost location of the islands, located on the Isle of Unst, and the road from Skaw bends and turns through the three largest islands, ending in Sumburgh, the

most southerly town located on the Isle of Mainland. The song was composed in such a manner that each movement or change would represent the major road marks along the way, including ferry terminals and the associated crossing. Each song was to line up with the journey, so theoretically one could start listening as they left Skaw and the soundtrack would change along with the travels south along the road (*Ignition* documentary). In addition to this major undertaking, the sessions also sought to produce new songs, which would be performed at the close of the culminating performance. The songs collected were ultimately performed by those who helped to write them, who were either part of the band or the choir that led the sing-song during the final tea. Nankivell's compositions not only served as a fun way to involve families and musicians within the project but also sought to pay homage to the unique sound of Shetland's folk music.

While Lowri Evans was hitchhiking and collecting stories with Sunday afternoon teas, other members of the *Ignition* team were organizing community events in order to collect more stories and to involve community members who may not be drivers. Jacqui Clark, who worked to collect stories in taxis, also coordinated the Makkin' and Yakkin' sessions. In these sessions "knitters will be encouraged to 'mak' (knit) and 'yak' (share stories). Tea, coffee and cake (yarn



Figure 13: Knitted Car by Seth Hardwick

fuel) will be available" (L. Ward). Mostly women attended the Mak and Yak events, though anyone was welcome. Each attendee (approximately thirty in total) knitted panels to be bound together to make a "car cozy" covering the *Ignition* car. Together they shared over thirty hours

of stories while they generated the key piece of the knitted car (see figure 13), which served as the symbol of the production as a whole.

The addition of a textile creation event clearly seeks to celebrate the importance of the woolen knitwear industry to the islands. Both raw wool and woolen products, such as sweaters, mittens, and hats, are marketable resources for the people of Shetland. Knitwear became especially important in the 1960s as Shetlanders began to trade these wares, and more young people remained on the island to work in the knitwear factories. The mak and yak were the home to the most heartfelt and deeply emotional stories that were shared during the event, and because so many of these stories really cut to the heart of the performance they were all collected and produced into a “glovebox” booklet entitled “Car Yarns” as a keepsake for each participant in the production. Thus even the mak and yak stories that did not make it into the culminating performance have a life beyond their initial shared moment. The focus on the woolen crafts also helped to shift focus from the tartan to the real material representation of the islands in the form of knitted wool.

The public event of sharing stories while knitting returns again to the cèilidh tradition, only now with a focus on the hearth and home as compared to the road. Even though the stories shared were about the road, the situation brought all the stories back to the home, to warmth and to family. “As in other Scottish domestic contexts, evening gatherings in the Northern Isles would have involved indoor work, especially for the women, who seldom rested from household chores (knitting, spinning, carding wool), while the men might be busy weaving straw ropes, baskets and similar items” (Macdonald 43). The act of working together while sharing stories is not unique to Celtic culture but has been fostered amongst Celtic people, especially the Irish and the Scottish. Macdonald points out the cèilidh for a woman was not a respite from work, as the

Sunday tea clearly is, but instead was a way to work inside. The women could knit and share the burden of work with one another. The women who attended Mak and Yak may not have been taking advantage of the session to get work for the home completed, but they still shouldered the burden of creating enough panels to cover the car together. The *Ignition* project's highlighting this tradition through the knitting campaign emphasized the importance of communal working and sharing to the people of Shetland, thus underscoring the significance of the Celtic culture to the Shetlanders.

Wilson and her team sought to represent all ages and experiences in the *Ignition* project and to include as many Shetlanders in the creation of the project as possible. A performance cannot represent a community if sections of that community are ignored. The *Ignition* project posed a unique problem: since its focus was on cars, the majority of stories collected would privilege those of driving age and ignore the elderly and the young. Thus, two major story-collecting initiatives were designed to reach out to these age groups. Janice Parker, the movement director for the culminating project, ran a five-week dance residency and collected stories at Wastview Care Home,¹⁴² but she soon found that most of her stories did not have to do much with cars but instead focused on walking the dirt roads, on the repetition of a daily traversed commute, and the changes cars have brought to Shetland. The history re-told by the care home residents revealed the recent changes in the Shetland landscape. The storytellers focused on loss and nostalgia for a time gone by and as a result emphasized the shift in lifestyle over the past forty years. These stories of life before cars were so poignant and impactful that they were featured in the Car Corral performance where they were juxtaposed poetically with the contemporary action of parkour and the nostalgic recreation of ballroom dance outings.

The community events also sought to engage those who were not yet of driving age but could still be involved in the final production. Chris Grant, of Northern Focus Parkour (out of Lerwick), taught parkour workshops with young people, with a specific emphasis on mapping and traveling across the local landscape. He also led “New Journeys in Familiar Places,” where he’d take an audience on a tour of familiar places but focus on travel without roads. Dance workshops were organized for residents of all ages, run by John Morris. Dream Car Workshops were held for primary and secondary school students as a way to dream life journeys, play games, and in some cases to actually work on restoring an old car. The students were able to utilize their enthusiasm and passion for parkour but be challenged in terms of a new context in theatre to develop skills as a performer. Composer Hugh Nankivell ran open music sessions to gather community input for the writing of music used for the final production.

All of these events, workshops, and training sessions served to involve as much of the community as possible in the production. Director Wils Wilson strove to create a final production that was not possible with a professional company, and her solution to that was to bring together community members, with their diverse talents, and to adapt the performance to them. She and her team worked with the skills people already had but in a new way to add to their vocabularies and as a result make their journey as important as the final performance. Ultimately the project was about gathering stories, but it was also about gathering people (*Ignition* documentary). The gathering of people is emphasized with the opening of the final performance, where each audience member (or at least each car load of audience members) picked up a hitcher on their way to the performance venue. Wilson emphasized that since each hitcher was a different person, each one should have a different story. All the stories used in the piece were finessed with the help of dramaturg Rob Evans, but all were true stories that had been collected. Rob Evans

described the process as taking the normal and raising it to the level of art. Sometimes that was as simple as putting music behind a story, or pushing the storyteller into sharing a part of the story that is more intimate or more specific so the story becomes unrecognizable as the everyday.

Rob Evans strove to initiate straightforward changes in the everyday world depicted in the performances that would elevate the ordinary to the unexpected. He worked with the actors in the culminating piece to elevate their monologues, but in the case of the bus windows this elevation occurred naturally. The view that was everyday and average suddenly was overwritten by observations, hopes, dreams, and celebrations. It is through the creation of art, and specifically the momentary capture of a time and place, that allows the landscape of Shetland to transform from merely existing in time to occupying the realm of the eternal, allowing Shetland to be preserved.

The culminating piece was created and devised by community members, under the direction of the NTS and Shetland Arts creative team. An announcement for what to expect at the final performance was posted on the NTS website:

The idea is simple.

You arrive at your starting venue, which this week is the Brae Hall.

You are then escorted by one of our Hitchers to your first venue.

That will be either a movement feast at the Car Corral or on to the

Car Theatre where there are various pieces performed – of which you will see one.

This is a promenade performance with a difference. (Clark)

The instructions are clear yet vague enough that the performance is not ruined for those who attend. The duration of the performance is also hinted at: it begins with the hitchers and then there are two more segments, but audience members will only see one. This advertisement also

does not seek to include the mainland population of Scotland, but only serves to pique their interest and highlight that the performance is for those who live on Shetland or those who are willing to travel to see it. The mainland “audience” would then have to wait for highlights of the show to be posted online and would have to work to connect the pieces to form the whole of the production.

Describing the piece as promenade with a difference allows for audience members to know they will travel throughout the show, but in traditional promenade theatre all audience members travel together and see a certain number of scenes in a specific order. Here, there are many scenes that are missed by each audience member. Some may see a performance in the RV, while another experiences a one-on-one performance in a small car with a bearded man. This organizational style allows for unique performance experiences. Though the Shetlanders gather once a week to share stories, the *Ignition* performances allowed these stories to be slightly removed from the source and changed just enough, by the addition of music, or movement, to elevate the “everyday” to something spectacular. Dramaturg Rob Evans worked with performers to help add these elements to the stories collected. The goal of each story is to push the audience to see themselves and their home in a new and refreshed way. By pushing the performances to be slightly unrecognizable and yet familiar opens the door for conversations amongst audience members after the performances have ended.

The culminating community theatre performance combines venues, travel, and site-specific work to create a performance that re-enacts the artist residency. The audience arrives at the community hall and mills about while the White Wife sits in the front of the room reading “Have you ever” questions to the audience. These questions vary in complexity, and some are clearly derived from her story collecting while others are more superficial and can apply to anyone.

“Have you ever done your Christmas shopping in Aberdeen? Have you ever broken down? Have you ever taken five kids on holiday in the back of Volvo? Have you ever had a day of reckoning? Have you ever pretended to drive in a parked car?” etc. (*Ignition*). Her questions end with “Have you ever stood in a hall wondering what you happen next?” and her final question signals the official beginning of the performance.

The community hall is filled with anticipation as Lowri Evans, again dressed as the White Wife begins the performance. She looks reminiscent of a 1960s flight attendant. She is now dressed in a knee-length pencil skirt, white blazer, white scarf tied around her neck, and white button hat with a white feather, and she chats through the organization of the evening. As she tells the audience about the show, a video following the roads of Shetland is playing behind her, swooping and turning along the landscape. She encourages the audience to “Relax sit back and enjoy the ride. You are our passengers. No one will see exactly the same thing this evening”

(*Ignition*). At this point the White Wife ceases to play the travel agent of sorts, and leaves just before the audience goes on their way to experience various short performance pieces. She closes by saying, “Now if you’ll

excuse me I have my own traveling to do this evening keep your eyes peeled

for me, I will be looking out for you,” and then walks to where her white cape is on display (over her Edwardian white gown) puts the cape on over her modern costume, removes her hat and



Figure 14: JG Ignition by James Glossop featuring Members of Ignition Cast

pulls up the hood, and exits into the darkness. The audience then follows suit and exits the hall to drive to the Car Theatre a few miles away.

Everyone must drive to the Car Theatre, and on their way each car must pick up a hitcher. Audience members know they will be escorted by a hitcher, but they do not know they will need to pick up that hitcher, have him or her ride in their car, and in essence play host to the actor dressed in a long white cape who hops into their cars. Each hitcher is now the White Wife (see figure 14), and fills her role within each car. They are strangers who are picked up by willing drivers, and they must share their stories. By multiplying the role of the White Wife, the culminating creative piece emphasizes that the loneliness and need for companionship on the road is not limited to one ghost of lore but extends to the populace of Shetland. The hitchers each have a story to tell those who are in the car, reversing the story-telling role of the artist in residence when the White Wife collected stories. Each hitcher tells a different story, and the monologues were devised from stories told to Lowri Evans during her journeys. The hitchers are men and women of the community who each devise a performance based on the stories collected. One man tells of seeking out his grandfather's grave while playing the ukulele, while a young woman retells of a family member's exploits hunting big game in Africa, and another woman discloses how she left her job to seek out an ice cream and never returned.

Upon arrival to the Car Theatre area, the hitchers leave the cars, and the audience members attend different performances that take place separately in a car, van, or bus. Audience members can only experience one twenty-minute piece, but there is no indication what to expect within each vehicle. Some performances are very intimate conversations between the performer and the lone audience member, while others ignore the very presence of the audience member(s) and enact conversations with imaginary partners. In addition, the main stage feature is known as the

“Car Corral” and juxtaposes moments of parkour and ballroom dancing around and within a blue station wagon (see figure 15). In this piece, recordings of the stories told at the care home are played in the background, while four dancers dance around a car, and a group of boys perform



Figure 15: *Ignition Media Call* by Malcolm Younger featuring Members of Ignition Cast

parkour around the car. The two images of past and present juxtapose in each moment that the dancers interact with the parkour boys. Both groups of dancers and parkour practitioners are experienced in their own art but had never done theatre, and it was in the moment of their coming

together on the “stage” that the audience can see a bit of their journey from classroom to performer.

At the end of the night the audience comes together again in the community center where the band of community members plays and tea is served by the White Wife. The White Wife has again changed her clothing and is now wearing a white cardigan in place of her blazer, and the scarf and hat have been put aside. She now wears a full A-line skirt and floats about the hall serving tea as the audience members sing and warm up from the cold. Again, her role in the performance has shifted from romanticized ghost, to dream travel agent, and finally to idealized host. Her costume in hall at the end of the performance matches what she wore during the Sunday Afternoon Teas, providing a sense of comfort and familiarity to the event. After serving tea she gives the entire performance context, mostly through listing objects and moments that

audience members may or may not have seen, such as a lost gnome, a ukulele, ballroom dancers, and lost souls. The night ends in an old-fashioned sing-song where all the audience sings a song called “The End of Shetland,” which was written by community members during one of the music sessions and talks of the beauty and wonder one can see at the southern tip of the highway that runs down Mainland, in Sumburgh.

Through *Ignition* the National Theatre of Scotland claimed the Shetland Islands as an inclusive Scottish culture by creating the first artistic project that mapped the landscape, addressed important issues to Shetland, represented the Shetlanders, and was performed for the Shetlanders. The National Theatre of Scotland acted as an explorer through Shetland. The addition of the highways to Shetland highlights that “[g]enerations of human beings have placed their own structures and technologies on the land, but they have always done so with a sense of concordance, a sense that we, who are more removed from the land than our ancestors, no longer possess” (M. Smith 9). The highways became prevalent with the discovery of oil in the North Sea, and those highways replaced the walking paths of old and split the landscape in new ways, with little thought to the past. The highways represent the new and the prosperous, but upon reflection the history of Shetland still exists underneath those modern highways. The car serves as a way to connect to the past and to contemplate the future. *Ignition* also links the past to the future, as it seeks to celebrate the unique Shetland culture while acknowledging the pain of the past. By connecting the performance to the Shetland Arts and the National Theatre of Scotland, the performance broadens the definition of Shetlander identity as well as the inclusivity of Scottish culture. Finally, by creating a community theatre event, Shetland Arts and the NTS emphasized their focus on the people of Shetland and their personal contributions to and visions of both a local and an interrelated national identity.

Conclusion

Warp, Weft and Weathered Tartan: Patterning a Modern Scottish Identity

It's 3 a.m. on a weekday in mid-September 2009, and I am peacefully asleep in my bed. I am studying abroad for my masters program at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, and I am suddenly startled awake by a blaring skirl followed by a low, off-key hum. As I slowly find my bearings, the hum gains volume and becomes, what I believe to be "Scotland the Brave," but it is hard to tell through all of the wrong notes. Drunken roars punctuate the tune as I open my window to behold three young men, one attempting to play (and struggling to even hold) a set of Highland pipes, and his two mates laughing at his struggle, while insisting they could do better. All three men are inebriated, "pished" one might say, and all are having the time of their lives. I distinctly remember smiling, withholding a laugh, and thinking "this is Scotland" as I attempted to go back to bed. At the time of my "drunken bagpipe awakening" I was not thinking about stereotypes, tartanry, Scottish identity, or how one begins to define nationalism for a nation of diverse individuals. Instead, I simply relished the experience of observing three young men care enough about the accoutrements of their culture and heritage to attempt playing bagpipes while three sheets to the wind. The image of those men fumbling with a set bagpipes has come to represent what Scotland is to me—a nation that loves its heritage, but that love is fraught because of all the historical baggage, the historical romanticization, and a contentious relationship with England. In order to ease the tensions between Scotland and its heritage, inhibitions must be lowered so all variations of Scottish identity are viewed as valid and important.

Scotland is in the process of defining itself as a nation separate from Great Britain, and the NTS is an agent of that effort. In order to define itself as a nation, the Scottish people need to be united, not as a homogenous group but as citizens who feel they are connected by some thread

and who see their lives woven together no matter how disparate their lives happen to be. The NTS “Theatre without walls” mission stitches these threads throughout the Scottish nation as the productions travel broadly and become representative of a true National Theatre by bringing art to all corners of the Scottish nation. This dissertation reflects the NTS’s focus on celebrating the local folklore by exploring the historically Scottish and heroic Black Watch regiment from Fife, re-examining the collected balladry of Sir Walter Scott, situating a polymath true to his Gaelic ideals who championed the local over the national, and demystifying the White Wife of Shetland. It is by expressing the lives and humanity of multitudes within their unique experiences that ultimately the NTS provokes the Scots to be united as one nation. Their unity does not remove the individual characteristics of a region or background but instead demonstrates that it is because of their diversity that the Scots are so remarkable.

On 25 February 2016 the National Theatre of Scotland celebrated its tenth birthday. Throughout its ten dramatic years, the NTS has focused on regional theatrical projects and local tours. Recently, more and more of its work has begun to tour outside of Scotland to theatre festivals throughout Europe and Australia, but its commitment to local communities remains strong. The 2016 season, for example, features *Granite*, a participatory outdoor theatre event localized in Aberdeen, and *The 306: Dawn* in co-production with 1418 NOW and Perth Theatre. These two shows will not tour but instead are rooted within the communities which will produce them. At the end of this current season Artistic Director and Chief Executive, Laurie Sansom, will step down. Sansom is the second artistic director, following in the footsteps of Vickie Featherstone, who saw NTS through its first five years. As he steps down, and the company moves to occupy its first dedicated rehearsal and storage space, the future of the NTS will lay within the hands of a new, yet to be named, director.

A probing question is where will the NTS go from here, now that it is an established theatre company. In its first ten years, the NTS established itself as a global theatrical entity by establishing a body of new work which celebrates Scotland's regional diversity, as well as by producing innovative re-imaginings of classical works. It has proven it can remind individuals who have drifted from their "Scottishness" of a common cultural heritage, but can it welcome the influence of those who seek to make a home in Scotland, and who will influence Scotland's future? As the NTS grows, especially in this era of increasing racial tension and xenophobia throughout Europe, how the NTS chooses to represent or not represent the experience of immigrant and second generation Scottish citizens will have a profound effect on the cultural landscape.

To some extent, the NTS has already begun to give voice to the experiences and concerns of the nation's newest members. In 2015, the NTS and co-producer Contact created *Rites*, a show exploring the cultural practice of female genital mutilation derived from interviews and stories shared by girls and women impacted by the practice within Scotland and throughout the UK. The production gives voice to women, and particularly women of color, whose voices are not often heard on the Scottish stage. Equally important the NTS has also represented the experiences of other marginalized or historically under-privileged groups. The 2016 double-billed productions, *Eve* and *Adam* explore the lives of transgendered and non-binary persons living both in Scotland and across the world, as they invited the globe to participate virtually in "The Adam World Choir." With Scotland's global persona as hyper-masculine and unyielding, the global invitation to participate in a transnational, transcultural, trans choir projects the Scots as much more complicated and multifaceted than the world views them to be. These projects are a few

examples of how the NTS is beginning to present a more diverse image of the Scottish nation, and how it is projecting imagined Scottish identities across the globe.

Along with its critical successes, the NTS has also inevitably experienced productions and collaborations that have fallen short of its mission. For example, the 2015 co-production with the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) of David Greig's *Dunsinane* traveled across the UK and United States to critical and box office success. The show was celebrated as a "an irresolvable drama about an irresolvable conflict" by *The Guardian*, and toured the US as a "production from the United Kingdom." The show depicted the Scots as barbarians, baby eaters, and fools. After seeing the production in Chicago, Illinois in February 2015, I was disappointed by that production's inability to bring the irony and satire of that play's representation of Scottishness to an American audience more familiar with the movie *Braveheart* than actual Scottish cultural history. The vision of Scottish nationalism once again disappeared behind the painted façade of a "United Kingdom." Throughout this dissertation I have chosen to focus on key productions that reflect and have shaped the NTS mission throughout its first decade; however, over the next decade the company will need to confront different challenges as it continues to grow and respond to the needs of Scotland and its people. There will be an increased need to speak to international audiences, across Europe and abroad, while staying faithful to its commitment to local art. In addition, the NTS will need to reconcile complications inherent in working in partnership with other companies (like the RSC) whose artistic goals differ.

Despite the challenges it confronts, the NTS has positioned itself to build on its first decade's successes in powerful ways as the vision of Scottish nationalism and identity continues to be in flux. The National Theatre of Scotland is not simply making theatre. It is undertaking a massive effort in theatrical cultural imagination. The NTS serves as an example of how theatre

and drama can be used to explore contemporary identities in an age where instantaneous entertainment is always at our fingertips. It is a multidisciplinary organization that shows equal talent for sweeping epic dramas, local performance art pieces, and theatre for youth. These performances teach us that theatre can be dynamic yet poignant, intimate while massive, and contain the traditional merged with the experimental. The NTS does not simply focus on one type of art, but instead challenges itself and its audiences to broaden the definition of what theatre can do. Audiences of the NTS are also encouraged to be more than spectators; they are sought after as artistic collaborators, which further emphasizes the NTS vision to create a truly national theatre that is of and for the people of Scotland. By not centering its productions in one region or privileging one group of people, the NTS is uniquely poised to represent the experiences of kings and shopkeepers with equal aplomb. Its international outreach and desire to share Scotland's stories with the world highlights its importance to the diverse historical, present and future national visions of Scotland.

¹ Nessie is nickname of the infamous Loch Ness monster. Neeps are a traditional dish made of mashed turnips or rutabaga served with haggis and tatties (mashed potatoes). A Ned is a derogatory term, most prominent in Glasgow, for “non-educated delinquents” who wear sports clothes and are generally layabouts and petty criminals.

² Greig is one of the primary playwrights whose work has shaped and impacted the NTS, with plays such as *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart* and *Dunsinane*.

³ David Grieg’s blog features small excerpts of writing and information regarding his recent works and musings on Scottish nationalism.

⁴ Emphasis in original.

⁵ Each section title comes from Greig’s “Notes to Self: A To Do List for Scottish Culture.” The quotes are taken out of order and are used to apply to the NTS, which was not his original intention.

⁶ Within Great Britain the National Theatre in London formed in 1976, and the NTS was the next national theatre to form in 2006. After the formation of the NTS, the National Theatre of Wales formed in 2009, using the NTS as a model.

⁷ Including Kenny Ireland of Edinburgh’s Royal Lyceum, Hamish Glen of the Dundee Rep, and Donald Smith of the then Neatherbow Arts Center (now the Scottish Storytelling Centre in Edinburgh) (Smith “Playing National”).

⁸ Australia (1968) and Finland (1978) both have devolved models combining both touring and regional theatres. However, the NTS is the first national theatre to not have a home theatre at all (Holdsworth 36).

⁹ In 2015 the NTS purchased a new headquarters and “engine room” located in Glasgow. The building contains a workshop for set building, houses costumes from previous tours, and contains rehearsal spaces. However, the space is not a performance venue (Rockvilla 2015).

¹⁰ Examples include, but are not limited to, J.M. Barrie, James Birdie, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

¹¹ Findlay suggests that the course of English and Scottish drama would have been drastically different if James VI of Scotland had not taken the English crown. He believes Scotland would have become the theatrical epicenter for Northern Renaissance if James VI had remained in Scotland as the patron, and England’s theatre would have died out (40).

¹² Home also encountered resistance from the Church of Scotland when premiering *Douglas*. The success of the performance ultimately was an important step for Scottish theatre and the Edinburgh Presbytery. The church never interfered with a theatrical performance in Scotland again (Scullion 106).

¹³ An attempt by Charles Edward Stuart (“Bonnie Prince Charlie”) to regain the British throne for the House of Stuart. The Jacobites were Highlanders who supported the claim of James VII of Scotland (II of England) and his heirs. The Jacobite Rising ended with the final battle at Culloden on 16 April 1746 (Devine 31-48; Oliver 288-322).

¹⁴ There was an initial attempt at forming a Scottish national theatre in 1909 by Alfred Wareing, which would produce Scottish plays with Scottish actors, but it ultimately failed at the outbreak of World War I.

¹⁵ With the exception of George Reston Malloch’s 1927 *Soutariness Water*, which centers on a young couple who marry without knowing they are siblings (D. Hutchinson, “1900” 225).

¹⁶ A cèilidh is a traditional Gaelic social gathering usually involving traditional folk music and dancing.

¹⁷ Lochhead’s most famous play is *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* (1987), which explores the relationship of Elizabeth I and Mary Queen of Scots from a female perspective.

¹⁸ In terms of this dissertation, ballads are the center of both *Black Watch* and *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart*, with the latter being written in verse and communicating through rhythm, meter, and rhyme.

¹⁹ The change in cultural identity is complex and is being grossly reduced within this introduction. I highly recommend T.M. Devine’s *The Scottish Nation* for a more in-depth analysis.

²⁰ There are a lot of reasons for why the SNP gained the majority that are not vital to this dissertation, but utterly fascinating in terms of how Scottish politics work. Again, see Devine’s *The Scottish Nation* and particularly the Afterword.

²¹ *The James Plays* were later revised for the “Ten Dramatic Years” season in 2016.

²² The Conservatives hold 330 seats (of 650), followed by Labour with 231, and the SNP with 54 (“Current State of the Parties”).

²³ Irn Bru is a carbonated soda that is orange in color with the tagline “Scotland’s other national drink” and Lorne sausages are square sausages (originating in Lorne, Scotland) that are part of the traditional Scottish breakfast.

²⁴ The Scots did not create the tartan, and many other nations claim to have created the unique pattern. The creation and ownership of the plaid is not up for debate, but instead the crux of the argument balances on the idea that the tartan is associated with Scotland, regardless of who invented interwoven pattern.

²⁵ The character of Scrooge McDuck was created in 1947, though is most well-known from the series *Duck Tales*.

²⁶ For example, when learning that her daughter was dating a woman by the last name of McKenzie, the main character Celia is deeply concerned that her daughter would be dating a Scot. Celia's disgust over the Scottish is used as a trope throughout the show.

²⁷ The history of the invented tradition surrounding the kilt can be read about in greater detail in Hugh Trevor-Roper's "The Invention of Tradition: the Highland Tradition of Scotland" (in *The Invention of Tradition*) and "Plaiding the Invention of Scotland" by Murray Pittock (in *From Tartan to Tartanry*).

²⁸ The Act of Proscription (1746) was an act of the Parliament of Great Britain in an attempt to assimilate the Highlands and end their revolt. The following Dress Act and Disarming Act (among others) were later additions to this over-arching proscription. These proscriptions were eventually repealed in 1782 ("Act of Proscription"). The Disarming Act of 1746 was a feeble attempt to squelch the Jacobite support in Scotland, but was marketed as a way to bring peace to Scotland. It outlawed anyone in the Highlands from possessing weapons of war (Devine 46, 233).

²⁹ A phrase coined by Thomas Nairn in *The Breaking-Up of Britain* to describe the monstrous nature of tartanry.

³⁰ For a key discussion on tartans and the history of the pattern read the introduction to *From Tartan to Tartanry*, entitled "Tartan, Tartanry and Hybridity," by Ian Brown.

³¹ See the Breton use of *tiretaine* for cider of half pears, half apples (I. Brown, "Tartan" 2).

³² This time period represents the beginning of the NTS to when I started this project. The NTS has continued to produce new and exciting work, which will be analyzed and explored in future projects.

³³ The bulk of the work produced by the NTS is site-specific and smaller work. As a result it was only fitting this dissertation will address a performance piece, even though it was viewed by a very small percentage of the Scottish population.

³⁴ See the introduction for a more detailed engagement with the HOME project and the founding of the National Theatre of Scotland.

³⁵ There are of course exceptions such as *The Cheviot, The Stag and the Black, Black Oil* which has world renown, and it often taught in universities as a token “Scottish” play in British drama courses.

³⁶ For a more detailed discussion of the history of Scottish theatre see the introduction.

³⁷ The scenes in the pub comes directly from the interviews held by Gregory Burke, but some of the details in Iraq were created and theatricalized by Burke and are only loosely based on the soldiers’ experiences.

³⁸ Throughout this chapter my discussion of the movement and choreography come from firsthand knowledge of viewing the play live in Chicago (in 2012 and 2013) and the BBC recorded production, released in 2008.

³⁹ The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo is an annual series of skilled marching performances by numerous British, Commonwealth, and International military bands and display teams. The performance takes place in the esplanade of Edinburgh Castle and is part of the August Edinburgh Festival.

⁴⁰ Also commonly referred to as an alley or corridor stage.

⁴¹ The second time I saw *Black Watch* in Chicago I spoke to a woman who had brought her son to the show simply so he would see how miserable life in the military was. She was hoping the show would convince him to not join up upon graduating. I am certain this woman was not alone in assuming the play would be a clear-cut anti-war performance, but before Cammy even finishes his monologue the audience learns that is not the case.

⁴² The NTS explores the Norse heritage of some of its people within the *Ignition* project, discussed in Chapter 4.

⁴³ On one level his comparison is uncomfortable because it seeks to re-affirm the stereotype that Scottish men are bloodthirsty and warmongering, and in this vein also indicates that the drunken disorderliness of a Saturday night on the Perth Road is as messy and deadly as the current bombing. However, this reading is disingenuous to the intensity of the moment, and the audience should assume the Sergeant is simply trying to lighten the mood without making broad statements about Scottish drinking and fighting habits.

⁴⁴ The most famous recording was done by the Clancy Brothers in 1964 on the album *The Last Hurrah!*, but with differing lyrics. This recording featured a tin whistle and guitar, as well as monophonic singing.

⁴⁵ thatched

⁴⁶ Though there is global interest in military history, the play is written to an average audience, so they introduce all of the Black Watch battle history as if unknown to the audience.

⁴⁷ The script includes a short section of dialogue about a bottle of water, but in the filmed version released by the BBC in 2008 the short discussion regarding the bottled water had been cut.

⁴⁸ It is then that the audience members usually realize the scene is going to be humorous and allow themselves to laugh. In the BBC recording the camera pans to the audience after Cammy says his line to focus on the audience's laughing faces.

⁴⁹ coal mines

⁵⁰ In Forfar I was born and bred/ But faith I did think shame, sir/ To tell the weary life I led/ Before I left my home, sir.

⁵¹ They learned me to read and write/ And count the rule of three, sir/ But a nobler thought came to my head/ And a soldier I would be, sir.

⁵² They gave me clothes to help my back/ And mittens to my hands, sir/ And swore I was the bravest child/ In all the Highland clans, sir.

⁵³ The Battle of Culloden was the final battle of the Jacobite Rising (1745). It was the last battle on British soil and represents the end of the fight for Scottish control of the British throne.

⁵⁴ Though not all Scots are of Celtic origin, Cammy's discussion focuses on the shared history of the men in the Black Watch. Due to the Golden Thread and the familial service in the regiment, his discussion of Celtic origin is accurate to himself and his mates, but does not speak for all Scots.

⁵⁵ The only other place was on the theatrical stage.

⁵⁶ Many of the Lowland regiments did not wear kilts, but some did.

⁵⁷ Technically, any person is welcome to wear the Stewart Hunting tartan, but it is also one of the tartans of the Stewart clan.

⁵⁸ Discussions of the tartan as a symbol of romanticism and sentimentality appear in Chapter 2 on *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart*.

⁵⁹ Embedded journalism includes all reporters attached to certain military units during armed combat. In this example the “embed” interview takes place between Cammy and the BBC reporter connected to the Black Watch and perhaps other units as well.

⁶⁰ “Received Pronunciation,” commonly known as RP, is the standard form of British English, based on the educated speech patterns found in the southern parts of England. This dialect is a learned speech pattern and is not native to any particular English locale.

⁶¹ It can also be assumed that the Officer’s e-mails are screened, but the same can be said for the airmail received and sent by the men, so the “performance for the sensor” does not separate the two, but instead makes the missives operate in a similar way.

⁶² Traditionally the song is sung to the tune of “Over the Hills and Far Away,” and English traditional song that gained popularity after being adapted and featured in George Farquhar’s *The Recruiting Officer* (1706). The lyrics from Farquhar’s version are very similar to the version adapted for the Black Watch regimental song.

⁶³ For it’s over the mountain, over the main/ Through Gibraltar, to France and to Spain/ With a feather in your bonnet (cap) and a kilt above your knee/ So enlist my bonnie (handsome) laddie (young man) and come away with me.

⁶⁴ “O laddie ye dinnae ken the danger that yer in/ If yer horses wis tae leg and yer owes wis tae in/ This greedy ole farmer, he would pay yer fee/ Sae list my bonnie laddie and come awa wi’ me” (49).

⁶⁵ “O laddie if ye’ve got a sweetheart an bairn/ Ye’ll easily get rid o’ that ill-spun yarn/ Twa rattles o’ the drum and that’ll pay it a’/ Sae list my bonnie laddie and come awa.” (49)

⁶⁶ The companies that originally formed the Black Watch consisted of three units of Campbells and one unit of Grants, Munros, and Frasers (I. Brown, “Myth” 97).

⁶⁷ “Oh Young Charles STEWART” by Margaret Bennett and Martyn Bennett on the album *Glen Lyon*.

⁶⁸ “The kailyard (literally ‘cabbage patch’) school of Scottish fiction emerged in the late nineteenth century, but the term is currently used to describe any sentimentalised and sanitized representation of Scottish life—particularly rural life” (Reid 7).

⁶⁹ Though the Scots are technically Britons as well, their roots are Pictish in origin and therefore seen as inferior to the southern Britons.

⁷⁰ Most spaces utilized seating only on one level. Some spaces utilized balcony spaces, but those were not typical, and the choice to sit in the balcony was still the same price as to sit on the main floor.

⁷¹ The ballad is classified as a romance by Sir Walter Scott, and can be found with the Ballads of the Middle Marches, which is a geographical area of the central Border, inclusive of Kelso (Reid 7,12).

⁷² As I was walking all alone/ I heard two crows (ravens) making a moan./ The one to the other say,
 “Where shall we go and dine today?”/ In behind that old turf wall/ I sense there lies a new slain knight;/ And none
 do know that he lies there/ But his hawk, his hound and his lady fair.

⁷³ ‘You’ll sit on his white neck-bone./ And I’ll poke out his pretty blue eye./ With a lock of his golden hair/
 We’ll thatch our nest when it grows bare.’/ ‘Many a one for him make moan./ But none shall know where he is
 gone;/ Over his white bones, where they are bare./ The wind shall blow for evermore.”

⁷⁴ a lover or sweetheart

⁷⁵ Greig’s text spells out the punctuation as lines which are spoken for the audience. This tactic is seen later when footnotes and citations are spoken lines.

⁷⁶ Scott continued his introduction by stating that there is not occasion to simply trace the history but instead to recapture the past through the ballads that remain from a displaced people. The Border ballads that Scott included in his *Minstrelsy* span a wide array of topics. The ballads addressing the battles and raids of the Border were obviously included, such as “Johnie Armstrang,” which tells of a clan leader who was killed unjustly by the King of England (Brander 73). The songs about Border raids eventually became known as “riding ballads” since the raids always took place on horseback and were a well-known event amongst the “Borderers” (Collinson 140). Though Scott could have easily filled his *Minstrelsy* with songs of similar tales of raids and death, only half the text contains battle or riding ballads. Instead Scott sampled the wide range of cultural heritage available at the Border, and published many ballads of nature and even of fantasy. Scott divided his collection of ballads into two major categories: historical (which included the riding ballads) and romantic (Collinson 140).

⁷⁷ Prudencia mentions the ballad “Tam Lin” during her plenary talk in “Part the First” when discussing supernatural beings: “In particular we can look at the supernatural visits/ Fair maidens make to the underworld—and ask if it’s/ Interesting the way the Devil is represented./ Sometimes as sane, sometimes demented/ Sometimes male, sometimes female, like in/ The supernatural ballad ‘Tam Lin’” (13).

⁷⁸ In the American tours, ASDA was changed to Costco.

⁷⁹ The book had been optioned as a film by UK Films in 2008, but no work has been done on it to date.

⁸⁰ I received the script via e-mail from David Harrower. It is an un-edited rehearsal script, and any errors in formatting should be dismissed as errors that occurred when the document was downloaded into the US version of Word, thus changing margins and the direction all apostrophes faced. The quotes are recorded here as they were found in the text, but may differ from a published edition should there ever be one. In addition, none of the songs used in the production are recorded in the text, so any references to the songs come from personal dictation.

⁸¹ The script refers to the actors by their first names only, and their names are in all caps, whereas the character names are depicted in sentence case. I will utilize this same differentiation throughout the chapter and will clarify who is speaking as the narrator when double-casting is especially interesting.

⁸² Kailyard addresses the “prodigious array of *Kitch* symbols, slogans, ornaments, banners, sayings and sentiments (not a few of them ‘pithy’) which have for so long resolutely defended the name of ‘Scotland’ to the world” (Nairn 162).

⁸³ The Gaelic Language television station within Scotland.

⁸⁴ A television series that helps with the learning of Gaelic. The show was transmitted on BBC Alba from 1993-1996.

⁸⁵ Calum’s Road has been immortalized in guidebooks, documentaries, a strathspy (written by a member Scottish folk band Capercaillie), and as the focus of an art exhibit in 2004; his road was declared a World Heritage Site (R. Hutchinson xvi).

⁸⁶ Famed Scottish poet Sir Walter Scott’s novel *Rob Roy* was adapted to a play in 1819 and is considered one of the first “National Dramas” (Bell 144).

⁸⁷ Hollywood re-imagined both Roy and Wallace in the 1995 films *Rob Boy* and *Braveheart* respectively in addition to many plays in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries throughout Scotland.

⁸⁸ The Wallace Monument was erected near Stirling, Scotland, in the nineteenth century and is a popular tourist attraction, along with many statues and other towers erected in Wallace’s memory.

⁸⁹ This cultural image is picked up on and critiqued directly in *Black Watch*, which was discussed in more detail in the first chapter.

⁹⁰ When touring Dunvagen Castle on the Isle of Skye, a guide pointed out that a claymore they had on display, when sharpened, could easily kill ten men with one blow.

⁹¹ Neil Oliver is a celebrity historian and is the face of history in Scotland. His “History of Scotland” miniseries was featured on the BBC, and his book *A History of Scotland* is the companion text to that mini-series.

⁹² The call to arms and a camaraderie around national identity is attractive to the modern viewer, especially when one thinks of these warriors fighting for a country that is still encountering “nation-breaking” today. If it were not for this warrior who hammered ideas of nationalism into the heads of the Scots, then the nation would not be where it is today, and contemporary ideas of independence and “freedom,” to quote *Braveheart*, would not be possible. Thus the image of Wallace as a warrior, as a man who is strong and violent, connects directly to his role in the national narrative. He could not be anything other than a physical being, for all of his actions had results in the physical world, and he had to fight a physical threat. The English were coming onto Scotland’s land and had to be fought and defeated. Even though Wallace was killed, it was through his bravery that eventually Robert the Bruce was able to lead the Scots to victory. This story is a hallmark of the tenacity of the Scots and the lengths they will go for their freedom.

⁹³ Robert Burns is the National Bard of Scotland. His influences can be seen throughout Scotland, from short verses inscribed in stone across the Lowlands, to the registration of the Robert Burns Legacy Tartan to commemorate the poet’s 200th birthday in 2008. On or around January 25 the life and achievements of the poet is commemorated with what is commonly known as Burns Night or a Burns Supper. The events typically include haggis, whisky, and the reading of a section of Burns’ poetry. The formality of the events varies from location to location but are most common in Scotland, Northern Ireland and throughout the Scottish diaspora in the United States.

⁹⁴ The Scottish peer to the House of Lords representing Edinburgh County.

⁹⁵ Cormorant are large aquatic birds that are often depicted in art and heraldry. The bird is rarely consumed, and the imbibing of cormorant serves as a joke about the barbarity of the island throughout the play. The bird was also displayed on the projection screen to introduce unfamiliar audience members to it.

⁹⁶ Written by Thomas Aitken, President of the Road Surveyors’ Association of Scotland (Harrower 8).

⁹⁷ Today crofting is more of a partial lifestyle and is found mostly in the Hebrides and in Shetland. Now, crofters will tend the croft part-time and have another job that allows for the purchase of food and other goods (Moore 84). Crofting is not simply a farming principle, but it is a way of life for those in the Highlands and islands and can be linked to the survival of Gaelic culture (MacDonald 75).

⁹⁸ Though most of these clearances are recorded as mutually agreed upon, or were undertaken with fair compensation, the clearances mark the start of Rainy's unfair level of control over the people of Raasay.

⁹⁹ Sometimes spelled "cotters," these were peasant farmers who would rent small farm space to grow crops and lived in small cottages. These are different from crofters, who owned their own houses and only rented crofting land.

¹⁰⁰ It is in the most southern region of the Inner Hebrides that one finds the famous distilleries and home to "Islay" Scotch. Famous islands of this region include Skye, Lewis, Jura, and Mull.

¹⁰¹ With the exception of the Glasgow Fair Holiday in July. During these festivities services were conducted in Gaelic and a small bit of English was added to accommodate the non-Gaelic speakers from the south who were in Raasay on holiday (R. Hutchinson 34).

¹⁰² The historic Calum was especially strong with his command of Gaelic and was entered in the Celtic Society of New York's Gaelic essay competition in 1925 (at the age of fourteen). Calum went on to win that contest and received an engraved medal. His passion for writing continued as he aged but took the form of letter-writing, and late in life, compiling a collection of essays entitled *Fàsachadh an-ìochdmhor Ratharsair* or *The Cruel Clearance of Raasay*. These essays were translated and published by Calum's daughter, Julia MacLeod Allan, in 2007.

¹⁰³ When *Calum's Road* was performed on Skye the discussion of locations took on a more familiar tone than when on the mainland.

¹⁰⁴ The Orkney Islands do have an official tartan that is recorded in the Scottish Registry of Tartans, further indicating their connection to the mainland Scotland while emphasizing Shetland's rejection of the most iconic Scottish symbol.

¹⁰⁵ Mainland Scotland also hosts various Viking-themed celebrations, such as the Largs Viking Festival, but these festivals celebrate the defeat of the Viking forces, not the impact of the Viking culture.

¹⁰⁶ Each of the section titles in the chapter are taken from the glovebox book of collected stories from the Mak and Yak sessions. The titles are reflective of the knitting culture in Shetland as opposed to the tartan culture explored in the previous chapters.

¹⁰⁷ The islands share the same latitude as Cape Farewell in Greenland (Nicholson 9).

¹⁰⁸ Throughout the remainder of this chapter Mainland will refer to the largest island of Shetland. If referring to mainland Scotland, the nation will always be referenced to avoid confusion.

¹⁰⁹ The mark was a Danish unit of account, and not an actual coin. The equivalence after the Norman conquest in 1066 was 1 mark equaled 160 pence (13 shillings and 4 pence, or $\frac{2}{3}$ of a pound sterling in the Roman measure). Though Scottish measures of money did not match England's in terms of weight until 1603, they differed only slightly (H. Macloed 459, 466). Thus the mortgage amounted to about £67 a year.

¹¹⁰ One florin was worth about two shillings, so 10,000 florins equated to approximately £1,000.

¹¹¹ approximately £800

¹¹² One Scottish friend of mine even went so far as to proclaim that people from Shetland are crazy and that any Glaswegian would appear normal by comparison.

¹¹³ The phrase was preferred by James I as compared to King of England and Scotland.

¹¹⁴ Scotland was often referred to as "North Britain" until the early twentieth century (P. Ward 149).

¹¹⁵ Tartanry refers to the kitch elements of Scottish heritage that became over-emphasized or superimposed with influx of Victorian tourists in the nineteenth century.

¹¹⁶ "The kailyard (literally 'cabbage patch') school of Scottish fiction emerged in the late nineteenth century, but the term is currently used to describe any sentimentalised and sanitized representation of Scottish life—particularly rural life..." (Reid 7).

¹¹⁷ Lauderism is "the turning of the back on the actuality of Scottish life" as exemplified by Harry Lauder, who performed exterior Scottishness through the wearing of exaggerated Highland regalia, combined with a romanticized Lowland speech, all the while rejecting his working-class upbringing. This word is reserved for the extreme Scottish persona and is linked to English propaganda as a way to destroy Scottish national pride (Reid 20-21).

¹¹⁸ Shetlanders not only began to pull away from the mainland of Scotland but also strove to emphasize differences between themselves and Orcadians. Celebrating difference and rejecting symbols of Scottishness became the norm in Shetland. Orcadians, on the other hand, “are relatively quiet about their cultural personality” and though they too feel a separate identity from the Scots, they are less likely to express that difference (Moore 55).

¹¹⁹ Entertainments National Service Association was part an organization responsible for setting up troop entertainment during wartime.

¹²⁰ This is the same board that denied Calum MacLeod’s petition to build a road on the Isle of Rasaay. See Chapter 3 for more.

¹²¹ Initially these changes were approached with fear that the oil industry would permanently alter the physical landscape and ruin local economy. However, the oil industry proved to be a positive and even revitalizing change for the Shetland Islands (Nicholson 78-88).

¹²² Travel to and from mainland Scotland is easier and also more tempting for those who reside in the Lower Hebrides. See chapter 3 on *Calum’s Road* for a more detailed exploration of the politics of leaving the islands.

¹²³ The attitude of control is most clearly reflected in the motto: “We do not need oil, but oil needs us. Let it come on our terms,” which was used by the Shetland County Council throughout the 1970s (Nicholson 88).

¹²⁴ In terms of people, 2,001,926 voted no, and 1,617,989 voted yes for a total electorate of 4,282,392 (BBC.com).

¹²⁵ The lowest two being the Orkney Islands and the Scottish Border.

¹²⁶ The Isle of Man serves as the precedent for islands being self-governing territories. The Isle of Man was part of Scotland in 1266, became a feudal colony of England in 1399, and in 1765 became an official self-governing Crown dependency.

¹²⁷ The islands barely approved of Devolution in 1997, and clearly voted no in the Referendum in 2014.

¹²⁸ Shetland’s Liberal Democrat MSP.

¹²⁹ Shetlanders often refer to their Islands as “the Viking Isles” or *Ultima Thule* (MacDiarmid 51, 53).

¹³⁰ Nicholson is a common last name in the Northern Islands, and it can be assumed that Theo Nicholson is of no relation to Shetland folklorist James R. Nicholson, whose work is cited at length throughout this chapter.

¹³¹ Nicolson went on to describe that his identification as British comes from his connection to his grandfather and father, who both fought with the British Armed Forces. In fact it is this connection to Britain and wartime fidelity that links many Shetlanders to Britain. A similar allegiance to Britain is explored in chapter 1 regarding the Black Watch regiment.

¹³² *Ignition* is the the latest of three National Theatre of Scotland projects to focus specifically on the daily lives of Shetlanders but was the first to be created and performed by the Shetlanders themselves. The others, *Home Shetland* and *The Long Gone Lonesome*, were brought in pre-written and then performed by locals.

¹³³ Wils Wilson is also the director of *The Strange Undoing of Prudencia Hart* (see chapter 2).

¹³⁴ This same wording was then used in most of the promotional material in newspapers and local blogs.

¹³⁵ Especially when compared to the populations of the Hebrides (see chapter 3 on *Calum's Road*).

¹³⁶ Valhalla Brewery in Unst (Shetland) brews the “White Wife” Ale. It is named after the same White Wife featured in *Ignition*, and the road she tends to travel is only three miles from the brewery.

¹³⁷ The “Car Yarns” collection was a curated “glove-box” book of stories collected from the Mak and Yak knitting sessions.

¹³⁸ The core vocabulary is Scots with an admixture of Scandinavian phrases. Just like Scots, there is great debate whether Shetlandic is merely a dialect or can be classified as an entire language. For the purposes of this dissertation I treat it as a dialect, but for a more in-depth discussion see Atina Nihtinen’s *Ambivalent Self-Understanding?* Chapter VII “Dialect or Language” (2011).

¹³⁹ This claim is loosely based on de Certeau’s theories of tactics and revision.

¹⁴⁰ There were instances of other bus travelers writing on the windows as well, the most noticeable being Chinese tourists who wrote their observations in their native language.

¹⁴¹ Rob Evans and Lowri Evans are of no relation.

¹⁴² Located in Walls, Shetland, on the south side of West Mainland.

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