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Scotland's Feminine Nationalism: some distant views of Jane Porter

Graeme Morton

To take for granted as truth all that is alleged against the fame of others, is a species of credulity that men would blush at on any other topic.¹

Nationalism with the lights out

Darkness envelops the place of gender within nationalism. As political movements in various manifestations, few instances are found where their aspirations converge. Most commonly the blindness comes from the nationalist side as the rights of women and men are marginalised to the agenda of the nation's needs. So hidden have the claims of gender been within the nationalist project, that the leading theorists have only fitfully explored the interaction and only recently have others taken up the challenge to re-imagine what nationalism and national identity might have meant, and may mean, through the power relations that gender analysis unearths.²

It is through the study of literature that the most extensive engagement with 'gendering the nation' is found in Scotland. Conversely this has produced results that are both feminine and masculine in communion with the core nation of England and the state of Britain.³ It is easy to be sucked in to a shorthand characterisation of the Scottish nation that is male dominated, particularly in analysis of its popular culture.⁴ Whether a literary or historical

¹ Words ascribed to the late Jane Porter in *The Florence Times* [Alabama], 1 October 1897.

² J. Heuer, 'Gender and Nationalism', in G.H. Herb and D.H. Kaplan (eds), *Nations and Nationalism: A Global Historical Overview*, Vol. 1 (Santa Barbara, 2008), 43; D. McCrone, *The Sociology of Nationalism: Tomorrow's Ancestors* (London, 1998), 120–4; M. Guibernau, *Nationalisms: The Nation-State and Nationalism in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 1996), 54–5. An examination of gendered Scottish/British identification as revealed through survey data is found in D. McCrone, *Understanding Scotland—the sociology of a nation* (2nd edn, London, 2001), 168–9.

³ The less common 'masculine' argument is proposed in M. M. Martin, *The Mighty Scot: Nation, Gender, and the Nineteenth-Century Mystique of Scottish Masculinity* (Albany, NY, 2009).

⁴ E. Breitenbach and L. Abrams, 'Gender and Scottish Identity', in L. Abrams, E. Gordon,



approach is used, the popular canon is stubbornly male: Saint Andrew, William Wallace, Robert Bruce, Charles Edward Stuart, Robert Burns, and Hugh MacDiarmid continue to dominate.⁵ Indeed, they are paraded within the national narrative for their excessive masculinity.

The one place where the feminine has claimed a major symbolic presence is at the constitutional level where the nations of Britain have been represented by the images of Britannia, Scotia, and Hibernia. Yet there is irony here, for notwithstanding their gender, these are masculine symbols of authority. Representing 'women-as-nation' they are most often masculinised in times of opposition or international dispute.⁶ And this is some help to our conceptual understanding, with the main works of theorists who have incorporated gender into nationalist analysis having levelled their focus on the state. If nothing else, this scholarship makes us aware that when national identity is privileged then it is based on inequalities of 'repressive gender regimes'.⁷ There is, explains McLintock, no nation that gives women and men the same access to the rights and resources of the nation-state.⁸ Thus Virginia Woolf could muse in *Three Guineas* (1938): 'How can England belong to me, how can I be a part of it, if I do not have the vote'.⁹ This exclusion is a powerful difference: 'Excluded from direct action as national citizens, women are subsumed symbolically in to the national body politic as its boundary and metaphoric limit'.¹⁰ Women's bodies are regarded as the preserve of the nation. To some, women are 'active transmitters and producers of the national culture' and 'symbolic signifiers of national difference' as well as,

D. Simonton and E. J. Yeo (eds), *Gender in Scottish History since 1700* (Edinburgh, 2006), 17, 19.

⁵ That Burns, Bruce and Wallace head surveys of the 'most important Scots' is shown in M. Penman, 'Robert Bruce's Bones: Reputations, Politics and Identities in Nineteenth-Century Scotland', *International Review of Scottish Studies*, 34 (2009), 7.

⁶ J. Edmunds, 'Generations, Women and National Consciousness', in J. Edmunds and B.S. Turner (eds), *Generational Consciousness, Narrative and Politics* (Boston, 2002), 46; A. Rauser 'Death or Liberty: British Political Prints and the Struggle for Symbols in the American Revolution', *Oxford Art Journal*, 21, 2 (1998), 151–2, charts the American challenge to Britannia's claim on liberty.

⁷ M. Molloy, 'Imagining (the) Difference: Gender, Ethnicity and Metaphors of Nation', *Feminist Review*, 51 (Autumn, 1995), 105.

⁸ A. McLintock, 'Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family', *Feminist Review*, 44 (Summer, 1993), 61.

⁹ J. Giles and T. Middleton (eds), *Writing Englishness, 1900–1950* (London, 1995), 111, 114–18.

¹⁰ McLintock, 'Family Feuds', 61.

perhaps wrongly at times, 'active participants in national struggle'.¹¹ The weaker or defeated nation is feminised, penetrated, occupied and culturally dominated.¹² Whether it is soldier rape as the epitome of power over another nation or in providing the newborn life to build up a nation's military or economic forces, women and the nation are coupled during any military campaign.¹³

Nor has the state been immune from legislating on women and men in ways that might seem to reflect constitutional rather than personal nationalism. Sex, itself, has been politicised. State (and church and institutional) control over sexual behaviour is the norm, with control over age of marriage, marriage to relatives, sodomy, bestiality, homosexuality, and masturbation.¹⁴ It is unclear how much Victoria was aware of her Prime Minister's attendance at the culmination of her confinement to ensure the royal line was protected, although insistence that she be a virgin upon marriage would have been something she was, however subtly, reminded of.¹⁵ Interest in the royal progeny was more than constitutional. With the birth of Princess Victoria in 1840, nine months after marriage, and Edward VII in 1841, Victoria was both mother of the nation and symbol of bourgeois domesticity; during the period when her infants were breast-fed this maternal activity became popularized as the domestic ideal.¹⁶

In most instances women's interaction with the state, and the embodiment of women by the state, is no different between Scotland and the other nations

¹¹ N. Yuval-Davis and F. Anthias (eds), *Women-Nation-State* (London, 1989), 7, quoted in McLintock, 'Family Feuds', 62–3.

¹² R. S. Herr, 'The Possibility of Nationalist Feminism', *Hyppatia*, 18 (2003), 137.

¹³ Ibid; S. Pryke, 'Nationalism and Sexuality: what are the issues?', *Nations and Nationalism*, 4, 4 (October, 1998), 538–40; Mayer, 'Gender Ironies of Nationalism', 10–11.

¹⁴ R. Davidson, "'The Sexual State': Sexuality and Scottish Governance, 1950–1980", *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 13, 4 (October 2004), 501; R. Davidson, *Dangerous Liaisons: A Social History of Venereal Disease in Twentieth-Century Scotland* (Amsterdam, 2000). The rise of first cousin marriages in nineteenth-century England, including Charles Darwin's marriage to Emma Wedgwood and Victoria's marriage to Albert, is explored in Adam Kuper, *Incest and influence: the private life of bourgeois England* (Cambridge, MA, 2009). The Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 allowed limited divorce in England, where the parties are domicile in England; in Scotland divorce had been possible since 1560 and in 1830 the Court of Session oversaw divorce and issues of bastardy; the divorce procedure was updated in the Conjugal Rights (Scotland) Act of 1861. The debate in 1820 on the legality of marriage to the widow of a deceased brother under Scots law, when the marriage took place in North America, is examined in L. Leneman, *Alienated Affections: the Scottish Experience of Divorce and Separation, 1684–1830* (Edinburgh, 1998), 261–2.

¹⁵ J. Plunkett, *Queen Victoria First Media Monarch* (Oxford, 2003), 29.

¹⁶ Plunkett, *Queen Victoria*, 56, 138.

of Britain. The theories of gender and nationalism take our understanding so far. Where they reveal less are for nationalisms that are feminised and thus similarly excluded from the state. This, then, is where the literary romance, and specifically the writing of Jane Porter, can provide some clues for the Scottish example.

Romantic Nationalism

Of the many genres, the romance has played a particular role because it is a feminised literature.¹⁷ This is not from any simplistic notions of femininity or love, but because it is not a high literature or a literature of politics or the state. Even in core nations it is thus, and within its boundaries it incorporates rural and parochial literature. The romance tradition can also be traced in continuities over time, providing the patriotism of a national tale that sustains Scottish poetry, as it does the historical novel.¹⁸ In Scotland of the second half of the nineteenth century the parochial element is most notable in the literature of the Kailyard and its place within the diaspora. This has not been lost on commentators and the contribution of such writings to structuring identity has been studied in depth.¹⁹ What further emasculates the Kailyard, Christopher Whyte has noted in relation to Neil Gunn, is that it is a trope where 'women are ready to serve their husbands and sons', to be silently on hand, to be strong and resourceful but not to demand anything for themselves.²⁰ It was a literary style that was then dismantled and consciously masculinised in the writings of Lewis Grassie Gibbon and Hugh MacDiarmid at the start of the twentieth century. As Zumkhawala-Cook maintains, MacDiarmid stood for a new vitality in Scotland against 'the

¹⁷ The construction of the feminine sublime by Edinburgh-born Susan Ferrier (1782–1854) is analysed in A. K. Mellor, *Romance and Gender* (London, 1993), 103–5. The theoretical debate behind this concept is laid out in 'Feminist Approaches to Romantic Literature', in C. J. Murray (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of the Romantic Era, 1760–1850, Vol. 1 A–K* (New York, 2004), 343–5.

¹⁸ S. C. Behrendt, *British Women Poets and the Romantic Writing Community* (Baltimore, 2009), 210, 213.

¹⁹ The conceptual value of the Kailyard in face of its wide cultural connotations is explored in A. Nash, 'The Kailyard: Problem of Illusion?', in I. Brown, T. O. Clancy, S. Manning, M. Pittock (eds), *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature. Volume Two: Enlightenment, Britain and Empire (1707–1918)* (Edinburgh, 2007), 317–23.

²⁰ C. Whyte, 'Introduction', in *Gendering the Nation: Studies in Modern Scottish Literature*, ed. C. Whyte (Edinburgh, 1995), xi.

feminine nineteenth-century forms as a homosocial change existing between men'.²¹

Yet we must take care that the Kailyard, the romance, and the symbols they carry, are not wrongly interpreted through a misunderstanding of Scotland's nationalism in these decades. It has been argued that Kailyard was a literature that symbiotically reflected the constitutional settlements emasculated by the unions of 1603 and 1707. That it was immersed in a world where the restoration of the Scottish monarchy and nation would lead not to modern Scotland but, later commentators feared, to the old unreconstituted Scotland.²² Alternatively, in the argument of Martin, the romanticisation of the Scottish Highlands in art, most dramatically represented by Sir Edwin Henry Landseer's *The Monarch of the Glen* (1851), and the cult of deerstalking, is theorised as a constitutional incorporation of Scotland into England and as the primal masculine element of an English and British identity.²³ By suggesting that Britishness was simply an expansion of Englishness, Martin's hypothesis that the Scottish symbols are masculine is based on a supposed preponderance of a misplaced pro-Union context.²⁴

There is some rhetorical power to these reactions, yet they bookend a nationalism that is not to be found. Restoration of the Stuarts or an unreformed parliament were not on the agenda, other than for a very few. The symbols might be masculine, but again this is not the nationalism they reflected. It was Britain not England that contemporaries envisioned when blending the Scottish nation with English constitutionalism, a meld where the Union was inviolate.²⁵ It did this not by being 'pro-Union', but through the equality of nations embodied by the term unionist-nationalism.²⁶ Indeed, the construction of the highlands or the kilted soldier was a contribution to the peripherality of the nation, forging a nationalism that was decidedly feminine despite its masculine motifs. In the antinomies of the Celt and the Anglo-Saxon, feminine and masculine are part constructs in the moral, personal, immediate and social

²¹ R. Zumkhawala-Cook, *Scotland As We Know It: Representations of National Identity in Literature, Film and Popular Culture* (North Carolina and London, 2008), 91–3. In the language of Tom Nairn, the Kailyard represents a cultural neurosis, Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain* (London, 1977), 156.

²² Whyte, 'Introduction', xii.

²³ Martin, *The Mighty Scot*, 42, 79.

²⁴ Ibid, 10–11, 166 n8, n9.

²⁵ G. Morton, 'Scotland is Britain: the Union and Unionist-Nationalism, 1807–1907', *Journal of Irish and Scottish Studies*, 1:1 (2008), 127–41.

²⁶ G. Morton, *Unionist-Nationalism: Governing Urban Scotland, 1830–1860* (East Linton, 1999).

opposites of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*.²⁷ To the anatomist Robert Knox, writing in 1859, the ‘Caledonian Celt of Scotland’ and the Lowland Saxon were as distinct ‘as any two races can possibly be’. So Cairns Craig explains from these observations, the nation is returned to its racial types, taking it further from hybridity or commonality, and thus accentuating difference.²⁸ It was a case of opposites attract. The Scottish symbols were not appropriated by England because they were masculine, but because they could be feminised. To Ernest Renan in 1860 the Scotland of this century had become melancholy and feminine. Once a land of masculine heroes, now ‘diminutive feminised pygmies’ inhabited Scotland.²⁹ For Matthew Arnold a distinct Celtic identity was an essential component, as well as counterpoint, to the British Empire.³⁰ And this thesis can be taken one stage further, to argue that consciously or not the Scots were complicit in this feminisation. Edward Said’s influential theory of Orientalism teaches us that the culture of the periphery is consumed through the imperatives of the core, and that such culture is then assimilated within the periphery as if it were its own.³¹ The darkness faced by studies of gender and nationalism in Scotland has come from the struggle to make sense of privileging social constructions of sex, but no progress can be made until the nation’s nationalism is imputed correctly. It was a feminine identity because it was the product of a peripheral nation in partnership with a core nation, a union envisioned, if not in actuality, as one of equality.

It is perhaps no surprise, then, that the romance is a literature reflective of this nationalism. And in many respects the author Jane Porter offers the historian some of the best insight into its construction. Hitherto scholarship has focused on her merits as the creator of the historical novel.³² It was a

²⁷ McCrone, *Sociology of Nationalism*, 58.

²⁸ R. Knox, *The Races of Men*, pp. 14–15, quoted in C. Craig, *Intending Scotland: Explorations in Scottish Culture since the Enlightenment* (Edinburgh, 2009), 230. Knox believed it inherent that the races were antagonistic, Clare L. Taylor, ‘Knox, Robert (1791–1862)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/15787, accessed 25 Feb 2010].

²⁹ M. G. H. Pittock, *Celtic Identity and the British Image* (Manchester, 1999), 69.

³⁰ M. Arnold, *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (London, 1867), xvii–xviii; Zumkhawala-Cook, *Scotland As We Know It*, 7.

³¹ C. Craig, *Out of History: Narrative Paradigms in Scottish and British Culture* (Edinburgh, 1996), 206.

³² F. Price, ‘Resisting “The Spirit of Innovation”: the other historical novel and Jane Porter’, *Modern Language Review*, 101 (2006), 638–51; T. McLean, ‘Nobody’s Argument: Jane Porter and the historical novel’, *The Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, 7, 2 (Fall/Winter, 2007), 88–103; A. D. Hook, ‘Jane Porter, Sir Walter Scott, and the Historical Novel’, *Clio*, 2 (1976), 184.

debate she herself perpetuated, but this is to ignore a perhaps more significant contribution to Scotland's national culture. Porter's literary works were singularly romantic, and she was renowned most for a feminine romance made out of one of the most masculine characters, Scotland's greatest military patriot Sir William Wallace. Jane Porter was someone personally connected to the royal family as well as publicly to the British military. And while no contributor to the nation's need for births to enhance its manpower against its enemies, her barren spinsterhood came to define her religiosity and the morality of her readership throughout the diaspora.³³ Thus within the literary genre that is feminine, her contribution to framing the contemporary Scottish view of their nation was an influential one. To make this case, three elements of her life and work are identified here. The first is the success of her second full-length novel, *The Scottish Chiefs*, published by Longman and Co. in 1810. Following quickly on the heels of Margaret Holford's *Wallace; or, The Fight for Falkirk; a Metrical Romance* (1809), Porter's romance became the dominant narrative of Scotland's patriotic hero in this century.³⁴ The second is the conception of nation she expressed through her highly personal and often self-serving forewords to her reprinted volumes. Here she offered an historical Scotland deeply rooted in the British nation of her day. The third theme comes from the connections between her life and the royal household, connections that ensured her nationalism was always paired with that of the British army at war and the British state at home. The many that read, heard and shared her work embedded the tale in how Scottish national identity was imagined as unionist-nationalism at home and abroad.

Her Book

The demand for Porter's *The Scottish Chiefs* was instant and would continue with new impetus through revised and repackaged editions wherever English romantic literature was sought. First published in 1810 with an initial print run of 2000, Longman and Co. of London printed a further 1500 copies in 1811, and 750 in each of 1816, 1819 and 1825.³⁵ But the biggest numbers

³³ *Museum of Foreign Literature and Science*, XXVII (1835), 113 reproduced from *Fraser's Magazine* of the same year.

³⁴ G. Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth* (Stroud, 2004), 62–3; E. Simpson, 'Minstrelsy Goes to Market: Prize poems, minstrel contests, and romantic poetry', *English Literary History*, 71 (2004), 708.

³⁵ *Longman Impression Book* No. 4, fol. 31, fol. 107; *Longman Impression Book* No. 6, fol.

came from the printing presses of others. American publishers quickly took up its production: in 1810 (New York; Philadelphia), 1811 (Baltimore), 1814 (Vermont), 1815 (New York), 1817 (New York), 1818 (Vermont), 1819 (New York; Vermont), 1831 (New York; Philadelphia), and in 1840 (New York). These reprints would continue and the book was still worthy of new printings as the century turned: in 1891 (Chicago), 1899 (Chicago), 1900 (New Jersey; New York; Chicago), and in 1903 (New York). The American publications, and those of Ward Lock of London and the Strathmore Press in Scotland, found their way to New Zealand and Australia, with Ayres and James of Sydney publishing a comic strip version in the twentieth century.³⁶ There were French translations published in 1814 and 1820, plus a dramatisation performed in Paris in 1819.³⁷ The book was a staple of circulating libraries in Scotland and England, as well as overseas.³⁸ Mr R. Campbell of Bligh Street in Sydney used the classified advertisements of *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* in January 1814 to declare that he was missing the first volume of *The Scottish Chiefs*, and ‘whomever may have [it] was requested to send it immediately’ to him.³⁹ Aitken’s Circulating Library in New Zealand advertised the work of Jane Porter to its South Island readership throughout October and until Christmas 1854.⁴⁰ A performance of the play in the Scottish settlement of Otago in 1863 was denounced as overly sensational when ‘a gory head, intended to be a striking resemblance of the actor, was raised by the executioner’ upon the fall of the axe. The audience were not calmed until the actor appeared from behind the curtain with the promise

11; *Longman Impression Book* No. 7, fol. 39v; *Longman Impression Book* No. 8, fol. 69v; ‘Publishing Papers for Jane Porter’s *The Scottish Chiefs* (1810)’, Database of British Fiction, 1800–1829 [DBF], DBF: 1810.A070.

³⁶ *The Scottish chiefs by Jane Porter*, adapted by John H. O’Rourke; illustrated by Alex A. Blum (Sydney, NSW, 19--).

³⁷ *Les chefs ecossais melodrame heroique en trois actes et en prose* by R-C Guilbert de Pixerecourt; Alexandre Piccinni; Theatre de la Porte-Saint-Martin (Paris, 1819).

³⁸ ‘Contemporary Libraries’ for Jane Porter’s *The Scottish Chiefs* (1810), DBF: 1810.A070; *New York Times*, 2 August 1902.

³⁹ *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*, 29 January 1814, 2.

⁴⁰ *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, XIII, Issue 674, 11 October 1854, 2; *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, XIII, 14 October 1854, 1; *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, XIII, 18 October 1854, 1; *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, XIII, 21 October 1854, 1; *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, XIII, 25 October 1854, 1; *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, XIII, 28 October 1854, 1; *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, XIII, 1 November 1854, 4; *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, XIII, Issue 688, 29 November 1854, 1; *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle*, XIII, Issue 695, 23 December 1854, 1.

that the offensive incident would not be present in future performances.⁴¹

The standard edition of 1831 was the more affordable, staying in print throughout the century and copied by others, some with permission, but more often by those free to do so under weak North American copyright laws until 1891.⁴² Shortly after the standard edition gained circulation, *The Scottish Chiefs* was described as 'a work no female should be without'.⁴³ Such success, however, did little for Miss Porter's persistently precarious finances, as frequent entries in her diary were to attest. Her literary friends rallied in 1840 when her unrequited romantic interest Nathan P. Willis negotiated with the publisher John Virtue to reclaim Jane's copyright and produce a velvet clad edition with a new and extensive introduction by the author, herself benefiting from payment of £210.⁴⁴ Near the end of her life, as well as posthumously throughout the second half of the century, the book was readily discussed. Porter quotes approvingly the reply she received from Mr Hastings when debate fell on how she could write so well of the heart when she was then so young: 'It is the rousing virtue that language conveys, which draws down those bursts of acclamation to a word of patriotism or of generous feeling between man and man'.⁴⁵ Such impressions were to last. It was recalled as 'an absorbing book' in 1860 by the author Ann Taylor Gilbert (1782–1866).⁴⁶ *The Graphic* remembered Miss Porter in 1882 for her contribution to romantic literature.⁴⁷ Out of 250 works of fiction thought worthy by the American Library Association in 1895, *The Scottish Chiefs* and *Thaddeus of Warsaw* were recommended to girls, women and their reading clubs.⁴⁸

⁴¹ *Otago Witness*, Issue 627, 5 December 1863, 2.

⁴² 'Longman & Co. to Mr Barclay, Liverpool', 12 August 1824, University of Reading Longman Archive MS 1393, Longman I, 101, no. 459B. My thanks to Karen Racine for this reference.

⁴³ *The Liberal* 12 September 1833.

⁴⁴ 'Had a letter from Mr Longman telling me I had recovered my SC's. Thanks to God. He had heard I had got a pension', I. M. White, 'Diary of Jane Porter', *Scottish Review*, Vol. XXIV (January and April 1897), 334; She wanted the £210 received in two exchequer bills to be invested in interest bearing accounts, 'Letter from Jane Porter to Henry Robinson', 29 November, 1840. UVL, Acc. No 1625–A, Box No. Wf1588–a, Folder dates 1840, N.D.

⁴⁵ *The Scottish Chiefs by Miss Jane Porter. Revised and Corrected with a new retrospective introduction, notes, etc. by the Author*, 1 (New York, 1841), xxxiv. [Its preface is hereafter Porter, *Preface* (1840)].

⁴⁶ A. Taylor Gilbert, *Autobiography and Other Memorials of Mrs. Gilbert, (formerly Ann Taylor)*, ed. Josiah Gilbert, 2 vols (London, 1874).

⁴⁷ *The Graphic* 23 September 1882, 302.

⁴⁸ H. A. Leyboldt and G. Iles (eds), *List of books for girls and women and their clubs: with*

The text, without doubt, is melodramatic, and this was a major element in its appeal. Take, for instance, what in historical reality was the gruesome death of its hero:

At this sight, Helen, with a cry that was reechoed by the compassionate spectators, rushed to his bosom. Wallace, with a mighty strength, burst the bands asunder which confined his arms, and clasping her to him with a force that seemed to make her touch his very heart, his breast heaved as if his soul were breaking from its outraged tenement, and, while his head sunk on her neck, he exclaimed in a low and interrupted voice, "My prayer is heard! Helen, life's cord is cut by God's own hand! May he preserve my country, and, oh, trust from my youth!" He stopped he fell and with the shock the hastily erected scaffold shook to its foundation. The pause was dreadful.⁴⁹

There was no mention here of the disembowelling while alive, the drawing or the quartering, and the story immediately shifts to the heroics of Bruce.⁵⁰ Constructing a basic concordance of the text gives insight into the all-encompassing coherence of the language used. In Table 1, showing the twenty most frequently used terms in the text, it shows the great focus given to its hero, with the name 'Wallace' used on 2209 occasions, over five times the frequency that 'Bruce' appeared (479), a divergence that increases when compared with the addition of their forenames (Table 2).

There are only 18 occasions when Wallace and Bruce are mentioned in sentence proximity, highlighting the ease with which Wallace was made the more heroic of the two chiefs. The latter, indeed, is given few opportunities to shine. Between Tables 2 and 3 it is seen that 'Helen', the love interest, is mentioned more often than Bruce, ensuring the personal tie overshadows the political bond. And there was no shortage of 'crying' going on throughout the text: characters cried 610 times (with no doubt much of it to do with having themselves heard), and 'cry' was found 52 times, 'tears' were shed 136 times and words were 'exclaimed' 198 times (Table 4). 'Wallace' and 'love' were only found in sentence proximity nine times, 'heart' was highlighted 476 times, and 'love' (189) won over 'honour' (172) (Table 5). Titles of honour were used

descriptive and critical notes and a list of periodicals and hints for girls' and women's clubs (Boston, 1895), 29.

⁴⁹ Porter, *The Scottish Chiefs* [1841 edn.], 312.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 370–2.

Table 1

1	Wallace	2209
2	Lord	698
3	Cried	610
4	Helen	596
5	Scotland	593
6	Lady	508
7	Bruce	479
8	Heart	476
9	Earl	457
10	Sir	455
11	Hand	421
12	King	406
13	Mar	394
14	Edwin	373
15	Country	352
16	Edward	338
17	Friend	338
18	William	336
19	Head	328
20	Arms	313

Table 2

Wallace	209
William, William	301
William	1
Bruce	479
Edward	338
Robert	33
Edward and Wallace	33
Bruce and Wallace	18

Table 3

Helen	608
Helen's	39
Marion	95
Marion's	10

Table 4

Cried	610
Cry	52
Tears	136
Exclaimed	198

Table 5

Heart	476
Love	189
Honour	172
Friend	338
Friends	146
Friendship	56
Friend's	17

Table 6

Lord	698
Lady	508
Sir	455
King	406
Knight	181
Chief	173
Noble	170
Chiefs	102
Guardian	16

frequently (Table 6) but Wallace was given the (administrative) title 'Guardian' on only sixteen occasions. The characters were 'brave' 265 times (table 7) and the communitarian values of 'friend' (338), 'friends' (146) and 'friendship' (56) were to the fore (Table 5).

Despite the historical claims made by the author in her introductions to have made use of 'the old standard historians', their names do not make it into the text, nor does Hary (or Harry or Harrie), other than in the preface to the first edition. Indeed, the blood spilling of *The Wallace* is not there to flow: 'Blood' was mentioned 194 times and was linked to ties of genealogy, but there were few other blood-related instances (Table 8).

Table 7

Brave	265
brave and Scotland	1
brave and Wallace	15
fear and Wallace	2
Brave and Wallace	10
weak and Wallace	0

Table 8

Blood	194
Bloody	16
Blood-stained	7
Blood-shed	4
Blood-red	3
Life-blood	2

The most sustained nationalist reading of the text comes from Ian Dennis, who comments on the contrast Porter draws between then and now, good and bad, the classic dualities of 'them and us' which sustain perceptions of the historical 'other'. Imagining the domestic bliss of Wallace at the start of the story, Porter depicts the hero living quietly with his 'wife', then contrasted against the evil of Hesselrigge. Porter objects to the death of Marion at the hands of the English, and by allowing women in men's clothes to participate in warfare and national politics,⁵¹ Porter makes the novel a story about revenge for the ravished Helen and the murdered Marion, on behalf of all 'outraged and violated womanhood.'⁵²

⁵¹ S. Brown, P. Clements, and I. Grundy (eds), 'Jane Porter', in *Orlando: Women's Writing in the British Isles from the Beginnings to the Present* (Cambridge, 2006) [<http://orlando.cambridge.org/>], accessed 16 August 2010].

⁵² I. Dennis, *Nationalism and Desire in Early Historical Fiction* (Hampshire & London, 1997), 15.

With such features to the fore, this is not an historical novel; this was no early Walter Scott, but it was a major contribution to more than just the reception of the historical novel. Wallace, like Thaddeus Sobieski, who appeared in Porter's first full-length novel, is portrayed as an ideal Christian gentleman.⁵³ Since this is more Jane Austen than Blind Harry, Wallace, it might appear to some, could be Darcy! Both Carlyle and the literary theorist Georg Lukács found difficulty fitting her work into the genre of the historical novel because of her failure to acknowledge the transformative power of change over time.⁵⁴ Yet Price suggests we should judge Porter by her ability to connect to ordinary people through the repetition of key historical narratives, creating identification with the nation through inheritance of the past. Not change and empathy with period, but continuity.⁵⁵ Similarly Peta Beasley has argued that Porter's female characters throughout her oeuvre have been drawn as strong and resourceful women, with Marion Wallace and Helen Marr in the forefront, maintaining domestic order in times of revolution and strain.⁵⁶ Porter herself argued that '[t]he melancholy circumstances which first excited him [Wallace] to draw his sword for Scotland, though it may be thought too much like the creation of modern romance, is recorded as fact in the old poem of Blind Harrie.'⁵⁷ Here she tries to downplay it, but still the power of the novel comes through personal romance not historical fidelity, a characterisation picked up in scholarly attention where Porter's Wallace is nobler because of his superhuman moral and religious purity; but less noble because he is only moved to action by the death of his wife, and because he is made the victim of a sentimental, feminine intrigue.⁵⁸ Yet this makes Porter no less a contributor to reading the nation than the historical fiction of Scott, and the life he led at the epicentre of the nation's introspection. Rather she may be regarded as providing a 'true' reflection of the nation for the very reason that her most influential writing was so undoubtedly ahistorical. That, after all, is how the nation is popularly conceived: narrated in suitable and legitimate pasts by means of getting history wrong.⁵⁹

⁵³ J. Porter, *Thaddeus of Warsaw* (London, 1803).

⁵⁴ Price, 'Resisting "the Spirit of Innovation"', 638.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 651.

⁵⁶ P. Beasley, 'Georgiana Molloy, Jane Porter and the Significance of Exploration Narratives for New Beginnings in a Strange Land', *Victorian Network*, 1, 1 (2009), 60.

⁵⁷ Porter, *Preface* (1841) 'Preface to the First Edition' [1809], vi.

⁵⁸ Hook, 'Jane Porter, Sir Walter Scott, and the Historical Novel', 189.

⁵⁹ E. Renan, 'What is a nation?' [1882], in H. K. Bhabha (ed.), *Nation and Narration* (London, 1990); McCrone, *Sociology of Nationalism*, 52–63.

Her Scottish Nation

It can be said that Jane Porter was never hesitant to project her life upon her fiction in order to make its impact all the greater. Her connection to Walter Scott was central, if not to him, with the pair having known each other since childhood. They also shared Longman and Co. as a publisher. Porter made claim to having written the first historical novel and was gracious to Scott to suggest that, in following her lead, he bettered and mastered the approach. She conspired to create her own *Waverley*-like mystery with the unknown location and authorship of *Sir Edward Seaward's Narrative*, the story of a shipwreck and simple utopian society. She kept an interest in mementos passed between queens Margaret and Mary.⁶⁰ Jane came across some unpublished letters of the tragic Scottish queen when visiting her brother in St Petersburg in 1841, letters she transcribed from the original French and delivered to Agnes and Elizabeth Strickland for their *Letters of Mary, Queen of Scots* (1842–3).⁶¹ Sir Walter's intense antiquarianism was well known, the novelist complaining on one occasion of the request sent by letter for him to start a hunt for the real Wallace sword, and he was frequently sent items of historical interest.⁶² Porter herself was to receive gifts carved from Wallace's great oak, cut down to its roots in 1790, and other relics sent by those whom she had inspired.⁶³ Similarly, Scott owned a chair carved from the wood of the house at Robroyston where Sir John Stewart of Mentieth betrayed Wallace in 1305, presented by the storyteller and

⁶⁰ Katherine Grimston, Countess Clarendon, Letter: 1843 July 1, Grosvenor Crescent [London] to Agnes Strickland. A request originating from Miss Jane Porter and expressed through Lady Clarendon relating to a 'small wooden casket' once the property of Margaret, Queen of Scotland, then Mary Queen of Scots. Edinburgh University Library, Gen. 1070 fols. 278–9. Letters from Miss Porter during this trip to her friends back in England were transcribed by *The Public Ledger*, 19 April 1842, 4.

⁶¹ Brown, Clements, Grundy, 'Jane Porter'; U. Pope-Hennessy, *Agnes Strickland: Biographer of the Queens of England* (London, 1940), 112–13. Agnes Strickland, *Letters of Mary, Queen of Scots, and documents connected with her personal history. Now first published with an introd* (London: Henry Colburn, 1842), XX [note].

⁶² 'Letter to Alexr. Young from Sir Walter Scott [November 1821]', in H. J. C. Grierson *et al.* (eds), *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, Vol. 7 (London, 1932–37). One 'rogue' having written to Sir Walter to compliment him on *Heart of Midlothian*, except for its fourth volume, then demands in a postscript for the novelist to recover Wallace's sword from England, *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott. From the Original manuscript at Abbotsford*, Vol. 1 (New York, 1970; 1890), 10 December 1825.

⁶³ 'Miss Jane Porter' in *National Portrait Gallery of Illustrious and Eminent Personages of the Nineteenth Century; with Memoirs*, vol. V (London, 1834), 5; J. D. Carrick, *Life of Sir William Wallace of Elderslie* (London, 1840), 96.

antiquarian Joseph Train.⁶⁴ Jane Porter relied upon her childhood friendship to broker visits to the famed novelist in his Abbotsford home:

But to see Sir Walter Scott would be a rich satisfaction to them both! Captain Montgomery has seen much foreign service; and is now returning to the West Indies, by the way of Scotland, to his native country, Ireland. A brave man, suffering under service, is worthy indeed a candid grasp of the hand from the Chivalry poet of Dear Old Caledonia.⁶⁵

Indeed it tended to be returnees to Scotland from abroad for whom she wrote to Sir Walter, saying her guests were '[i]nterested in the magical pen, before which all the world has bowed'.⁶⁶ Others were visitors to these shores, in one case a likely contact of her brother Sir Robert Ker Porter: "The present pilgrim to bonnie Scotland" being an officer of the Prussian Imperial Guard.⁶⁷ Jane kept up the connection of their youth when their respective mothers were friends. Jane wrote to Walter to describe her mother's passing:

And as her faculties near failed her one moment to the hour of her death, even to the age of eighty five, she enjoyed conversing with him [Sir Walter] in his books; and talking of his boy days, with those about her who appreciated the safe gratification but who had near seen the author. This memorable parent and friend was born in the memorable year 1745, on the day of the Duke of Cumberland's march through her native city of Durham, to the eventful field of Culloden! And, on the 18th June 1831, the anniversary of the important day of Waterloo, she was taken from this world of still awful expectancy! Having always been impressed with a foreboding that as "she came into the world in so troubled a public time, she would be called to quit it in some season of similar circumstances!". But thanks be to God, that whatever has been the stir in Europe, nay all over the Globe, as well as in this little land, she

⁶⁴ J. G. Lockhart, *Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott, Bart* (Edinburgh, 1844), 516; J. Patterson, *Memoir of Joseph Train, F.S.A. Scot., the antiquarian correspondent of Sir Walter Scott* (Glasgow, 1857); A description of Charles Dickens' encounter with Train is reported in *Household Words*, No. 173, 16 July 1853, 475–6.

⁶⁵ Jane Porter to Walter Scott, 31 May 1823, National Library of Scotland [NLS]: MS 3896, Folio 183–4.

⁶⁶ Jane Porter to Walter Scott, 8 April 1828. NLS: MS 3906. Folio 196–7.

⁶⁷ Jane Porter to Walter Scott, 10 September 1825. NLS: MS 3901 Folio 118–19.

laid down her [--] head in Peace. And with prayers for her country, and for her children near and distant, gently resigned her meek soul into the saviour's promised safe keeping.⁶⁸

Jane Porter lived her youth in Scotland, but her adulthood in England. There is no evidence that she ever returned back across the border, although she always maintained a fond attachment for the country that set her imagination towards a literary path. It was after living in England that she began publishing (in 1797 for the journal *The Quin*) and after sixteen years in the south she produced *The Scottish Chiefs*. In her first preface of 1809, she takes care to assign Scotland as the identifier of William Wallace, and to stress the importance of lineage to the nation. Yet she does this both for England and Britain: 'It is now too common to condemn as nonsense even an honest pride in ancestry. But where is the Englishman who is not proud of being the countryman of Nelson? Where is the British sailor that does not thirst to emulate his fame?' She pleads that this sentiment must be right and if so then 'respect for noble progenitors cannot be wrong, for it proceeds from the same source—the principle of kindred, of inheritance, and of virtue.'⁶⁹ It was a personal virtue, but also a national one, not for Scotland, or for England, but for Britain:

Happy is for this realm that the destiny which now unites the once contending arms of those brave families has also consolidated their rival nations into one, and by planting the heir of Plantagenet and of Bruce upon the throne have redeemed the peace of Britain, and fixed it on lasting foundations.⁷⁰

In the preface written in 1828 she expressed 'her grateful sense of the candour with which so adventurous a work from a female pen has been generally received'. With translations made into the Continental languages, approval from those countries and those even further distant, including India and Australia, was a source of pride. In preparing the retrospective preface to the illustrated edition of 1840, she chose to explain what 'impelled her to choose a theme so unusual to a female pen—a theme of war and bloodshed!' She justified it as a story where 'men [were] true to themselves, to the laws and rightful independence of their country'. Her story is teleological in that

⁶⁸ Jane Porter to Walter Scott, 5 October 1831. NLS: MS 5317 Folio 185–6.

⁶⁹ Porter, *Preface* (1840) 'Preface to the First Edition' [1809], vi.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

she identifies a clear pathway from the past to the present, but is primarily ahistorical because of her chosen juxtaposition of past events: 'Such subjects,' she argues, 'are consecrated to a purpose beyond the time of their action', here linking the battles of Falkirk (Scottish defeat—1298) and Runnymede (English constitution—1215) with 'our own glorious field of Waterloo' (British military—1815), and in that order.⁷¹ Despite the new love interest in Helen, the death of Marion makes it too simplistic to accept the suggestion that the inevitability of Union was mirrored in the inevitability of marriage as the purest bond.⁷² Her ahistoricism was classic nationalism, plugging in preferred historical events whenever necessary to construct a suitable historical past.

Her Monarchy

The company she kept and the names that she dropped aided the wider influence of Porter's story. When living in Esher between 1822 and 1844 she was a neighbour to Prince Leopold, king of Belgium, uncle to both Victoria and Albert, then residing one mile distant in Claremont House.⁷³ The royal party often attended the parish church near the small cottage where the female Porters lived, their respective pews facing one another. The novelist spoke in 'rapturous tones of the beauty of Princess Victoria at this time' (in 1824, when Victoria was aged five).⁷⁴ They had moved to Surrey from London once their brother Robert had left for overseas. Robert was an artist of grand epics and his work gained him the kind of attention that reflected well on his family. In 1804 he moved to St. Petersburg to take up the appointment as historical painter to the Russian Emperor Alexander I. In Russia, Robert met and later married a princess, Mary van Schertbatoff, was then knighted by Gustavus IV of Sweden in 1806, became a knight of St. Joachim of Würtemberg in 1807, and upon returning home was knighted by the Prince Regent in 1817.⁷⁵ Adding to the

⁷¹ Porter, *Preface* (1840), xii.

⁷² As suggested in Martin, *The Mighty Scot*, 19.

⁷³ J. L. Polasky, 'Leopold I (1790–1865)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/subzero.lib.uoguelph.ca/view/article/41227>, accessed 10 Feb 2010].

⁷⁴ *The Childhood of Queen Victoria* by Mrs Gerald Gurney (Dorothy Frances Blomfield) (London, 1901), 97–100.

⁷⁵ E. Quayle, 'Porter, Anna Maria (1778–1832)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22559>, accessed 19 Feb 2007].

fashion for her family, it ensured the continuation of recently acquired royal patronage for the novelist. Robert's art remained in vogue and Sir Sidney Smith brought Prince William of Gloucester to see work in preparation and to meet the shy Jane.⁷⁶ Her reputation survived the encounter and *Duke Christian of Luneburg* (1824) was written at behest of the future George IV (r.1830–7) after the king's librarian, Dr Clarke, had reported his Majesty's pleasure with Miss Porter's 'historical fidelity' in the heroes she portrayed.⁷⁷ George also conveyed that *The Scottish Chiefs* had won her favour with the late William IV (r.1820–30), their onetime close neighbour in Thames Ditton.⁷⁸ But it was to Victoria that she mostly claimed connection. Apparently written from her own bed, possibly where she was confined after having waited in the rain for six hours at Pall Mall for the royal procession to pass, Jane Porter sent six lines of verse to the royal couple on their wedding day. The lines 'were graciously acknowledged' although not published until the golden jubilee celebrations of 1887:

Wake Albert, wake! from dreams of hope arise!
 And clasp with blissful arms the hovering prize;
 A lily from the highest Eden bends
 To seek thy bosom, and in light descends,
 Not cold, but chaste, and spotless as its hue,
 It breathes of Paradise, and breathes for you!⁷⁹

The queen had earlier received a 'fine copy' of *Sir Edward Seaward* upon its publication in 1831. A complimentary copy had also been sent to Sir Walter Scott, who was third on the list of recipients after the United Services Club and the Athenaeum Club.⁸⁰ That Miss Porter was in the thoughts of the monarch was seen when she became ill in 1840 and received best wishes for her health and the pecuniary help of £100 from the Royal Bounty—described by Porter as 'proofs of the value her gracious sovereign set upon such talents so applied'.⁸¹ Perhaps

⁷⁶ I. May White, 'A Page from the Past: Selections from a Diary of Miss Jane Porter', *Cornhill Magazine*, 86 (1902), 226–7.

⁷⁷ Porter, *Preface* (1840), xxxv–xxxvi; Hook, 'Jane Porter, Sir Walter Scott, and the Historical Novel', *Clio* 5 (1976), 181.

⁷⁸ Porter, *Preface* (1840), xxxvi.

⁷⁹ *The Graphic* 'Jubilee Number' 20 June 1887; Pope-Hennessy, *Agnes Strickland*, 8.

⁸⁰ Durham University Archives: Porter Correspondence B [1831]: 'A note on the binding of presentation copies of Sir Edward Seaward's narrative'.

⁸¹ R. Tate Irvine Jr., 'The Life of Jane Porter', unpublished MA Thesis (University of Virginia, 1942), 213; Hook, 'Jane Porter, Sir Walter Scott, and the Historical Novel', 181; Porter, *Preface* (1840), xlv.

it is right to accept that as late as 1898, under the title of 'Ladies' Gossip', the *Otago Witness* noted that '[o]ne of the most favourite books of the Queen when she was a girl was Miss Jane Porter's "Scottish Chiefs" and Sir William Wallace, among these, her Majesty's pet hero'.⁸² The latter claim, one might suspect, unlikely, with the queen found to express publicly her lineage to Bruce, but the appeal of the romantic novelist is more believable.⁸³ It suggests some measure of royal connectedness that is not solely the creation of the authoress herself. Porter was acknowledged for her loyalty and friendship by the hero from the Siege of Acre, Sir Sidney Smith. When it was learned that the sister of the great naval man was in London and found to be in destitute circumstances, it was to Miss Porter that Prime Minister Sir Robert Peel entrusted £150 from the Royal Bounty to pass on to Mrs Dwyer.⁸⁴ Government and monarch alike knew Porter, for all her marginality in the highest literary circles, and it helped spread the sentiment of her feminine nationalism.

Scotland's Feminine Nationalism

Porter's Scottish identity was the identity of choice, reflecting the complexity of contemporaries' nationalism. Her ahistorical connections sidestepped the teleology of Union. Neither political nor marital connections were necessitates for the Scotland she envisioned in her novel, and thus she went beyond the minimum structure of a romance to make wider historiographical constructions. Her Wallace followed a higher morality of action in the events of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, but one framed in the military heroism that so engaged her passions in the nineteenth century.⁸⁵ She was

⁸² *Otago Witness*, Issue 2301, 7 April 1898, 43.

⁸³ In Victoria's continuation of her highland journal she records seeing the National Wallace Monument in the distance, but no visit, and no other mention of the patriot, is recorded, *More Leaves from the Journal of a Life in the Highlands, From 1862–1882* (London, 1884), 121. The first journal notes that Wallace was incarcerated at Dumbarton Castle, but nothing else, *Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands From 1848 to 1861* (Leipzig, 1884), 78. Her lineage to Bruce was expounded in George Russell French, *The Ancestry of Her Majesty Victoria, and of His Royal Highness Prince Albert* (London, 1841), ch. 15.

⁸⁴ 'English Extracts', *New Zealand Gazette and Wellington Spectator*, IV, Issue 262, 12 July 1843, 3.

⁸⁵ Although within the genre of the historical novel, Porter's ascriptions of feminine motivations to Wallace—for the love of his wife, the ravaged Helen and for all womankind—undermines his morality, Dennis, *Nationalism and Desire*, 15.

writing Scottish history to reflect the Britain of her time. Born in England of Irish parentage, raised in Scotland, living and writing in England, connected to the world through the travels of two brothers, so enmeshed in following the successes of Sir Sidney Smith and the military, she located Scotland in some of its deepest British moorings.

Throughout all this, Porter's centrality to Scottish national identity is strengthened because she used romance masquerading as the historical novel to produce it. If it is accepted that Scotland's contribution to British identity is that of a peripheral and feminine identity in commune with England's core and masculine identity, notwithstanding internal infractions to these broad characterisations, then Porter's appeal becomes evident. Feminising the most masculine of Scottish heroes ensured the greatest impact, dominating the literary output in this strongest phase of the Wallace cult. It caught the popular construction of Scottish nationalism like no other in the decades before political nationalism. The life of Miss Porter and the literary style she adopted made it so. The lack of participation which elsewhere masks women from the state stands aside to a Scottish nationalism itself masked from the state. This nationalism, it would appear, was a gendered concept.

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