

Heritage and Festivals in Europe

Performing Identities

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10 Performing Scots-European heritage, ‘For A’That!’

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The concept of European heritage has been widely debated (Kockel 2010; Shore 2010; Nic Craith 2012; Delanty 2017) and raises many questions. Does it infer a mosaic or an amalgam of different national heritages within the continent of Europe, or is it a composite of selected prestigious symbols that have been elevated beyond the nation state to become European? The complexity of the latter scenario is captured in the motto “unity in diversity”, which is frequently used to describe Europe’s multilingual character. Sometimes the slogan is used more generally to capture the diversity of Europe’s national heritages. In this chapter, our primary focus is on Scottish heritage and how this has contributed to, and drawn upon, Europe’s intellectual heritage through the medium of Scots.

Geographically, Scotland is located on the margins of Europe. Despite its marginal position, interactions between Scotland and the Continent have been profound over the centuries and have taken many different forms. In his book *On Scottish Ground* (1998), Kenneth White makes the case that although part of the United Kingdom, Scotland has always been more European than its near neighbour, England, in terms of character and outlook. Scotland’s intellectual and cultural heritage has been enriched by continental influences, just as Scotland’s languages, values and ideas have taken part in continental debates and contributed to shape a European heritage throughout the ages.

Connections with Europe have been and remain diverse, reflecting the range of peoples within Scotland. The ‘imagined community’ of Scottish-Gaels includes Ireland and Brittany as well as the Isle of Man, Wales and Cornwall (Price 1994) and is celebrated annually at the Celtic Connections festival in Glasgow. The archipelagos of Shetland and Orkney have strong Nordic connections (Kockel 2017; Henderson 2018). This is very evident during the annual *Up-Helly-Aa* fire festivals in Shetland that end with the burning of a replica Viking ship (Clopot and McCullagh, this volume). There are strong historical links between Scotland and Poland, which continue to be celebrated today (Devine and Hesse 2011).

This chapter focuses on the Scots-speaking community and, in particular, on its use of the Scots language as a means to assert political difference in the form of a ‘welcoming, inclusive civic nationalism’ (McFadyen 2018). Our

contribution reflects on the process of narrative building within Scotland, with its special emphasis on democracy, egalitarianism and freedom. We argue that this narrative was strongly influenced by Europe's intellectual heritage. Perhaps central to this process of narrative building is the 'Scottish myth' (McCrone 2017). Sometimes called the 'egalitarian myth', this is the belief that Scotland is a more egalitarian and democratic society than its larger southern neighbour.

Like traditions, myths connect with past realities; they draw selectively from the past (Kølvraa 2015), a process that involves selective inclusion and exclusion. In discussing the difference between history and myth, Barthes proposes (1993: 142) that 'what the world supplies to myth is an historical reality, defined, even if those goes back quite a while, but the way in which men have produced or used it; and what myth gives in return is a natural image of this reality'. Barthes nuances this further with the statement that 'myth is constituted by the loss of the historical quality of things: in it, things lose the memory that they once were made' (Barthes 1993: 142).

The myth that we critique in this chapter draws on Scotland's intellectual and ideological heritage which has roots in the notion of the 'democratic intellect' in education as well as in continental political thought. The historical veracity of this myth is perhaps less interesting than the uses to which it has been put, both politically and creatively, drawing upon both an imaginary past taken for real and an equally assumed imaginary future. Much (although not all) of this discourse has been expressed in Scots – a unique, indigenous but contested voice that has developed into a symbol of resistance, both culturally and politically, against the homogenising forces of Anglocentrism and in favour of a continental outlook.

10.1 Scots language and festivals

Europe is a diverse, multilingual continent (Nic Craith 2006) with twenty-four official languages as well as a range of minority and contested languages. Scots belongs to the Germanic family of Indo-European languages. These include English, Scots, German, Low German, Dutch, Swedish, Norwegian and Danish. All of these (bar Scots) have the status of language rather than dialect at the level of nation state. Indeed, Scots is sometimes regarded as corrupted English (Nic Craith 2000, 2001). This reflects the intimate relationship between language status and that of its corresponding nation state (Nic Craith 2008). It also reflects the ideology of the homogenous nation state based on common cultural traits among which language is foremost. While Dutch is internationally regarded as a distinct language, the status of Low German remains disputed. As a contested language, Scots has many counterparts in Europe. These include Alsatian, Asturian, Franco-Provencal, Karelian and Kashubian (Nic Craith 2006).

Following the union with England in 1707, Scots ceased to be the language of the state. Despite subsequent prejudice towards the language, the language has proven to be resilient, surviving in the speech of millions of ordinary Scots and in their songs, ballads and poems. This period precipitated a number of

poems and songs, which are part of a long tradition of musical and literary heritage addressing the question of the national identity of Scotland, its role within the British Empire and the hostility of many towards imperialism. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, there was a flourishing of Scots poetry and song, with Robert Ferguson in Edinburgh and the ‘national bard’ Robert Burns in Ayrshire, who most famously brought the Scots language to the world.

In the nineteenth century, the Scottish novelist Sir Walter Scott became a world-famous writer. His Waverly novels were written in English, yet the speech of his characters was a rich broad Scots (Scott 1918 [1814]). During this century, the millions of workers who went to work in the factories in the Industrial Revolution were largely Scots and Gaelic speakers, and so Scots was very much alive in their communities and writings. Scots prose continued to appear in newspapers, often in the form of articles campaigning for social justice and for workers’ rights. At the same time that Scotland was moving forward into industrial times, writers and scholars were becoming increasingly interested in the past.

In 1808, a scholar called John Jamieson published the first *Dictionary of the Scots Tongue*. In the interwar years, the Scottish literary renaissance revitalised Scottish literature where the Scots language played a vital role. In the 1950s and 1960s, interest began to revive in traditional music and song with the Folk Revival, and within that, a strand of countercultural protest song. There is, of course, a long tradition of protest song and poetry in Scotland, from Mary Brooksbank in Dundee to the ‘bothy ballad’ tradition protesting farm worker’s conditions in the north-east.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Scots acquired a new status when the United Kingdom ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (Nic Craith 2003; McDermott 2018). According to the 2011 census, the language is spoken by 1.5 million Scots. Scots is more widely available than ever before, via local radio stations and monthly podcast Scots Language Radio. Scots is also spoken in the highly successful television *Outlander* series, which features time travel through eighteenth-century Scotland. Scots is recognised as an important component of the curriculum, with new resources created for schools.

Most festivals in Scotland nowadays have a Scots strand, and these festivals give an opportunity to Scots-speakers to affirm their identity and to interact with each other in a fun context. The area most commonly associated with the Scots language is Aberdeen and the north-east of Scotland, where the Doric tongue is spoken and performed annually at the Doric two-week festival in autumn. In this part of Scotland, local Poles regularly perform Scots traditional songs within the Polish–Scots Song and Story Group. Poland has a more than five-centuries-old relationship with Scotland, and the Polish language community here has produced a guide to the Scots language, designed for those who may visit or work in the area: *A Scots-Polish Lexicon / Leksykon szkocko-polski* by Kasia Michalska (2014). Here the community heritage practice of singing together in a contested language expresses uniqueness at a local level, while also

promoting social cohesion within a European ideal of ‘unity in diversity’ (see Kockel 2010: 125ff.). This performance of Polish–Scottish identity is a projection both inwards and outwards of belonging and identity that is both shared and unique (see identity model in chapter 1 and in Kockel, this volume).

Scots is performed and celebrated at local and national literary festivals such as the Borders Books Festival, the Edinburgh International Book Festival or the Wigtown Book Festival, which run a Scots poetry competition every year. TRACS (Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland) has a policy to celebrate both Scots and Gaelic and supports several festivals with a prominent Scots strand; these include the Scottish International Storytelling Festival, the summer TradFest, the Winter Festivals (which includes Burns Night) and the Carrying Stream Festival.

There are numerous other grassroots and community-led organisations dedicated to promoting education in and transmission of cultural practices in Scots. The TMSA (Traditional Music and Song Association) supports a network of smaller festivals, for example, at Kirriemuir, Blair Atholl or Cullerlie, that are dedicated to traditional song in regional dialects of Scots. This network has its roots in the earlier Folk Revival movement, which featured unaccompanied traditional song in the variety of Scots dialects. There are also local folk festivals that showcase Scots song, such as Innerleithen in the Borders area or Perthshire Amber in Dunkeld.

10.2 ‘The egalitarian myth’

An egalitarian ideology has long been associated with Scotland. It has a long cultural history, with roots as far back as the Declaration of Arbroath (1320), written in Latin, which has been described by Neal Ascherson (2002: 18) as ‘Europe’s earliest nationalist manifesto’. (In 2016, the declaration was placed on UNESCO’s (n.d.) Memory of the World register.) This declaration rejected the position of Edward I of England as overlord of Scotland and argued that a King owed his power to his peers rather than to God. The declaration of freedom derives from an old idea that also underpins the Presbyterian ‘*lad o’ pairs*’, which refers to the potential of any individual to rise from humble beginnings into good fortune (largely thanks to the distinct education system). This idea also lies behind the historical belief that the Scottish working class has an instinct for radical, if not revolutionary, international socialism, and the contemporary belief in Scotland as a more welcoming, inclusive nation than its southern neighbour. The myth is reflected in Robert Burns’ song ‘*A Man’s A Man For A’ That*’, which was performed at the opening of the Scottish Parliament in 1999.

This myth operates in different ways and at different levels. ‘Myth’ here does not refer to something which is manifestly false. Like traditions, myths connect with past realities; they draw selectively from the past, a process that involves selective exclusion and inclusion. The ambiguity of the myth helps to account for its persistence. It is perhaps most commonly expressed in the ubiquitous phrase: ‘*We’re Aa Jock Tamson’s Bairns*’ (Anon 1848: 29). This is interpreted

in a metaphorical sense as a statement of egalitarian sentiments confirming equality: that no-one is fundamentally any better than anyone else or perhaps that we are all heirs to the same fortune and misfortune that might befall in the course of a life. The phrase is used in common speech and in cultural life generally in Scotland. The origin of the phrase is uncertain; the earliest reference is in the *Dictionary of the Scots Language* in 1847, which describes the phrase as ‘an expression of mutual good fellowship very frequently heard in Scotland’ (Anon 1848: 29).

10.3 The Enlightenment and democratic intellectual heritage

We have already linked the decline of Scots to the Union of Parliaments with England in 1707. At that point, Scotland gave up its political and economic independence; however, Scotland retained its right to follow its own policy in culture, religion, law and education. The eighteenth century was a period of intellectual enrichment in Scotland, commonly known as the Enlightenment. A core feature of this period was the concept of a democratic intellect that affirmed the ability of every individual to arrive at their own conclusion. Broadie (2001: 1) defines a key characteristic of this period as: ‘the demand that we think for ourselves, and not allow ourselves to develop the intellectual device of assenting to something simply because someone with authority has sanctioned it’. Moreover, the expression of that demand in the public domain would be without fear of penalty or punishment.

That is essentially similar to the Kantian definition of the Enlightenment. One of the most influential philosophers in eighteenth-century Europe, Immanuel Kant examined reason and the nature of reality. He argued that in order to be truly enlightened, every individual must have the wisdom to use his or her own intellect. Kant argued:

Enlightenment is man’s emergence from his self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one’s own understanding without the guidance of another. This immaturity is self-incurred if its cause is not lack of understanding, but lack of resolution and courage to use it without the guidance of another. The motto of enlightenment is therefore: *Sapere aude!* [Dare to be wise!] Have courage to use your own understanding!

[Kant 1991: 1]

This promotion of the ordinary individual as intellectual was supported by a semi-continental style of education in Scotland, which was very distinct from practice in England. This continental dimension of Scotland’s intellectuals is taken up by Kenneth White, who traces Scotland’s ancient connections with continental intellectuality through the figure of the ‘wandering Scots’ who were known to be the most avid seekers of knowledge. Beginning with the Celtic monks, he references the twelfth-century philosopher Duns Scotus, Renaissance Scots in France, the Republican-minded George Buchanan, the

Scots College in Paris, David Hume in the eighteenth century, Robert Louis Stevenson in the nineteenth and Patrick Geddes into the twentieth. Given his own Scottish–French background, it is hardly surprising that White draws particular attention to the French–Scottish intellectual heritage, noting that ‘it was in Scotland, as a page at Mary Stuart’s court, that Ronsard learnt the rudiments of lyrical writing. And it was in France that Buchanan plunged into the opening field of the New Knowledge, writing the best Latin poems of the age in Paris and in Bordeaux, and in the bygoing teaching Montaigne’ (White 1998: 122–123).

The continental character of Scottish education was profiled by George Elder Davie in his book, *The Democratic Intellect* (1961). Drawing on Scotland’s Presbyterian inheritance, he argues that metaphysical Scotland, in contrast to utilitarian England, always favoured the generalist, philosophical approach. ‘The barrier between North and South was proverbially located in the contrast between rationality and the rule of thumb, between principle and precedent, and the English with their tolerant good-humour could refer to the complex sister-nation as “metaphysical Scotland”’ (Davie 1961: xix). Students were expected to inquire into the connections between subjects, their intellectual and ethical grounding and relationships, as well as their functional application to the community. They were guided by a philosophy of common sense that was both social and epistemological. From this generalist grounding, expert skills could be pursued, safe in the knowledge that specialising students were so well educated in the philosophical perspective, they would always refer their specific area of expertise back to its relationship and significance within the generalist context.

This resonates with the Humboldtian idea of the university. In the early decades of nineteenth-century Germany, an ideological change in Prussian universities placed new emphasis on the role of academics as researchers as well as teachers. This shift had theoretical implications and generated a ‘spiritual and philosophical rejuvenation’ (Watson 2010: 228), which also had implications for students at these universities. Humboldt argued that the ‘primary purpose of a university is “to cultivate learning in the deepest and broadest sense of the word,” not for some practical or utilitarian end, but for its own sake as a “preparatory material of spiritual and moral education”’ (Watson 2010: 233).

It is this intellectual insistence, writes Davie, that makes for democracy in the Scottish tradition. Class, colour and religion are irrelevant in a philosophically based education. The application of knowledge was not thought to be a separate issue and the high point of Scotland’s worldwide contribution in engineering, industry, science and architecture coincided with the pinnacle of the country’s philosophical and literary influence in the Enlightenment. Davie’s later work, *The Crisis of the Democratic Intellect* (1986), charts a narrative of decline where continental traditions are held in tension with the more pragmatic influences from England in the context of Empire.

10.4 Burns' celebrations and the French Revolution

Much of this egalitarian ideal has been expressed in Scots – a linguistic heritage that was considerably enriched by Robbie Burns, sometimes known as Scotland's national bard (McIntyre 2009). Having been born into poverty himself, Burns was quick to propagate the egalitarian ideas of the French Revolution through Scots, a theme that is regularly remembered at the annual worldwide celebration of Burns' supper on or near the anniversary of Burns' birthday (25 January 1759). The bard was born in Ayr, a town on the west coast that had a long tradition of trading with European ports from the Mediterranean to the Baltic.

Burns developed political leanings towards issues of equality and freedom that were key ideals of the French Revolution. Crawford (2009: 368) notes Burns' reference to one of his own songs as being 'not only about the historical Scottish struggle for "Liberty & Independence" but also "associated with the glowing ideas of some other struggles of the same nature, not quite so ancient"'. Unusually for the period, Burns extended these ideals of liberty and equality to women as well as men. At the time of the French Revolution, Burns composed verses on contemporary political concerns. There were allusions in some of his poetry to Thomas Erskine, who was Tom Paine's lawyer (Crawford 2009). Paine had actively engaged with the French Revolution and is especially known for his *Rights of Man* (1791), which subsequently sold nearly a million copies. Although highly controversial, Paine survived these years of political turmoil and was a participant in the committee that drafted the constitution for the French Republic, but he subsequently fell into disfavour again. An ardent revolutionary, Burns sympathised utterly with this European intellectual heritage and expressed these ideals in his own Scots verses.

For many people today, the poet and the annual celebration of this Burns' festival is strongly associated with these republican ideals and resonates with the Scottish egalitarian narrative. Aamer Anwar, a human rights lawyer writes: 'Burns was a poet of the common man who championed universal suffrage and the abolition of slavery long before it became fashionable. Inspired by the American and French Revolutions with their ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity, Burns stood against the corruption of the gentry, nobility and royalty' (Anwar 2009: 34).

One of Burns' more famous Scots' poem is entitled '*A Man's A Man For a' That*' (Burns 1993) and celebrates the idea of democracy and the equality of all human beings. The poem argues that, regardless of personal wealth or poverty, every individual is entitled to the same respect. The novelist Andrew O'Hagan calls it 'a secular hymn to the dignity of the common man that outstrips any holy writ or any national anthem'. O'Hagan regards the poem as: 'a song for every colour, every class and every creed, the notion of brotherhood and equality as the greatest testament to humanity's essential compassion, a goal that everyone can share' (O'Hagan 2009: 46).

This egalitarian ideal has strong resonance among all Scots, whether born in Scotland or recently arrived. ‘New Scots’ is the term commonly used in Scotland to describe migrants and refugees – a phrase designed to suggest inclusivity as an expression of the same egalitarian myth. New Scots have celebrated the Burns tradition by organising an alternative ‘Burns’ Supper’ as part of Glasgow’s Celtic Connections festival. BEMIS (Black and Ethnic Minorities in Scotland) aims to promote inclusion and democratic citizenship. Their annual Burns’ supper is a grand-scale multicultural *Ceilidh* (or gathering) honouring Robert Burns’ transcendent beliefs in human equality, kinship and conviviality and reinforces Scotland’s image of itself as a democratic, egalitarian society that gives voice to the subaltern.

10.5 MacDiarmid and socialism

More than a century after his lifetime, Burns’ poetry in Scots was edited by Hugh MacDiarmid (1949), who was culturally significant in Scotland as a socialist poet. Harvie (1999: 113–114) notes that MacDiarmid was ‘influenced by right-wing thinkers. He must have read Maurras and Barrés while in France at the end of World War I and been attracted towards their gospel of French provincialism. He also seems to have accepted the Italian Futurists’ characterisation of Mussolini as a kind of indigenous Lenin’. However MacDiarmid never actually engaged with Scottish Fascists.

Having joined the Royal Army Medical Corps at the beginning of the First World War, MacDiarmid served in Salonica, Greece and France before returning to Scotland. ‘Galvanised by the knowledge he gained in the Great War to wage his own war for Scotland, MacDiarmid adapted the generalist tools of the Scottish democratic intellect to stimulate a modern Scottish Renaissance and write the Scottish Republic’ (Lyll 2006: 25). A strong believer in socialism, MacDiarmid was politically as well as culturally active. MacDiarmid’s worldview followed Marx in his Hegelian rejection of empiricism as the reduction of reality to facts. Instead, he believed that ‘the importance of such facts was always contingent on their overall context and on the fact of change’ (Harvie 1999: 112). Like Marx’s, MacDiarmid’s worldview was synthetic.

In 1920s Scotland, a modernist literary and cultural movement heralded a political drive towards renewed political as well as cultural self-determination. In his attempts to encourage cultural confidence, MacDiarmid thought it necessary to free Scotland from the yoke of Anglicisation that had effectively quashed any new and original expressions of national character for hundreds of years. MacDiarmid believed that a Scottish worldview could not be adequately expressed in English. To achieve this new self-confidence, he consciously adopted the use of the Old Scots Tongue, or *Lallans*, as the new form came to be known, which was a synthetic idiom borrowing from many different varieties of the Scots language, spoken at different times in different parts of the country, instead of English for much of his poetry. Some of his best work is written in Scots, including the famous *A drunk man looks at the thistle*, an epic critique of

Scottish culture expressing MacDiarmid's animosity towards a Scottish culture which was becoming Anglicised and intellectually barren.

From MacDiarmid's perspective, there was an inherent diversity in the creative expression of Scots and all its rich dialectical variations which could be used as an expression of resistance to homogenisation and Anglicisation. Effectively, MacDiarmid was inviting Scottish writers to find a new and distinctive Scottish voice which led to a 'literary renaissance' that was rooted in a pluralistic cultural and linguistic experience in Scotland. It included writing in Gaelic, standard English as well as Scots. This period inspired writers such as Lewis Grassie Gibbon, Neil Gunn, William Soutar, Edwin Muir, James Bridie, Ewan MacColl, Joe Corrie, Ena Naomi Mitchison, Catherine Carswell, Willa Muir, Nan Shepherd and others to recover a vast neglected heritage of literary and creative practice from Scotland's past. Rather than identifying a unique Scottish experience, these writers were addressing universal conditions through diverse Scottish realities. This inherent diversity in the creative expression of Scots and all its rich dialectical variations can be read here very much as resistance to homogenisation and an invitation to artists to find a new and distinctive Scottish voice. While they may not align themselves with MacDiarmid's extreme cultural politics of the early century, more modern writers like James Robertson, Tom Leonard, James Kelman and Irvine Welsh still continue in the tradition of cultural reclamation and the determined use of localised Scots languages.

10.6 Henderson, Gramsci and the People's Festival

Scotland's concept of egalitarianism is one that respects all people, whether rich or poor, native or migrant, participating in high or low culture. It challenges the notion of an established, bourgeois culture and promotes ideas not dissimilar to Antonio Gramsci, the Sardinian Marxist, best known for his theory of cultural hegemony. This proposes that the bourgeoisie maintain their order and values over others by the promotion of their own practices as the norm. Force is not necessary to maintain this order. Instead through their dominance of cultural institutions, upper-classes reproduce and maintain the *status quo*. Boothman (2008: 2003) interprets Gramsci's concept of hegemony as 'consent backed by coercion'. This model of power relations can be traced back to Machiavelli's centaur, who is half-animal and half-man, and must learn to know both natures if he is to survive (Machiavelli 1950).

Gramsci's thinking was highly influential on the Scottish folk collector Hamish Henderson (1919–2002) who dominated the folk scene in Scotland in the second half of the twentieth century. Henderson travelled the country recording ordinary people singing and telling stories, including those from the Travelling communities. He was part of the very folk process he sought to understand, bringing the phrase 'the carrying stream' into cultural consciousness and writing songs like *Freedom Come All Ye*, which was adopted by the Peace Movement and the CND's anti-Polaris campaign. For Gramsci as for

Henderson, folk culture presented an alternative, a subaltern view of society and history, alternative to the official, or establishment version of the rulers. 'Folklore can be understood only as a reflection of the conditions of cultural life of the people, although certain conceptions specific to folklore remain even after these conditions have been (or seem to be) modified or have given way to bizarre combinations' (Gramsci 2000: 360–361).

During 1948–1951, Henderson translated Gramsci's Prison Letters (*Lettere dal Carcere*) into English (Gramsci 1998). Henderson saw many cultural parallels between Gramsci's native Sardinia and Scotland. His translation of Gramsci is peppered with Scots words, with expressions such as 'wee' or 'daff' used many times, and an Italian Jacobin described as having 'bees in his bonnet'. Henderson was particularly drawn to Gramsci's conception of folklore. Gibson (2010: 243) argues that Gramsci's writings 'can be seen to account for a large part of the foundations of Henderson's conception of folk-culture, and to represent crucial assertions that were to be reified through his long investment in Scottish folksong revivalism'.

In the early 1950s, Henderson became actively involved in an arts festival in Edinburgh known as the Edinburgh People's Festival, which ran from 1951 to 1954. The festival was originally inspired by the 1945 Labour Government as a celebration of the arts 'for the people, by the people'. Henderson regarded the revival of folk song more generally, and this festival in particular, as an opportunity to democratise folk traditions and bring them to the masses. He regretted the apparent divide between modern popular culture and the popular culture of folklore.

The first People's Festival *Ceilidh* – which some say was an early forerunner of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe – took place in the Oddfellows Hall on 31 August 1951, the same year as the School of Scottish Studies was founded at the University of Edinburgh. Henderson played a significant role in the organisation of the People's Festival *Ceilidh*, which he saw as a catalyst for the development of the folk song revival in Scotland, describing it as 'Gramsci in action'. He explained how the idea for the festival related to Gramsci:

Attracting people who felt excluded by the International Festival, keeping the prices low and including children – it was Gramsci in action! One of the things that attracted me to Gramsci was his great interest in popular culture. He was a Sardinian, and the Sardinian folk song is rich and bountiful and vigorous to the nth degree. When he was in prison he wrote to his mother and sisters asking for details of their folk festivals. Gramsci in action was the People's Festival.

[cited in Davidson 2010: 258]

The festival provided artists and singers that had previously been recorded by Henderson in his position as researcher at the University of Edinburgh with an opportunity to perform to a wider audience. While the festival was subsequently embroiled in political controversy, the egalitarian message had been received, and that festival is regarded as the forerunner to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe that now runs in parallel to the Edinburgh International Festival of high

culture every summer and has vastly outgrown the latter in terms of audience numbers and performances.

10.7 *Freedom Come All Ye* at the Commonwealth Games

Henderson's egalitarianism came to the fore with the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow in 2014, when his song *Freedom Come All Ye* was performed at the opening ceremonies by South African Soprano Pumiza Matshikiza. The title is a nod towards the genre of songs known as 'Come all ye's', the kind of song that begins with a call to listen – 'Come all ye (sons of liberty/ good people/ tramps and hawkers etc.)' and listen to my song. Scots have used traditional song as a means for expressing and constructing political views and musical practice to challenge the larger structures of power. Song is an incredibly potent and affective form of embodied musical practice. The semantic power of words expands the awareness of possibilities ranging over past, present and future, while the sounds of voice and melody and their intonation focus the awareness in the present through a visceral, embodied experience. The power of political song provides a sort of relational empowerment where those who sing and those who listen bond with one another in the performance of shared values and aspirations (McFadyen 2018).

On the national and international stage, the emotional impact of the performance of *Freedom come all ye* at the Commonwealth Games shows how songs can communicate to the world. The Scots song – which calls for freedom, equality and an end to war and speaks for social justice, inclusion and understanding throughout the world – refers to Nyanga, one of the oldest black townships in Cape Town. This is where Pumeza Matshikiza lived as a child. Taking inspiration from this, her reinvention of the song mixes Scottish and South African instrumentation. The performance of this song was especially poignant in Glasgow, a city that has a special relationship with the struggle against apartheid South Africa, embodied in Nelson Mandela, who, while still a political prisoner, was bestowed the Freedom of the City in 1981 (Bort 2013).

This song is so rich in imagery and symbolism that it is impossible to give a full explanation of it here. Neal Ascherson (2002: 168) has described it as 'socialist battle-song'. The main theme is anti-imperialism coupled with the recognition of the part that Scots have played in the conquest and subjugation of other peoples within the British Empire. Although Scottish people were 'so long misled and abused, [Scotland] is still strong enough to tear off the alien uniform which it has been persuaded to think its own, and to regain its true, noble and universal nature' (Ascherson 2002: 168). The song anticipates the day when all peoples are truly free and can meet in peace and friendship.

10.8 Hogmanay Celebrations 2019

As New Year 2019 was rung in, there was a special Hogmanay celebration in Edinburgh. As well as 'Auld Lang Syne', a traditional Scots song performed around the world on this festive occasion, the fireworks celebrated Scotland's cultural,

historical and social connections with Europe. At a time when the Westminster government was intent on leaving the European Union, Edinburgh's iconic fireworks were accompanied by a soundtrack created by the German techno-marching band *Meute*. Six of Scotland's leading writers composed love letters to Europe. These letters were projected onto six buildings in the Scottish capital between 1 and 25 January. The idea for these letters was developed in partnership with Edinburgh's International Book Festival and Edinburgh as UNESCO City of Literature. The letter written by author and radio presenter Louise Welsh, displayed at the Tech Cube in Summerhall, featured words from Scots and other European languages and was designed as an expression of shared European origins and cultures.

These letters could be interpreted as a form of resistance to moves by the parliament in London to withdraw the United Kingdom from the EU against the democratically expressed wishes of the majority of the Scottish people. Although a small majority overall in the United Kingdom (51.9%) voted in favour of leaving the EU in the 2016 referendum, that perspective was not reflected in Scotland, where over 62% of those eligible to vote preferred to remain within the EU (BBC 2016). Given Scotland's continental empathy, this result was hardly surprising and should be set against the referendum for Scottish independence in 2014 (Kockel 2015), during which EU citizens were told that a vote for independence would jeopardise Scotland's membership of the EU!

How we listen to and perform our linguistic heritage contributes not only to our own sense of belonging and authenticity but also to how we project this on to others. Given Scotland's cultural and political heritage, there has been no less a sense that the traditional arts community had a responsibility to contribute to the national debate, irrespective of political leanings or differences of opinion. However, in a climate of rising political tension, public arts organisations and networks involving traditional arts were careful to avoid taking an explicit position in the independence debate. Contributions had to come from individuals and independent groups. One of us, Mairi, was an active campaigner at this time, taking a lead in catalysing the campaign group TradYES, part of the wider non-party creative cultural campaign National Collective (McFadyen 2013, 2018).

One Scots song that rose to prominence during that campaign reinforced the egalitarian narrative that we have discussed in this chapter. Written in the Borders (Southern) dialect of Scots, Matt Seattle and David Finnie's *Theme for the early days of a better nation* (2014) rejoiced in the diversity of people in Scotland, whether native or migrant (McKerrell and West 2018). The title was inspired by the famous words of author and artist Alasdair Gray, quoting Canadian poet Dennis Leigh: 'Work as if you live in the early days of a better nation'. The lyric used two images from Scotland's natural heritage, drawing on a strand of rurality that has a long pedigree in Scotland. Composer Matt Seattle explained: 'The wandering geese represent those who are welcomed as new Scots, and the shimmering salmon represent the struggle of all those who swim against the current, as in the Peebles motto *contra nando incrementum*, which means "against the stream they multiply"' (Seattle 2014). This song became

a campaign favourite, later recorded by singer Lori Watson and the orchestra McFall's Chamber as part of the Distil project.

10.9 Conclusion

Heritage is a dynamic concept (Kockel and Nic Craith 2007). As Europe evolves, so does its heritage. Language is a crucial element of the heritage expressing local and transnational belonging at one and the same time. It enables people to find their place in society. In using Scots, people in Scotland are connected with others throughout Europe who speak a contested languages. In speaking Scots, people are re-affirming an element of European heritage that was almost lost and are challenging the forces of homogenisation that are gathering momentum at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

This chapter has been set in the context of a particular political and cultural moment in late modern Scotland and its transitioning relationship with the United Kingdom, and the United Kingdom's transitioning relationship with the EU. It traces Scotland's emphasis on the equality of individuals and the links between that ideology and ideas in Europe. It has focused on the promulgation of this myth through the Scots language and the many festivals associated with it. There is no suggestion, however, that empathy with egalitarianism is the sole prerogative of speakers of Scots, and we are aware that there are multiple 'Scotlands' and multiple ideologies within it. Our interest in Scots has been inspired by its increasing visibility in the public sphere at a time of transition and the perception that its rise could be seen as a form of resistance to the Westminster parliament. Our primary focus has been on the affinity between Scotland and Europe – and that empathy seems set to continue. Neal Ascherson (2002: 304) noted that Scotland has a sense of European identity 'as a small North Sea nation which needs to encounter the world directly rather than through the priorities of Great Britain'. As this chapter has indicated, the relationship with Europe is centuries old and the notion of resistance well rehearsed!

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