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1 Introduction

I became interested in Scotland and its history during my time at the University of Aberdeen. Therefore, I decided to write my diploma thesis in this field and started thinking about which aspects are most fascinating. *Braveheart*, that was my first thought. Almost everyone knows the film but not so many people know something about its background. Through this the idea developed to look at various other media representations of Scottish independence, which also has become the title of my paper. Finding such representations was very easy as there are many songs, poems, articles, websites, films and so on which deal with aspects of Scottishness and independence. But during my research it became clear that including too many different fields would go beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore I decided to take a closer look at two famous, important but very dissimilar examples, namely *Braveheart* and *Trainspotting*.

This choice was also out of personal interest but I was proved right in picking those two as they are most influential due to their popularity and international appeal. In the course of time it became obvious that both examples can be linked to nationalistic ideas and foster the idea of an independent Scotland. This led to some questions which will be subject to investigation in my thesis: *In how far do media representations influence politics? How and why do nationalists make use of these representations? In which way and how do media representations support the idea of an independent country? How do the two chosen examples encourage the idea of a Scottish independent nation?*

In order to answer these questions my thesis starts out with a theoretical background. First and foremost it is necessary to get a glimpse of Scottish history. It is an important preliminary to understand further developments and to get to know events, people and the nation as such and its struggle to become an independent country. The past is often appropriated and referred to as myths, old stories and heroic deeds can be found there. As this is not a historical paper the first chapter provides an overview and only includes incidents which are directly connected to independency claims.

Another theoretical aspect which has to be dealt with is nationalism as this provides the basis for all thoughts about independence. In this context Anthony Smith and Benedict Anderson have to be mentioned as they present theories
on nation, state and nationalism. Both of them proved to be useful for my thesis as they helped to develop general ideas. An aspect which is of special importance with regard to Scotland is devolution, which will also be explained and analysed in more detail. After that the focus will be on nationalism in Scotland and how it developed there. This section includes questions of Home Rule, the two referenda and the newly established parliament. A decisive factor in the fight for Scottish independence is the Scottish National Party, which will also be discussed. By showing its development, changes, achievements and the most recent election results conclusions about Scottish nationalism and the state of the nation can be drawn.

The goal of nationalism is the establishment of an independent nation, which is defined as an “imagined community” by Anderson. At the basis of a community is a collective identity which is the reason why the next chapter is concerned with theories on identity. As the focus is on collective identities and more precisely on national identity the most important source of reference was Anthony Smith’s *National Identity*. The importance of the past, the language and a shared culture is especially stressed because *Braveheart* as well as *Trainspotting* use some of these aspects to strengthen the Scottish identity. Having already mentioned the idea of a distinctive Scottish national identity it must also be analyzed what factors contribute to it. As with any other identity defining Scottishness is no easy task but the distinction between Englishness/Britishness helps to understand the concept. The last part of this section is concerned with the role the media, for example newspapers and websites, play in the construction of identities.

This question is further elaborated by looking at the two above mentioned examples in more detail. First, *Braveheart*, a film set in the Middle Ages, was able to affect politicians, the media, tourism and people’s opinions. There are numerous debates about the authenticity or the effect of *Braveheart* which shows how influential the film has been. Although it deals with the war of independence in the 13th century, at the time it was released, namely in 1995, there was already a lively discussion about regaining Scottish independence to which it contributed. The “Braveheart Effect”, a term coined by Colin McArthur,
becomes even more obvious when looking at another example which also has the Wars of Independence as its basis, namely *The Bruce*.

The last chapter is concerned with *Trainspotting*, the book and the film. Its difference from *Braveheart* becomes obvious and also the unconventional way in which it presents ideas about Scottishness will be explored. The idea of seeing Scotland as a colonized nation with an inferior culture is investigated. The connection of culture and independence positions Irvine Welsh within the cultural revival, which seeks a new identity for Scotland and its people. Through this the idea of an independent nation is strengthened. An important factor for this is the language used by Welsh, which will also be dealt with in more detail.
2 Selected Moments in Scottish History

There are two main reasons why a historical overview is necessary. First of course, it is important to know about important events which took place in Scotland as they influenced the country and the people. As the focus of my thesis is on this one country some background knowledge is advisable. But what is even more important is that the media, the tourist industry, claims of nationalists and others go back to the past. They refer to it frequently in order to present certain events in a new way and link it to present developments, and by this they appropriate the past for their own purposes. Therefore, knowledge of the Scottish past is needed to understand the present. In this overview I will only deal with those parts of Scottish history which are relevant for the points and conclusions made later on in this paper. This means that this is not an exhaustive historical account but only an introduction into matters concerning Scottish independence or the loss of it. For this purpose the work by Michael Lynch Scotland: A New History was very useful as it provided an extensive and critical account of the major events and their backgrounds. In addition to that Scotland History of a Nation by David Ross gave a more basic and narrative overview, which helped to draw connections between certain events. Also the Oxford Companion to Scottish History, which is an encyclopaedia, allowed looking at key episodes and personalities in more detail.

2.1 Loss of Independence

From the reign of Malcolm III, 1058-1093, onwards the succession of the Scottish throne was troubled. The deaths of heirs to the monarchs and the following struggles led to uncertainty among the population and gave England the chance to interfere in Scottish politics. Already Edgar and Alexander I, who ruled at the end of the 11th and beginning of the 12th century, were under the influence of the English kings. The succession of William I in 1165 saw on the one hand an extension of control into remote areas but on the other hand a tightening of English control. In the Treaty of Falaise in 1174 William was forced to vow homage to the English king Henry II. From this point onwards the kings of England repeatedly claimed supremacy over Scotland.
William’s son Alexander succeeded his father as king of Scotland in 1214 and ruled until 1249. His marriage to Joan, the sister of Henry III, calmed down the relationship between Scotland and England which enabled the agreement on the Anglo-Scottish border between Tweed and Solway. Next in the line of succession was Alexander III, who began his reign 1249 as eight year old boy. His minority rule was marked by struggles between the noble families of Scotland, which also continued after his death. Alexander was married to Princess Margaret of England and was supposed to pay tribute to Henry III but he refused diplomatically. Nevertheless the English king felt he had the right to interfere in Scottish politics as he was now related to the Scottish monarch. A confrontation with Norway led to the Treaty of Perth, which included the marriage of Alexander’s daughter Margaret to King Eric II of Norway (see Lynch 74-90; Ross 72).

The unexpected death of Alexander III in 1286 was another blow to Scottish kingship as his son David had died five years earlier. The only heir left to the Scottish throne was Alexander’s granddaughter Margaret, daughter of Margaret and Eric II. The Maid of Norway, as she was commonly named, was not of age when Alexander died and so the nobility founded the Council of Realm, a group of six guardians, to rule Scotland in the meantime. As this was not a satisfying solution the guardians approached Edward I of England to ask for advice. In the Treaty of Birgham in 1290 they agreed on a marriage between Margaret of Norway and Prince Edward, the heir to the English throne. This connection was meant to strengthen the bonds between the two countries and not as a union of the two kingdoms as each would have remained its sovereignty. But the treaty was never fulfilled as Margaret died on her way from Norway to England in 1290. Scotland was left without a monarch; so the struggles for the throne began and the country was on the edge of civil war (see Lynch 114).

2.2 Wars of Independence

The term “Wars of Independence” is a modern invention and it already suggests that there was more than one struggle involved. The one war, which is more familiar to people through its presence in the media and its representation in Braveheart, is that of Scotland against England in the 13th century. It is the story
of William Wallace and his fight against Edward Longshanks to regain the freedom for his country. The other unrest taking place can also be called a civil war as it involved the conflict between two noble families, the Bruces and the Balliols. The fact that many Scottish nobles at that time held properties in England, and English lords on the other hand possessed land in Scotland proved problematic as shifting loyalties had a major influence on the following events.

The crisis in kingship caused by the death of the only heir, Margaret of Norway, led to the appearance of thirteen competitors claiming the right to be king. The four major claimants were all related, in one way or the other, to Henry, who was the son of King David I (1124-1153). Among them were John Hastings of Abergavenny, Florence V, the Count of Holland, John Balliol, the Lord of Galloway and Robert Bruce, the Lord of Annandale (see Lynch 111; 115). Due to the inability of the Scottish nobles to appoint a king for themselves, Edward I, known as “the hammer of the Scots”, started to interfere in Scottish politics. But Edward was mainly interested in his own advantage so he claimed “overlordship” in return for his guidance ([*Oxford*, 333]). Edward I was the final and decisive factor in the kingship question. He gave both John Balliol and Robert Bruce the chance to become the new leader. But Edward only guaranteed his support under certain conditions; the main one being loyalty to him. As Robert Bruce did not agree on these terms, John Balliol was made king of Scotland in 1292. During the whole reign Edward made sure that Balliol was constantly reminded of his inferior position by undermining his power.

In the war between England and France, Edward asked King John for his support but instead Balliol entered an alliance with the French King Philip IV. John saw this as a possibility to free himself and Scotland from English domination but it resulted in quite the opposite. King Edward I saw this act as treachery and declared war on Scotland in 1296. This was the beginning of the first war of Scotland, which should last until 1304. As the Scottish army was inferior to the English, King John was soon defeated and he was put into prison together with a majority of the Scottish nobility. From that time onwards Scotland was no longer independent but just part of and governed by England.
“Scotland had become a virtual colony” (Lynch 118). English officers were sent north in order to rule over the newly acquired lands (see Lynch 115-118).

2.2.1 William Wallace

Those events were the starting point of the most famous myth in Scottish history; that of William Wallace. In popular culture he is presented as a hero and freedom fighter. The involvements of others in Wallace’s story who contributed to his success as well as negative aspects are largely omitted. This presentation of false history already started in 1477 when the poem The Wallace by Blind Harry was published. Moreover, the 19th century saw the erection of the Wallace monument near Stirling, which became a major tourist attraction. The exploitation of the myth reached its peak in 1995 with the release of Braveheart.

Nevertheless the true historical story behind the myth is exceptional and crucial to further developments in the Scottish history. Little is known about Wallace’s life before he became involved in the rebellion. He was probably born around 1270 as the son of a small landowner (see Oxford 634-635). The next notable events took place in May 1297. There was a “beginning of a rising that came to be national in character and has usually, at least in the popular mind, been uniquely associated with the otherwise obscure figure of William Wallace [...]” (Lynch 118-119). During the absence of Edward I, who was still involved in the war with France, William Wallace killed the sheriff of Lanark, which encouraged other Scots to take up arms to defend their own country. He was loyal to King John and fought for the restoration of the kingdom. His actions were widely perceived as revolts of peasants, but major nobles, as for instance the Bishop of Glasgow and James the Stewart, supported him. The 11th September 1297 is remembered as the biggest victory for Wallace. He and Andrew Murray, another rebellion leader, joined forces and defeated the English army at the battle of Stirling Bridge. They managed to free Scotland from English officials and even invaded England. In 1298 William Wallace was appointed sole guardian of Scotland but Wallace’s success was soon ended. At the battle of Falkirk in July of the same year he was defeated by the English and had to flee. In spite of that
his resistance triggered off others, including nobles, to fight against the English rule.

After the disastrous defeat at Falkirk, Wallace resigned his post as guardian (see Lynch 119; 121). Wallace himself returned to Scotland in 1303 and tried once more to encourage rebellion against Edward I. He was not successful and remained a runaway until he was captured a year later. William Wallace was put on trial in Westminster Hall, where he was convicted of treason. In August 1305 Wallace was executed in Smithfield (see Oxford 634). Edward ensured that the killing was marked by cruelty to make an example to deter other potential traitors. But by this he also ensured that the memory of Wallace would stay in the Scottish mind forever (see Ross 85).

2.2.2 Robert Bruce

In July 1299 John Balliol, who was still king of Scotland, was released from prison and was put into papal custody. In the meantime, Robert Bruce, later king, and John Comyn, John Balliol’s nephew, formed an alliance against Edward to fight for an independent Scotland. This was rather surprising as a few years before Bruce was supporting the English army but shifting loyalties were very common at that time. The Comyns and the Bruces had a long tradition in claims for the throne. Robert Bruce, the Competitor, claimed the throne after Margaret’s death, his son did the same six years later and finally it was his grandson, the Earl of Carrick, who was the only one to succeed. As both families were very influential and only interested in their own advantages, the alliance was not to last very long.

The appointment of both of them as guardians of Scotland further complicated the situation. It reached its peak with the murder of Comyn on 10th of February 1306 in the Greyfriar’s Church of Dumfries. One of the reasons for the escalation was that both discovered that the other was collaborating with the English. Although many Scots saw it unjust to accept a new king while Balliol was still alive, Bruce crowned himself as king of Scotland on 25th of March in 1306. Consequently he had to face both, the English army and the Scots, who did not welcome his actions. This left Robert Bruce no choice but to flee, most
likely to Ireland. The death of Edward I in 1307, however, brought him the needed support and prevented another English attack on Scotland. He returned to his country in 1308, and in March 1309 Robert Bruce was able to open parliament for the first time. There he presented the so-called Bruce cause which suggested that John Balliol had only become king due to English interference. The true successor Bruce the Competitor, King Robert’s grandfather, had been ignored. The claims made were intended to justify his kingship and to persuade people of his rightfulness as king.

The most decisive battle took place in June 1314 at Bannockburn, where King Robert I defeated Edward II and his army. In 1320, the Declaration of Arbroath was written, which is regarded as the most important and influential document at that time. It “managed to condense a mythology of the nation’s past, provide a compelling vision of the relationship of kings of Scots and the Scottish people, and summarise the history of the present struggle” (Lynch 111). Its purpose was to gain support from the Pope and other royal courts around Europe for the Scottish cause. Moreover, it paid tribute to King Robert and stated the will of the Scottish people to fight for their independence. In 1323 a peace contract was agreed on, and the Treaty of Edinburgh in 1328 finally secured Scotland’s status as an independent nation. Bruce was accepted as king and Scotland was independent and free (see Oxford 333-335; Lynch 111-112; 121-126).

2.2.3 Succession

King Robert I died in June 1329, and his son David succeeded him to the throne. As he was not of age Scotland faced another minority rule, which led to new unrest and civil war. Not only the English king tried to seize control over Scotland once more but also the old feud between the Bruces and the Balliols was renewed. The following events are often referred to as second War of Independence as it involved the civil war between the two noble families as well as the struggles with Edward III of England.

Edward Balliol, King John’s son, and his allies, the so-called disinherited as they lost their land during the reign of Bruce, took the coronation of David II as reason to start a rebellion. The war officially started on 24th September 1332,
when Balliol also proclaimed himself king of Scotland. He, like his father, vowed loyalty to the English king Edward III and much of Scotland’s south fell under English rule. After David suffered military defeats, he went to exile in France in 1334. But already one year later the fortune changed and Andrew Murray, who was David’s guardian, defeated Balliol’s supporters and together with Robert the Steward he was able to regain much of the Scottish kingdom. This led Edward III to rethink his tactics as he had to concentrate on securing the borders in the north. Murray died in 1338 and Robert the Steward became the new guardian. In 1341 David returned to Scotland and was officially recognised as king by Edward of England shortly afterwards. As Edward Balliol lost most of his support in the Scottish population, he had to resign. The Treaty of Berwick in 1357 put an end to the civil war but the relations between Scotland and England remained fragile, which would lead to new confrontations in the following centuries (see Lynch 126-131; Ross 99).

2.3 Unions between Scotland and England

2.3.1 Union of Crowns

The following almost 300 years were shaped by the reign of the Stuart monarchs. They established themselves as the new dynasty through the marriage of Marjorie, King Robert’s eldest daughter, to Walter the Steward. Their son Robert succeeded David II on the throne as he himself had no heirs. This marked the beginning of the Stuart line in which the most famous kings were James I till James VI and the most famous queen was Mary. But I want to omit this part of the Scottish history and turn to James VI of Scotland, son of Mary Stuart, who was a Protestant and pro-English king. He is best remembered for succeeding Queen Elizabeth I of England in 1603, a date which is also known as the Union of Crowns.

James was born in 1566 and immediately was put to the Scottish throne in 1567 when his mother was imprisoned even though he was only an infant. The story of the dispute between Queen Elizabeth of England and Mary is very well known. Similar to Wallace, it became a popular myth and Mary is still referred to as the Queen of Scots. The reign of James VI was troubled from the beginning.
due to the constant undermining of his authority by feuds between the nobles. But by 1603 he had been able to restore confidence in his kingship and the country as a whole (see Lynch 132-134; 233-235).

The most remarkable event of his reign is the Treaty of Alliance in 1585, which made sure that James was to be king of England in case the Queen had no heirs (see Ross 167). After the death of the childless Queen Elizabeth I of England in 1603, James gained what his mother always desired; he became James I of England. He was a legitimate heir as his great grandmother was Margaret Tudor, sister of Henry VIII. This event is known as Union of Crowns as James became king of England and Ireland as well as Scotland. James wanted a union between England and Scotland on equal terms and even if he managed to keep the balance better than any of his heirs, he did not quite succeed. The fact that he and his court moved from Scotland to England would prove devastating for Scottish society and culture, especially literature. James only visited Scotland once, in 1617, during his whole reign; he was an absentee monarch. From the union onwards he was interested in creating a new British identity by neglecting the Gaelic culture. This was the starting point of the differentiation between Lowlands and the Highlands which were considered less civilised.

The two distinct parliaments remained highly critical of the union. The English one was afraid that the free trade would affect English economy whereas the Scottish one voiced its concerns that Scotland would turn into “a conquered and slavish province [...]” (Lynch 239). The hostilities towards the new developments could also be seen among the nobles. This general disapproval resulted in the rejection of a full incorporating union, which James had always longed for. In the public eye the idea of the king who secures the independence of Scotland was lost because James I was King of Great Britain and in this position he disrespected many old traditions and values attached to former Scottish kingship (see Lynch 239-244).
2.3.2 Union of Parliaments

James I’s successors had to deal with many of the problems left unsolved by the old king. The most remarkable events during this time were the civil war, the following rule by Oliver Cromwell and the restoration of Charles II. Although the interregnum period marked the temporary loss of independence for Scotland, I want to turn to the 18th century, when Scottish autonomy disappeared completely.

The last Scottish monarch was Anne, who claimed the throne in 1702 after the death of William of Orange. She was very pro-unionist in the same way as James I was, mainly because she was not really devoted to the country of Scotland. The first negotiations for an incorporating union already took place in 1702 but they failed due to the disaccord about the compensation. Moreover, other political issues like that of succession after Anne’s death were more prominent. The Act of Settlement made sure that the House of Hanover was the heir to the throne but it was only valid in England. Therefore, for England a union would secure peace and the succession of the House of Hanover, respectively that of George I. That this would not prevent the revolution of the Jacobites in 1715 and 1745, in which they tried to restore the Stuart monarchy, could not be foreseen (see Lynch 310-312; Jim Smyth 27-28). In Scotland the Act of Security of 1704 stood against the English succession by stating that the Scottish monarch must not be the same as the English one. The parliament in London answered with the Alien Act, which suggested treating Scots as foreigners if the Act of Security was put into practice.

The relationship between the two countries was more hostile than for a long time to come. But those difficulties put the union first on the political agenda in order to overcome the problematic times. A commission was appointed to negotiate the articles of the Treaty of Union which in the end decided for a complete parliamentary union. Twenty five articles were carefully drawn up and equally carefully discussed in parliament (see Ross 218-220). While Scotland was concerned and critical, the opposition in England was minimal. The comparison between the writings of that time shows that the English ones were not concerned with a union debate. In contrast, Scottish writers and historians
discussed the influence on politics, economy, culture and society (see Jim Smyth 24).

On the 16th of January 1707, the Treaty of Union was agreed on in the Scottish Parliament and the English one ratified it on March 19th. The English and the Scottish parliaments were united officially on the 1st of May, although the opposition to this step was great. The treaty was unpopular, especially in Scotland, and most of its population was against this union. Lynch also argues that this development was only possible through “a striking coincidence of short-term political factors” (313). The only positive aspects of a union were concerning economics and the free trade which would be beneficial for Scotland (see Lynch 312-315; 318).

After Scotland no longer had its own Parliament it sent Members of Parliament to the House of Commons in London. The Treaty of Union also established the United Kingdom of Great Britain as the only state. The united parliament was meant to substitute the separate governments under one banner but it was actually an “enlarged English parliament” (Oxford 604). Although Scotland maintained its own church, its legal system and the educational structure, England was predominant (see Oxford 474; 604). The government in Westminster was not interested in Scottish issues and only concerned itself with Scotland when there were troubles. The Union did not establish new British politics but Scottish politics had been incorporated into English ones. This had been the main reason why many Scots remained sceptical about the union. Lynch also claims that the Union in 1707 was the final step in the long process of absorbing Scotland into the larger unit then called Great Britain.

One immediate effect of the Union was the abolishment of the Scottish Privy Council, which was the main agency in Scotland after the court moved south. This meant that the control in the most remote areas in the north, especially in the Highlands, decreased. The positive effects, like the economic benefits, can be observed only much later. Before the 1740s the Scottish economy did not profit from the free trade and the agricultural sector, which was the most important one in Scotland, did not improve (see Lynch 317-325). Although the sentiments shortly after the union were negative, nowadays it is seen as inevitable and beneficial for both countries (see Jim Smyth 25).
The Union put an end to Scottish independence and incorporated the nation into the new construct of Great Britain. But this proved problematic as England dominated in this fusion. The way in which this Treaty was settled and the following exploitation, interference and unfair treatment of Scotland had to lead to frictions in the relationship with England. The more Scotland and its people felt disadvantaged and left out, the more the wish for change and self-determination grew, which finally led to the re-opening of the Scottish Parliament.

2.4 New Parliament

Again I will omit a great part of history and continue with the developments leading to the re-establishment of the Scottish Parliament. In this section I will only mention the milestones in history as a more detailed analysis of the occurrences will be given in the section concerning Scottish nationalism and the Scottish National Party. The events since the First World War have been mainly shaped by nationalist ideas and thinking so that it seems reasonable to refer to them in a later section.

The situation in Scotland after the two World Wars was devastating; especially economically it was lacking ground. Among the population the wish for the reorganisation of the country and the replacement of old structures grew. The first step towards a delegation of powers was the Home Rule Bill, which was followed by a referendum in 1979. In the referendum it was decided if a Scottish Assembly as independent legislature should be established. Although more than 50 per cent were in favour, it was not enough to grant the Assembly. This changed with the referendum in 1997 in which more than 70 per cent voted for a devolved Scottish Parliament. The change in opinion can be traced back to Margaret Thatcher’s government and the negative effect it had on the Scottish people. The 1st July 1999 was a day to celebrate because Scotland regained its own Parliament, which was opened by Queen Elizabeth II.

An important factor in the recent developments towards Scottish devolution was the Scottish National Party, which was founded in 1934. It was of no real significance until 1967, when it won a by-election. Since then the Scottish
National Party, short SNP, could steady but also strengthen its position as one of Scotland’s leading parties. In 1974 they had the highest share in a general election so far. In the first election for a new Scottish Parliament in 1999 they only came second but in 2007 they managed to become the leading party. This also led to the appointment of Alex Salmond as First Minister of Scotland (see Oxford 445; 474).
3 Nationalism

3.1 What is Nationalism?

3.1.1 Preliminaries

Before talking about nationalism, other terms which are involved, most obviously that of the nation, have to be defined. This is no easy task as there are many competing theories and definitions. In the following only the most important and widely accepted concepts will be introduced.

One of the most important scholars in this area is Benedict Anderson. In his book *Imagined Communities* he defines nation as

an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives an image of their communion. (6)

Another definition by Anthony Smith is more descriptive as he names certain elements which are necessary to speak of a nation.

A nation can therefore be defined as a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members. (14)

It is also necessary to note that nations do not need to be homogenous, especially today through migration this is no longer the case. But there are certain core elements, like certain memories, a common heritage, beliefs and so forth, which serve as means of identification and unification. Moreover, Smith distinguishes between two different approaches concerning the nation. The so called Western or ‘civic’ type is mainly concerned with territory. “Historic territory, legal-political community, legal-political equality of members, and common civic culture and ideology; these are the components of the standard, Western model of the nation” (A. Smith 11). Opposed to that, the ‘ethnic’ model is based on descent rather than territory. It assumes a common ancestry and sees the community as a quasi family. In accordance to that the vernacular culture plays a major role. The distinction of these two models is necessary for a deeper understanding of nationalist sentiments, as all nationalisms contain both, civic and ethnic elements.
Importantly the concept of the nation has to be distinguished from that of the state. Whereas the latter involves only public institutions which are independent of social institutions and is therefore a legal entity, the nation refers to a political community with cultural and political ties. This distinction led to the idea of so-called ‘nation-states’, states whose boundaries are identical with that of the nation and which population share one culture. Nowadays, however, most states accommodate more than one culture and different communities. They are therefore ‘plural’ states, a concept which can also be applied to the United Kingdom (see A. Smith 9-15; 145).

In the case of Scotland one can speak of a ‘stateless nation’\(^1\). Scotland is a nation as it consists of a political community but it is not a state. It lacks “the democratic decision making institutions to match its status and identity as a nation” (Weißenberger 43).

### 3.1.2 Nationalism Defined

After having clarified some underlying assumptions the term nationalism itself needs to be defined. This is no easy task as there are many different and sometimes competing explanations. A very basic way of describing nationalism is that it is the pride and love in one’s own country. It is believed to be better than other countries and is regarded as ideal (see Weißenberger 37). This simplification does not involve any direct action and it does not explain why groups of people take nationalism as motivation for change or as source of resistance. As this is exactly what has happened in Scotland another definition is needed.

Anthony Smith defines nationalism as “an ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential ‘nation’” (73). This statement is much more suitable for the purpose of this thesis as it includes the idea that nationalism is an ideology which promotes self-determination. So if a nation does not yet have this sovereignty the wish for independence can be part of national belief as it is the case in Scotland with the Scottish National

\(^1\)The concept of ‘stateless nation’ is used by various scholars, most markedly by David McCrone.
Party. But nationalism does not necessarily involve the creation of an independent state. The preferred solution of many nations is some kind of separate government and not complete separation.

What also has to be mentioned is that there are different kinds of nationalism in accordance with the different models of the nation, namely the ‘civic’ and the ethnic approaches. In general the same distinction as with the concept of nation can be made. Furthermore different subgroups can be singled out depending on whether the nations are already independent or not (see A. Smith 74-79).

1. Territorial nationalism
   (a) Pre-independence: The main goals are to eject foreign rulers and to develop a new state nation instead of the old colonial territory. This kind of nationalism can also be called anti-colonial nationalism.
   (b) Post-independence: It tries to integrate all ethnic populations and to create a new territorial nation. Another label for this type of nationalism is integration nationalism.

2. Ethnic nationalism
   (a) Pre-independence: The wish to secede from a larger political unit and to form a new political ‘ethno-nation’ instead is most prominent. This is why it is called secession and diaspora nationalism.
   (b) Post-independence: The main aim is to expand boundaries in order to create larger ‘ethno-national’ states or union of states. This nationalism is also referred to as irredentist and pan nationalism. (see A. Smith 82-83)

Although the goals of all this types of nationalisms differ, some objectives have to be pointed out separately as they are predominant. The main aim is the protection of smaller communities against dominant neighbours. The idea behind nationalist thinking is that nation and state should be equal (see A. Smith 18). Nationalism is always directed against the present situation and shows the will to change it either through a nation-building process or through discrimination against other people. This desire for change is often combined with violence, therefore nationalism itself is often linked to violence (see Hagendoorn 6). There are many instances where this is true, as for example in Ireland. The most prominent is the Easter Rising in 1916, in which the Irish
republicans aimed to end the British rule over the country. But Scotland’s case exemplifies that nationalistic ideas can also be achieved in a peaceful way.

Moreover nationalism fosters the solidarity among members of the same community (see A. Smith 18). It attempts to create a sense of uniformity and thereby ignores any difference “for the sake of political and cultural homogeneity” (76). Nationalists try to create a homogeneous nation with a single national identity. The distinction between the in-group and other out-groups is crucial. Stereotypes are used to create a negative image of others, which is then used as a threat. “The feeling of being threatened as a group by an out-group contributes to popular nationalism” (Hagendoorn 23).

In order to achieve this unity and solidarity, nationalism makes frequent use of the past. It depends very much on myths and memories of a heroic past. This elicits feelings of nostalgia and establishes a common background for identification. Through the appropriation of folk stories, legends, heroes and the like, a distinct national identity is created which all members of the nation should have in common. The idea that citizens of one nation have a single identity is central for the feeling of loyalty, which is expected of them. It is a presupposition to unite different people, despite their differences, under one common notion they feel attached to. This unity is then further strengthened by the use of symbols such as flags or national anthems.

The development of nationalism is as complex as the term itself. Nationalism is a modern construct in the same way as nations are fairly recent inventions. Without nations there can be no nationalism. Most scholars find the origins of nationalist ideology in the 18th century during the French Revolution (see A. Smith 18; 44; 77; 127-129). However it can be argued that predecessors to nations existed in the form of ethnic communities. Therefore Smith concludes that

[i]f nationalism signified merely resistance to cultural and political outsiders, then […] nationalism can be found in every era and continent. But if by nationalism we wish to designate ideologies and movements that presuppose a world of nations, […] then we shall be hard put to find movements inspired by such ideals in the ancient, or medieval, worlds […]. (A. Smith 46-47)

In the course of time ethnic nationalism has become the most powerful and predominant form. Several waves in which strong nationalist notions were
present can be observed. In the late 19th century it was mainly present in the
form of counter-movements to imperialism, as separation from empires. Later
on this wish for secession was visible in the colonies which tried to free
themselves. The 1960s saw the coming of nationalism in European countries.
Smaller nations claimed the right for autonomy and self-determination, as it was
also the case in Scotland (see A. Smith 123-125).

3.1.3 Devolution

An integral part of the discussion about nationalism is the idea of devolution, as
this is of special importance in a Scottish context. Devolution involves three
elements, namely “the transfer to a subordinate body on a geographical basis,
of functions at present exercised by Parliament” (qtd. in Retschitzegger 65).
Those functions can be legislative as well as administrative. Devolution
represents an attempt to defuse discontent by bringing decision-making
closer to the governed. Even in a highly centralized state some powers
will be delegated to towns and provinces. Many countries—e.g. the USA
and Germany—have federal constitutions with considerable powers
exercised by states or Ländber. But in a devolved system, the central
government retains ultimate authority. (Cannon)

The most important aspect in this definition is the fact that, although some
powers are delegated, the sovereignty of the central government is not
challenged. In a British context not only provinces attained devolved powers but
whole nations like Northern Ireland or Scotland. Nevertheless, the Parliament in
Westminster remains the highest authority and it is inviolable. To be more
explicit, in the United Kingdom regional parliaments were established, which
have certain powers without undermining the national Parliament in
Westminster. As Calvert states, “in the case of devolution, Parliament remains
the central institution of the Constitution of the U.K.” (qtd. in Retschitzegger 68).

There are three possible forms devolution can take. First there is legislative
devolution, which means that there is an elected assembly with legislative
powers. The second possibility is executive devolution, which only involves the
delegation of administrative functions and not of legislative ones. The last form
is the advisory council, which refuses legislative devolution. Instead it favours
the maintenance and expansion of responsibilities for the Scottish Office (see
Retschitzegger 121-123). In Scotland legislative devolution was the preferred option, and the newly established parliament holds legislative powers in certain political areas as well as limited tax varying powers.

Devolution can be interpreted as working against secession and as hindering independence. This is the case as devolution fosters regional institutions which have some power but without undermining central control. So instead of full autonomy, devolution offers a more moderate solution. Moreover it appeals to a large number of people as it evokes the impression that decisions are made near to them. This is a positive development as the population feels more involved and taken seriously in their wishes and claims. Thus the community is often satisfied when some authorities are placed into their hands. In addition to that the regional political elite gains more power through devolved institutions which they are unwilling to give up again. This weakens their support for the entire secession as their newly earned privileges would get lost. Therefore devolution is the preferred solution for anti-secessionist and anti-nationalist groups. They see devolution as only way to prevent nationalists from achieving their goals. Unionist groups partly comply with requests for autonomy in order to take the wind out of the sails of nationalist groups. Devolution gives the impression that nationalist demands are met, and this causes a declining support for secessionist parties (see Mitchell 69-72). On the other hand nationalists, as for example the SNP in Scotland, regard devolution as a first stepping stone towards independence and are therefore not satisfied with mere devolved powers.

3.2 Scottish Nationalism

3.2.1 Main Aspects

As already mentioned, most forms of nationalism today are ethnic and so is Scottish nationalism. Moreover it belongs to the sub-category of pre-independence nationalism for obvious reasons; it is not yet an independent country. Due to the major goal of Scottish nationalism, namely to secede from a larger political unit, that of Great Britain, it can be labelled secession nationalism. Also other goals typical of nationalists can be found in the Scottish
case. Closely related to the wish of separation from a larger unit is the protection of a smaller community against dominant neighbours. The struggle for Scottish independence is foremost a striving for freedom from the dominant English neighbour and the attempt to preserve the Scottish culture and identity. The next chapter will provide a detailed analysis on identity in Scotland and the influence this has on thoughts about independence.

Scottish nationalism developed out of the idea that the nation needs to have separate political institutions. This is the case because the problems Scotland has are Scottish and therefore the solutions to these also have to be Scottish. In recent years more and more people have had the feeling that the British Parliament is not able to provide such solutions. The distinct past and developments in the country are seen as unique and different from the rest of the United Kingdom. This makes it necessary to establish new institutions in order to govern it successfully. People asked for Scottish organizations as they were seen as more suitable to satisfy demands and manage affairs than was the British Parliament. So the main reason for nationalism in Scotland is the view that the remote Parliament located in London is unable to provide solutions for specifically Scottish problems (see Ross 29).

Nationalism in Scotland is influenced, among other factors, by the separate institutions which were kept after the Union, like the educational system and the Church of Scotland. This is to say that certain parts of the civil society were not influenced by the Union (see Brown 1-3). The maintenance of these independent systems helped to create and foster nationalist tendencies (see Weedon 25). Shortly after the Union, Scotland was mainly left alone and could manage it own affairs. It had a special position as it could be seen as “state within a state” (Hanham 51). But in the following centuries this changed and Scotland was becoming more and more dependent on England and on the decisions made in Westminster. The inequalities between Scotland and England were growing and the feeling that new means of government were needed arose (see Hanham 71-73).

In addition to that, nationalistic tendencies are closely linked to the economy. If the economy is in decline, which is noticeable through higher unemployment, people tend to blame the government in London. At those times a high level of
nationalism can be observed (see Retschitzegger 31). I also want to mention that Scottish nationalism is closely linked to developments in England or in Great Britain. Often approval of nationalistic ideas is connected to distrust in the system of government and the Westminster Parliament. At such times the cry for a devolved Scottish Parliament has been loudest. In the following section only the Scottish aspect will be taken into account as anything else would go beyond the scope of this thesis.

Another factor which plays a major role in Scottish nationalism is culture. Matthias Eickhoff attributes this factor to nationalism in general. “Politischer Nationalismus greift zumeist auf kulturelle Werte zurück, um sich eine historische Legitimation zu verschaffen” (46). I would argue that this is of special importance in connection to Scotland, as looking back to past events has shaped Scottish identity and culture decisively. Furthermore, the argument for independence is often supported through claims that Scotland has a distinct cultural identity. This view may not be present in official policy but it cannot be neglected and will be illustrated in the course of this thesis.

Although language can also be seen as fostering national identity and consequently is closely linked to the idea of an independent country and nationalism, it is often argued that it is not the main aspect of Scottish nationalism. James Kellas, for example, states that “Scottish nationality is not linguistic, for there is no Scottish language” (qtd. in Retschitzegger 25). Nevertheless, the distinct accent of Scots is often used to strengthen national feelings, and I would argue, therefore, that it can be seen as part of a nationalistic discourse. This idea is further developed in later chapters especially in relation to Trainspotting.

Williams argues that the history of Scotland is a major reason for its right to independence. A separate history concerning politics and the managing of its own affairs are a prerequisite for nationhood. This is more important than any other aspect such as language, religion or strong sentiments concerning the nation one lives in. Scotland therefore qualifies for the process of devolution and the establishment of its own parliament on the basis of the long period in which Scotland was a state of its own (see 11).

2 See Alice Brown for a full account of the connection between Scottish and British politics.
3.2.2 First Traces of Nationalism

Although Anthony Smith does not identify nationalism as such in the medieval time, the Declaration of Arbroath written in 1320 is often referred to as an important document in this respect. It is, as H.J. Hanham argues, “the most important single literary contribution to the nationalist tradition” (65). The text of the Declaration states:

For so long as there shall be but one hundred of us remain alive, we will never consent to subject ourselves to the domination of the English. For it is not glory, neither is it honour, but it is liberty alone that we fight and contend for, which no honest man will lose but with his life. (qtd. in Ross 96)

I would argue that the statements made here are clearly nationalistic. It is an open call for resistance in order to defend the country against foreign influence. The Scottish people are asked to resist the English to gain a free and independent country. This is the reason why it is justified to name the “Wars of Independence” starting in the late 13th century as first traces of nationalism in Scotland. Moreover, Smith also allows for predecessors of nationalistic ideologies in earlier periods, even if they are more based on ethnic communities than nations (see 51). The events concerning William Wallace and Robert the Bruce are of major importance in the development of nationalistic trends in Scotland.

The Union of the Parliaments in 1707 not only marked the end of Scotland as an autonomous state but also the decline of nationalism. Although the opposition to the Treaty of Union was great, it should not be interpreted as England taking over Scotland but as an amalgamation agreed to by both countries. Although many Scots did not welcome this development at first, it seemed to secure a new future for them and their country. With the acceptance of the Union the Scottish people also embraced the British Empire. It provided further economic and cultural opportunities. To the disappointment of many it soon proved to be a one-sided relationship with England being the dominant force. This led to a newly aroused nationalism, which is still in existence today for similar reasons as 300 years ago (see Brown 11-12).

Another early instance of Scottish nationalism can be found, as Sandra Retschitzegger argues in her thesis, in the Jacobite Revolution of 1746. She
interprets the events in a nationalist light and argues that the rebellion was not only the fight for the restoration of the Stuart monarch but also resistance against the Union with England (see 106). But I disagree with that claim as historically speaking the revolution was a civil war. It took place on Scottish soil and divided the Highlands and the Lowlands. Both armies had Scottish soldiers under their command as the reason for the fight was not the old battle England against Scotland but a religious conflict. The Catholic Stuart monarch Bonnie Prince Charlie fought to regain the throne from the ruling House of Hanover. The view Retschitzegger has taken is the way in which the Jacobite Revolution is often represented nowadays in popular culture. It is promoted as another battle for Scottish independence and therefore a nationalistic cause is attached to it. Moreover, it is promoted as a tourist attraction. The official Culloden homepage offers a virtual tour, a gift shop, and even the possibility to buy a stone at the entrance of the new visitor centre (see Culloden). Here history is turned into a commodity and the best promoting device is that of relating it to another well-known story. As most tourists are aware of the Braveheart story it suits well to give the Jacobite rebellion a similar cause. It is presented as the downfall of Highland culture and as a battle to free the country, as Wallace did before. As most tourists associate the Highlands and its stereotypes, like the kilt or bagpipes, with Scotland as a whole, they interpret the extinction of those as a defeat for the nation of Scotland.

3.2.3 Home Rule All Around

The term Home Rule refers to the “limited autonomy or self-government granted by a central or regional government to its dependent political units” (Home Rule). The management of domestic affairs is handed over to regional or local administrations whereas foreign affairs are still subject of the central authority (see Ross 28). In the case of Great Britain some powers were given to the parliament in Scotland or to the assemblies in Northern Ireland and Wales but the main authority still lies with the Westminster parliament.

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3 This title refers to the general wish of nationalists for Home Rule in the United Kingdom. This includes Ireland, Scotland, Wales and even England.
Coming back to the developments in Scotland, it is undisputable that Scottish nationalism was a minor force in the 18th and in very much of the 19th century. The year 1886 can be seen as milestone. Through the growing nationalistic movement in Ireland and the wish for Home Rule there, similar ideas became prominent in Scotland. This prompted the foundation of the Scottish Home Rule Association, short SHRA. But the government in Westminster saw the Irish problem as more prevalent and largely ignored Scottish claims for Home Rule (see Ross 266; Martiny 51). Nevertheless the idea of Home Rule has been part of Scottish politics ever since. “Scottish nationalism with a small ‘n’ had always been part and parcel of the Scottish radical tradition and Liberal MPs had been putting forward Scottish Home Rule bills in Parliament from the 1890s” (Finlay 70).

The period leading to the First World War was characterised by Home Rule movements. However, the outbreak of war marked a turning point in Scottish nationalism. It shifted the focus onto more prominent and more urgent issues. Even shortly after the war the discussion about Scottish Home Rule was not of prime importance. The country had too many other concerns, mainly social and economic issues. Moreover, Great Britain wanted to present itself as a strong united country, which made the idea of devolution impossible (see Leutgeb 20). The Liberal Party, which had been a strong supporter of Scottish devolution, could not meet the new demands of a post-war country. The Labour Party rose as a new force and this has proven indispensable for nationalistic developments in Scotland.

Despite the fact that the general climate was not in favour of nationalism, it never fully disappeared. During the 1920s, Scotland began to complain, as no solutions to the economic problems were found. People were drawn to nationalism because of the economic depression. This time also saw the rise of national parties, which have become a major force in Scottish nationalism (see Finlay 73; 76-77). In 1918 the Scottish Home Rule Association was re-established. One of the members, called Thomas Johnston, gives a full account why Scottish Home Rule is vital. “Our land problem is vastly different to the land problem of England. [...] Our local problems are different and our local phrases are different. [...] Our historical and cultured traditions are different; our racial
characteristics are different” (qtd. in Hanham 108-109). Once again the main reasons for the need of devolution are the different preconditions between Scotland and England, which make a centralized government unsuitable. The reference to race is problematic as this easily leads to discrimination or racism. I would argue that the argument for Scottish Home Rule based on different economic, regional and even cultural developments is understandable. But to talk about a distinct Scottish race is hard to grasp. As in most people’s minds race is related to skin colour, or other physical features, Scots do not appear to be different from Englishmen. Therefore giving race as the determining feature seems too far-fetched and not helpful for the argument of distinctiveness from others.

The coming of the Second World War, however, destroyed all nationalist hopes once more. The war was a chance to build up the Scottish economy as it provided work places in military factories. Additionally, as before, other stronger and more urgent concerns were overshadowing devolution claims in British politics (see Finlay 80). Moreover, the term nationalism was closely linked to Nazi Germany, which means that nationalist ideas were regarded as dangerous and delicate. Although the World War put an end to any Home Rule plans, the nationalist movements in Scotland were still on the rise. This can be seen when looking at the success of the Scottish National Party at that time.

3.2.4 After 1945

After the war Home Rule was once again back on the British agenda. In 1942 the Scottish Union, later called Scottish Convention, was founded, which was a movement promoting the idea of a separate Scottish Parliament alongside the British one. Their commitment made sure that the government could no longer ignore the wish for better representation of Scottish affairs in Parliament. But the movement was not able to make a real difference. Instead it receded into the background of political affairs and only maintained a propaganda function (see Hanham 169-171). The next decades were marked by an upsurge of nationalism. The unemployment rate in Scotland was very high and the time of British Imperialism was coming to an end. The British Empire was crumbling. The general atmosphere of decline was a perfect breeding ground for
nationalist ideas and the parties which supported them. Especially the Scottish National Party could take advantage of those tendencies in the 1960s (see Mitchell 91-92; 94-95). Moreover, the finding of oil in the North Sea provided hope for economic growth and the optimism related to that strengthened the idea of Scotland as a prosperous country. But it also showed the need for a sovereign country to use the new possibilities in the best ways possible; at least that is what the Scottish National Party claimed.

The Labour Party, which had been the strongest force in Scottish politics since 1922, was challenged through the rise of nationalism in the 1960s. Therefore, in 1968, the Royal Commission on the Constitution was established to evaluate the devolution debate and possible solutions. After constantly losing seats in elections, also to the Scottish National Party, the Labour Party finally had to place devolution on their political agenda in order to meet the threat of the SNP.

The results of the Royal Commission were presented five years later, in October 1973, in the so-called Kilbrandon Report, named after the presiding judge of the commission. It agreed on the fact that changes are needed but it could not come up with a plan as how things should change. It rejected separatism and federalism as solutions and consequently the recommendation was some form of devolution (see Lynch 445-446).

The transfer of power with which we shall be concerned in this and subsequent parts of our Report, therefore, are those which would leave overriding control in the hands of Parliament. The extent of powers transferred and the conditions under which they were to be exercised would be prescribed by the status and might at any time be changed by Parliament or by Ministers answerable to it. In other words we shall be concerned with devolution, which is the delegation of central government powers without the relinquishment of sovereignty. (qtd. in Retschitzegger 121)

The above quoted section of the report shows that the general idea of sovereignty of the Parliament is one of the most important factors. Although the Royal Commission and its report were not very influential or widely and publicly recognized, it showed the importance of paying greater attention to matters of devolution.

In 1974 and 1975 the Labour government presented more concrete ideas on devolution in their white papers, which fostered the idea of legislative devolution with the establishment of a Scottish Assembly. This Assembly was meant to
have legislative powers in areas such as education or environment but should not have financial autonomy. The final decision-making powers should still be held in Westminster. Nationalists held the opinion that the white papers were not enough and also the government itself did not take any serious steps based on them (see Eickhoff 23).

The appointment of the Royal Commission as well as the following reports can be analyzed as counter-reactions to nationalism. They were not intended to bring independence or any other form of self-government but were established in order to keep nationalistic tendencies at bay. “Each seemed to grant measure of devolution but in reality made its embrace all the tighter” (Lynch 435). All measures were against succession and the models on devolution, which were drawn up, were meant to placate nationalist demands. Moreover it helps to weaken secessionist groups as the members falsely believe that they are one step closer to their goal, complete separation (see Guibernau 69; Lynch 435).

3.2.5 Referendum

The year 1977 finally saw the coming of a Scotland Bill. But the government demanded a referendum and in addition to that the so-called Cunningham amendment requested a 40 per cent quorum which was not referring to the persons actually participating in the referendum but to all persons which were entitled to vote. After the Royal Assent the referendum took place on the 1st of March 1979. The turnout at the election was 63.9 per cent and although 52 per cent were in favour these were only 32.9 per cent of the electorate. The Cunningham amendment prevented the referendum to be a success.

This was a blow not only for the Scottish National Party but also for anyone interested in a devolved Scotland. The next elections in the same year proved this tendency. The SNP lost nine seats and the Labour government was replaced by a Conservative one under Margaret Thatcher (see Lynch 446-447). The new government and especially Thatcher herself were against the Scotland Act. They saw no need for it after the referendum failed. During the premiership of Thatcher, Scotland and her people felt more oppressed than ever before. She did not pay any attention to wishes for devolution and focused on English
affairs. Statements such as the following made Thatcher extremely unpopular in Scotland: “If it [the state] sometimes seems English to some Scots that is because the Union is inevitably dominated by England by reason of its greater population” (qtd. in Mitchell 98). Moreover the new government used Scotland as a test-bed. The poll-tax, for example, was introduced in Scotland one year before it came into being in England. The country was in a state of economic recession, the unemployment rate was high and the gap between rich and poor widened. Unknowingly Thatcher’s politics helped to re-establish Scottish nationalism (see Ross 15-18). Finlay states that “Thatcherism fuelled a revival of Scottish nationalism” (qtd. in Retschitzegger 152).

This finally contributed to the downfall of Conservative politics, at least in Scotland (see Brown 129). Instead the Labour Party was seen as a good alternative to deal with Scottish concerns, especially after Tony Blair became the new leader. He and his ‘New Labour’ party kept devolution on the political agenda and promised the establishment of a Scottish Parliament. The new policy saw devolution as the only possibility to keep Great Britain intact. Otherwise the discontent in certain areas would finally lead to the breaking up of the country. These standpoints helped the Labour Party to win the general election in 1997. The new government presented a white paper called Scotland’s Parliament in the same year, which regulated the responsibilities and duties of the new Parliament. The most important aspect would be that the Queen was still recognized as head of the state and that some areas were still in the hands of the Parliament in Westminster (see Retschitzegger 161-162; 167-174). A second referendum was held on the 11th September 1997 where 74.3 per cent of the people voted for a devolved Scottish Parliament (see Oxford 474). In 1998 the Scotland Act was passed and a devolved Scottish Parliament was re-established4. Nationalists and especially the SNP understood this development as a first step towards Scottish independence. Although the establishment of the Scottish Parliament was only possible through the Labour Party, they reject the idea of separation and further nationalistic trends.

We firmly reject those parties who see devolution as a stepping stone to the break-up of the U.K. … our aim is to build a stronger and more

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4 The full text of the Scotland Act is available online on the homepage of the Office of Public Sector Information. See <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1998/ukpga_19980046_en_1>
dynamic Union where the influence of the citizens will increase because power will be exercised closer to the people. This is the new politics: between an old-fashioned centralised state, and disintegration. *(The Guardian 1998 qtd. in Retschitzegger 179)*

3.3 **Scottish National Party**

3.3.1 **Development**

The Scottish National Party, short SNP, was founded on the 20th of April 1934. The party was a fusion of the National Party of Scotland and the Scottish Party, which will be examined shortly in the following paragraphs.

The National Party of Scotland (NPS) was established in May 1928 by John MacCormick, Roland Muirhead and R.B. Cunninghame Graham, who was also the first president. It was a rather radical group, which mainly found its followers in student societies, intellectual circles and with journalists. Its main goal was the self government for Scotland with independent status “within the British group of nations” (Lynch 434). Due to these extreme standpoints the NPS was not very successful in elections. This is the reason why MacCormick chose to create a new party together with the Scottish Party (see Lynch 434).

The Scottish Party, founded in 1932, was a very loose organization with only vague ideas concerning self-government. The opinion that Home Rule would give further strength to the British Empire was prominent. Because of that the SP did not support separatist requests but rather devolutionist ones. The idea of a fusion with the NPS was not welcomed at first. The attitude towards independence and the anti-Unionist approach were seen as too radical. After adjustments in the politics of both parties, but especially in the National Party of Scotland, the two parties were united and the Scottish National Party was born. But this was just the start of the problems and conflicts within the party (see Brown 138-139). In 1942 the founder of the SNP, MacCormick, left the party and established the Scottish Union, which was later called the Scottish Convention (see Hanham 167-168). At first the SNP held the opinion that secession was not necessary. It supported the establishment of a Scottish Parliament and not the independence of Scotland or separation from the Union. It tried to eliminate too radical sentiments in order to appeal to a broader mass.
But the opinions of old National Party of Scotland and Scottish Party members were too diverse and no common ground could be found. The inability to put an end to the inner conflicts was the main reason for the first unsuccessful years of the SNP (see Leutgeb 36-39).

The need to change this situation was soon recognized and the necessity for self-government within the Union was stressed. The following statement was made by McEwan, member of the SNP, and underlines the need for all to pull in the same direction in order to achieve their goals:

Wir treten nun in eine neue Phase kooperativer Anstrengung ein. Den weiblichen und männlichen Mitgliedern der Schottischen National Partei steht es weiterhin frei, ihre eigene Meinung zu sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Problemen zu haben, aber sie werden bereit sein, diese temporär hinten anzustellen bis wir unser gemeinsames Ziel erreicht haben - die Befreiung unserer Heimat. (qtd. in Leutgeb 40)

The party managed to establish a new agenda with a clear structure and concrete ideas. In the wake of Nazism it was also important to differentiate the nationalism of Germany and other great powers and the one the Scottish National Party was promoting. According to the SNP, Scottish nationalism is not aggressive and neither meant to enlarge territory nor power, but can be seen as tolerant and liberal. It is a counter-movement to the centralizing powers and abuse of control of the sovereign states (see Leutgeb 41-42). Further changes in the agenda were made under Dr. Robert McIntyre. He set up a new statement of aim and policy which focused on the ‘little man’. Moreover it asked for more discipline and a greater unity within the party. Only then did the request for independence become part of the party’s programme. This policy is largely still in existence today (see Hanham 173-176; Eickhoff 69).

What also has to be mentioned is the fact that the effort for an autonomous country is due to economic reasons. This means that culture is not so much on the SNP agenda. It fosters an economic nationalism which aims at maximal economic independence (see Eickhoff 69, Weißenberger 314; 319). The reason for this can be found in the population of Scotland, which is not homogenous.

Der Mangel an kulturellen Gemeinsamkeiten von Lowland-Farmern, Glasgower Arbeitern und Highland-Fischern erklärt, warum in der SNP-Politik die Kultur eine so untergeordnete Rolle spielt. Weil die kulturellen Voraussetzungen so unterschiedlich sind, würde eine Betonung der kulturellen Identität spaltend wirken. (Eickhoff 77)
The distinction between Highlands and Lowlands has been in existence for a long time and still can be seen today. But also modern trends, like migration, make it impossible to speak of a uniform community in Scotland as well as in any other country. Too many factors, for instance education, regional developments, or working environments, influence people differently. The Scottish National Party is aware of that and therefore they do not want to focus on one certain aspect and as a result on one particular social group in their campaigns. The party expects that including culture would have a dividing effect (see Eickhoff 77). But nevertheless the party is making allusions to cultural products, as can be seen in my discussion about Braveheart below. Furthermore it relies on personalities deeply rooted in popular culture, such as Sean Connery. Therefore culture can be linked to the SNP and the rise of nationalism.

During the Second World War the Scottish National Party was very strong, as it benefited from the truce the two main parties, Labour and Conservative, had at that time (see Mitchell 91). In 1945 Robert McIntyre, the new SNP leader, won 50 per cent of the votes in the Motherwell by-election and by this a seat in the British Parliament. After the war this seat was lost again and the party became insignificant until the 1960s. In the first years of the 60s the party achieved the status of a mass movement with an increasing number of members. It was also able to increase the votes and to make a remarkable performance in several by-elections throughout the 60s. In 1967 the SNP won a former secure seat from the Labour Party in Hamilton, which can be seen as a small sensation. In 1970 the Scottish National Party even won its first seat in a general election (see Brown 139-140).

The 1970s proved to be a successful decade for nationalism as two major events which strengthened the argument for self-government and which helped the SNP in future elections took place. The first of them was that Great Britain entered the European Commission in 1973. This was preceded by a referendum in which Scotland showed the least positive attitude to the entry. The SNP, who at first campaigned against the EC, could profit from the hostile sentiments in the country in the following elections 1974. However, in 1988 the Scottish National Party changed its policy towards the European Commission,
and now the European Union, because the British government began to reject the pan-European idea. In order to undermine the British position of power, the SNP started to ask whether Scotland’s interest would not be better represented through its own membership (see Eickhoff 89-91). The second event was the discovery of oil in the North Sea, which made the long lasting argument that the Union is necessary for Scotland because of economic reasons no longer valid. “Oil offered Scots the prospect of escape from their dependency [...]” (Lynch 446). The SNP used this occasion and started its 1972 campaign *It’s Scotland’s Oil*. It was seen as a new chance for the Scottish economy and the fight for independence (see Lynch 446).

Through the oil campaign the SNP demonstrated its ability to take action and to take state matters into its hand. The Scotland Bill and the following referendum were welcomed by the SNP. But in the same way as the idea of devolution increased the party’s popularity, the lost referendum weakened it. In the following general elections the Scottish National Party was defeated with only 18 per cent of the votes (see Leutgeb 28-30).

### 3.3.2 The New SNP

The Scottish National Party could profit from the nationalism that was strengthened after the Thatcher government in the 1980s. The party adapted its agenda and started to tackle more international matters such as the European question. The party abandoned their purely Scottish policy and they showed a positive attitude towards the European Union. They campaigned with the slogan *Independence in Europe* (see Lynch 449; Mitchell 99). Politicians insisted on a separate representation in the European Union instead of representation through the United Kingdom (see Cinnirello 56).

From the 1990s onwards the new leader of the party was Alex Salmond. I want to argue that with him the claim that a new charismatic leader is needed to better represent the Scottish National Party was taken seriously. He managed to modernize the party and to give it a European face with a reliable and realistic agenda. This made the Scottish National Party a major force in Scottish politics. Salmond himself best summarized the main goals and new ways of
thinking with regard to the European Union in an interview he gave during his visit to Vienna in 1994.


This speech showed that the SNP was convinced that Scotland, once it was independent, would become a member of the European Union without applying. Matthew Happold (2000) argues in his article that this is not the case. After secession from the United Kingdom the membership of Scotland in any international organisation that the U.K. belongs to is no longer secured. Therefore he judges the Europe campaign of the SNP as misleading. It promises the benefits of an independent country in the European Union but Scotland might end up independent and without EU membership.

The developments in British politics which paved the way for devolution were welcomed by the SNP. The re-establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 was seen as a victory and as first step towards independence. The first general election in the new Parliament in 1999 brought 35 seats for the Scottish National Party, which made it the second strongest force in Scotland after Labour. The next election took place in 2003 and meant a loss of seven seats for the SNP. But the most recent election for the Scottish Parliament in 2007 turned out to be a victory. The SNP secured 47 seats and was the strongest force, which led to a minority government. Alex Salmond was made First Minister of Scotland (see Scottish Parliament).

At present the Scottish National Party is presenting ideas for a referendum on independence. It should consist of two questions, the first asking whether
Parliament should be given more devolved powers. The second question refers directly to the independence of Scotland. The main argument for introducing such a bill are economic reasons: Scotland is seen to be able to take matters in her own hands and would be better off in doing so. But the opposition parties are against such a development and will most likely vote against the bill (see *Scottish independence*).

The latest campaign of the SNP promotes once again the idea of independence with the slogan *We’ve got what it takes*. It can be found on the official homepage of the SNP, where also a broadcast can be seen. It visualizes the claim that Scotland needs her own, stronger voice. In addition the achievements of the SNP since the re-establishment of Parliament are praised. All in all the new campaign of the Scottish National Party suits the new plans for an independence referendum. It tries to convince the population that Scotland is able and needs to be independent to further strengthen its economy (see *SNP*).

The recent general election, which took place on 6th of May 2010, made the Scottish National Party the third strongest party, behind Labour and the Liberal Democrats, in Scotland. They gained 19.9 per cent of the votes which equals 6 seats in the Westminster parliament. What is most remarkable, however, is the fact that the Conservatives only won one seat in Scotland, whereas in the rest of the United Kingdom they ended up being the strongest party (see *Election*). Similar to the Thatcher years, the Scottish votes show major divergences to the rest of the country, which strengthens the argument that Scotland is a separate nation and justifies the establishment of a devolved parliament in order to represent the interests of the Scottish people.
4 Identity

4.1 Theories on Identity

“Put as simply as possible, your identity is who you are” (Joseph 1). The term identity derives from the Latin words *idem* ‘the same’ and *identitas* ‘sameness’. There are two different ways to look at identity; on the one hand there is the psychological approach, which sees the identity as the true self of an individual, and on the other hand the social sciences focus on the community and collective aspects (see Mikula 92). Thus, two kinds of identity can be differentiated. One of them is the “personal identity”, the “social roles” each individual has, and the other is the “social identity”, which correlates to the position a person has in society (Weißenberger 32). Another way of referring to these two kinds is individual and collective identities. Opposed to individual identities where people search for their inner selves, collective identities are related to the unity within groups and the collective self (see A. Smith 75). Of course, these two are interrelated as the collective identities one person has influence the individual self (see Joseph 5). As this thesis focuses on the way in which individuals place themselves into a larger construct, a society or even a nation, the collective and social aspects are important. The aim is to understand how and why people identify with a certain group and what consequences this has. Although the following general statements about identity are also valid for the individual identity, the focus lies on the social side. Therefore psychoanalysis, like the Freudian theory, which is concerned with the individual and how it finds its true identity, will be largely ignored.

One of the most important characteristic of identity is that it is not fixed and unchanging but in flux; it is a dynamic process rather than a static entity. Identities are influenced by changes and developments in the world but also by individuals who adapt their roles and identities according to different situations. This suggests that each person has more than one identity; each of us has multiple identities, which can be competing with or even contradict each other (see Weißenberger 33; 337; 339). To give a very simple example of this: a mother also inhabits the role of a daughter, depending on the viewpoint. Maybe she is also the wife of someone or she is working, which gives her yet another role in society. Moreover, the woman belongs to a certain ethnic culture, she
can be part of a religious group or she may have certain hobbies, which allow her access to particular groups. In addition to that the woman lives in a specific environment, and therefore she might feel attached to the nation, the region or the city she inhabits. Each of these factors constitutes the woman’s identities, and based on the situation she will choose one or several of them and behave accordingly.

Another important feature of identities is that they are constructed. People are not passively accepting their identities but they are actively involved in shaping them (see Douglas 13-14). Factors which influence the creation of identities are the culture, the so-called high but also the popular culture, and the everyday life of people. They search for a common basis, on which identities can be established (see Edensor 23). All people are part of this production process, which means that identities are not just there, and they should not be taken as something natural. But they are constituted and institutionalized by different groups and their ideologies (see Weedon 5-7). The process of construction does not only affect other people’s identities but also influences who we are (see Joseph 3). The most important classifications which constitute the identity are gender, space or territory, which influences the local and regional identity, religion and ethnicity (see A. Smith 3-8). For my thesis the concept of national identity, which will be explored in the next chapter, is most important.

Moreover the construction of particular identities can be meant to serve a specific purpose. They can either be used to strengthen a dominant discourse or to subvert it. Therefore power plays a crucial role in the making and spreading of identities. The powerful and dominant discourses can decide which identities are superior and which are perceived as ‘the other’ and as inferior. Chris Weedon points out that being white is one of the dominant discourses. It is assumed to be normal and natural, and therefore it is not even recognized as constructed identity (see 9-10; 15). The importance of power relations in connection to identity is also proved by the fact that politics engage in identity issues. They are on the political agenda mostly when they are in crisis. “Identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty” (Mercer qtd. in Brown 190). As no identity is fixed and our modern
world is changing faster than ever before, the crisis of identity and the attempts to solve it have become major issues. It makes identities more fragmented and the identification process more complicated (see Brown 191).

In addition to being constructed, identities are also maintained or negotiated every single day by every individual. Negotiating relates to the fact that each individual has to debate his or her membership of one group with other members of the same group. He or she has to be accepted by others to be able to claim belonging (see Douglas 13-14). Which identities a person assumes are subject to the practice of active identification, that is to say that people recognize that they share or do not share certain characteristics with others (see Hall 2). People are free to choose which identities they want to acquire but it is also important to note that not everyone can have every possible identity. There are restrictions which are based on different discourses, as for example gender or class. For instance, a male person cannot claim the identity of a mother for himself. Of course the exclusiveness is not always that clear cut, and acceptance of others is often refused by members of the group themselves and not by physical factors (see Weedon 6-7).

As already mentioned the claiming of identities is related to an active identification process, which is based on the distinction between ‘us’ and ‘them’ (see Edensor 24). The concepts of ‘otherness’ and ‘sameness’ are necessary prerequisites to further investigate the constitution of identities. Philip Schlesinger calls this a “dual process” with inclusion on the one hand and exclusion on the other. By this the distinction between self and ‘other’ is established (see 223). Also Stuart Hall mentions that identities are not constructed outside difference but through it. “Identities can function as points of identification and attachment only because of their capacity to exclude, to leave out” (Hall 5). We define ourselves not only in terms of who we are but much more in terms of who we are not. This is to say that identities are constituted against ‘others’, who are different from what we are. So-called binary oppositions are established to differentiate and create distance between different identities. This is also true for Scottishness, which is commonly opposed to and differentiated from Englishness.
Last I want to mention that identities are represented. People choose the identities they want to belong to, and they also choose ways in which they show their membership to this certain group. Through symbols, practices and signs the identity is made explicit to others, and it can be recognized by others what group one is a part of. A very prominent example of this is clothing; the clothes we choose or do not choose give information about our attitudes and values. Especially youth groups, such as punks, rockers or Goths, signify their belonging through a unique style (see Weedon 7; 19). Another way of showing attachment is language. Different accents and dialects suggest different identities and differentiate between different cultures or classes. On the other hand talking in the same way can highlight the unity of a grouping. Therefore the question of language is related to the question of identity (see Douglas 15). Especially John Joseph advocates the theory that “language gives rise to identity” (11). People make assumptions of the identities of others based on their speech, but the way we speak is also dependent on the person we are talking to. Thus, speech is a major indicator of different identities and shows how people assume different speech patterns i.e. identities in different situations (see Joseph 12). These investigations will be further elaborated when talking about Scottishness and the Scots language, especially in connection to Trainspotting.

To conclude, our identity not only shows us who we are but also which groups we belong to. More importantly, identities help us to make sense of the world by differentiating between us and ‘the others’. This is especially important when talking about a national identity, as will be seen in the next chapter. What should not be forgotten is that every identity is constructed, and therefore it can be used to fulfil certain aims; again a point which is of special significance in relation to the national identity.

4.2 National Identity

The term national identity is a rather modern one, which has rarely been used before the 1980s. Moreover the term is not easy to define as many different viewpoints and opinions exist (see Condor 52). Tim Edensor summarizes the complexity of the concept of national identity: “A sense of national identity [...] is
not a once and for all thing, but it is dynamic and dialogic, found in the constellations of a huge cultural matrix of images, ideas, spaces, things, discourses and practices" (17). The above mentioned characteristics of identity, for example that it is part of a dynamic process, constructed and represented, are also true for national identity but in addition to that it is closely connected to politics.

Anthony Smith argues that “‘national’ identity involves some sense of political community.” In turn the concept of political community involves “common institutions”, same rights and duties for all its members, and a territory or space (9). To clarify this very complex definition, it is helpful to look at all the aspects involved separately. One of the most important features is that of territory but it is also the greatest source for misunderstandings and conflicts. National boundaries are not always clear cut, and opposing claims over areas can lead to disputes. In the constructions of national identities the territory is often substituted by the notion of ‘homeland’ or ‘historic land’ as this evokes a stronger feeling of unity. The ‘homeland’ is seen as land of the forefathers, where the national heroes lived and where myths and old stories took place. It is part of the heritage of a group and therefore sacred. What is also important is the equality of all the members of the community at least on a legal level. They are equal before the law on the one hand but they also have the same duties on the other. These political and social rights and responsibilities are only for members, so outsiders are excluded and not seen as being part of the society. On a social level, however, there is still a division between different classes. The equality of all is not a matter of course but it is only applied by the state in order to evoke the feeling of fair treatment of all its members. The last aspect are the common institutions, which are shared by all who belong to the same national group. These institutions, like the education system and the media, foster the idea of a common culture. The feeling of belonging and of unity or sameness is strengthened through the belief that certain myths, values, traditions, symbols and beliefs are shared by all people living in the community (see A. Smith 9-11). The idea of being such a unified community helps to set aside differences within the society concerning religion, class, or culture. The emphasis is so much on the similarities of all members that the differences are not even detected. This is further encouraged by the construction of national
myths, the use of national symbols and a national language (see Joseph 116-117).

To summarize the most important features, Anthony Smith gives a list of five main characteristics of national identity:

1. a historic territory, or homeland
2. common myths and historical memories
3. a common, mass public culture
4. common legal rights and duties for all members
5. a common economy with territorial mobility for members. (A. Smith 14)

Whereas Smith sees a political community at the base of each national identity, Benedict Anderson introduces the concept of “imagined community”. “It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (6). Both, Smith and Anderson, acknowledge that a community is based on a shared ground. But Anderson’s definition focuses more on the fact that the common aspects are not actualities but only there in people’s minds and imaginations. This is the precondition to bind people together as they appear to be the same, and it also helps to strengthen the unity and “comradeship” between them (see Anderson 7). Also Tim Edensor agrees with the idea of an “imagined community” but he criticizes Anderson for being rooted too much in history. For Edensor also the so-called popular culture and everyday life play a role in shaping national identity, and not only the common past and the lost heritage (see 7; 17). I agree that the construction and representation of national identity is related to modern day cultural discourses, such as film, newspapers, television, sports, festivals, theatre and so forth. This claim will be made when showing how Braveheart influenced and constituted a sense of Scottishness. But history cannot be neglected as, especially in Scotland as well as in the Braveheart example, it forms the basis for a common identification.
4.2.1 National Identity and its Functions

As outlined above, national identities involve many different elements, and this goes hand in hand with the assumption that identities are multi-dimensional. They are not consisting of just one element but of various related components (see A. Smith 14). Moreover, “national identity does not necessarily have to be fixed, unchanging or homogeneous” (Weißenberger 337). As any other kind of identity it is in flux; it adapts to new circumstances and is constructed in order to fulfill various different functions.

These functions are manifold and can be subdivided into two main categories, namely into external and internal functions. The most important of the external tasks is territorial. National identity helps to locate a community in a certain space but also in time. It justifies the connection of people to a certain territory and explains the myths and stories ascribed to specific places. Another purpose is the managing of resources, the administering of goods and labour and other economically related tasks. The last external function is connected to politics. National identities secure solidarity to the nation, and therefore the legal rights and duties, which are in existence, are justified. Among the internal functions socialisation has to be pointed out. This helps members of the community to position themselves in the world and to identify themselves as citizens. People define themselves in relation to the nation the live in, and therefore they feel that they know who they are and where they belong. In addition to that the national identity helps to create a homogenous culture for the nation in which the education system promotes this culture (see A. Smith 16-17; Weißenberger 41).

Nowadays national identities are no longer restricted to certain state boundaries as most states are multi-national. Through factors like migration the population of one state is no longer of one nationality but a mixture of several. This means that various national identities exist in one state but it is also true that not all people with the same national identity live in the same state; they can be spread among many different countries. Moreover institutions like the European Union plea for a new identity, a European one, which is a transnational construct. This means that there are new challenges to national identities (see Schlesinger 223). Nevertheless, the most important collective identity and the most
prominent way of identification is still the national identity. It remains successful and significant due to the fact that nations will always exist, and that they will always be in the need to establish themselves against other nations. Furthermore, the symbolic aspects as well as the ritual nature of national identities are responsible for their permanence and long lasting life. Smith attributes this to its connection with nationalism and the functions which both conduct (see A. Smith 162; 170).

Transcending oblivion through posterity; the restoration of collective dignity through an appeal to a golden age; the realization of fraternity through symbols, rites and ceremonies, which bind the living to the dead and fallen of the community: these are the underlying functions of national identity and nationalism in the modern world, and the basic reason why the latter have proved so durable, protean and resilient through all vicissitudes. (A. Smith 163)

4.2.2 National Identity, Culture and History

After having clarified the basic assumptions underlying national identity, I want to return to the cultural aspect as this plays a pivotal role for the arguments made later on. That national identity influences culture is without doubt as one of its functions is to create a shared culture. The common values and symbols, the common heritage and the shared traditions which are presented are strengthening the sense of belonging of the individual members, which has become more prevalent in modern day society (see A. Smith 15).

It is through a shared, unique culture that we are enabled to know ‘who we are’ in the contemporary world. By rediscovering that culture we ‘rediscover’ ourselves, the ‘authentic self’, or so it has appeared to many divided and disoriented individuals who have had to contend with the vast changes and uncertainties of the modern world. (A. Smith 17)

In the light of this quote I would argue that the feeling of security, the placing the individual in a group, the being part of a certain group as opposed to others who do not belong there, is the most important function of all kinds of identity, but especially that of national identity. But by all means it is also the most problematic one. As most states nowadays contain more than one ethnic community such an exclusive view can easily lead to discrimination and unrest. A strong sense of national identity can easily lead to the conviction that the nation has the right to govern itself. The desire that the nation one belongs to
also becomes an independent state becomes evident. On the other hand states try to reduce their multicultural basis to one single and common identity, culture and therefore nation. This means that dominant groups use the idea of the national identity to incorporate other minorities by creating a single and seemingly homogenous culture (see Williams 7-9).

The feeling of belonging to the same cultural group is mainly based on a common heritage. People feel attached to a certain place, their country, and to other members, their fellow countrymen, and they are connected to them through a shared past, beliefs, achievements and losses. In addition to that defining oneself as part of a community always involves an imagined ‘other’. In the case of Scotland the other is usually England, which is clearly differentiated from a sense of Scottishness (see Condor 59-60). This shared heritage is often connected to and influenced by the construction of a national history. “It is important both to our sense of who we are and to our understanding of the present” (Weedon 29). Historical events carry a certain symbolic meaning which is used to create a common past (see Martiny 8). Of course, it is important to take into account who makes and interprets the history and how it is represented. The past is simplified and only selective aspects are used in order to create a certain image, which is useful for the creation of a national identity. “The process of selection and simplification involved in the construction of dominant narratives of national history are, it is argued, crucial to its ideological role in the creation of a shared national identity” (Weedon 30). History is also one of the key aspects of Anderson’s “imagined community”. It helps to create the feeling of community, which is necessary to bind people together even though they do not know each other (see Weedon 24). Symbols, myths, habits, speech, every day rituals, and also history construct an imagined community. They strengthen the feeling of solidarity on the one hand but also create a sense of solidarity that was not there before (see Parekh in Weedon 31). This means that people identify and empathize with others although before the use of specific myths and so forth they did not. A new community is created, which is based on the highlighting of shared characteristics.

The sense of a common past and a shared history is strengthened through media representation, the education system and also through family influence.
The school history books, historical novels or films, as well as family anecdotes shape the perception of the past. They are used to celebrate and advertise specific principles. In the case of Scotland the aim of nationalist appropriation of history is to create a positive image of Scotland and the identity attached to it (see Weedon 24-26). It is important to note that it does not make any difference whether the presented history is true or not. Authenticity plays a secondary role but the purpose is to give people something they can hold on to. It gives them a feeling of security and places their own lives into a larger context, that of the nation. In response, people feel obliged to the community and are willing to defend and support it, which is an important factor in connection to national identity.

Of course its [history's] effectiveness in binding society together is no less real because much of it is invented and distorted. Its purpose is not to give an accurate historical account but to enable individuals to position their personal life-stories within the larger, more significant national story. Identification not knowledge is its raison d’être. It allows individuals to identify with something outside, and greater than, personal experience. It binds individuals into a broader interdependence with others in the nation-building project. (Parekh qtd. in Weedon 30)

4.2.3 National Identity and Language

Another aspect connected to the national identity, which is also important in relation to Scotland and this thesis, is language. Scholars are not in agreement whether language is a factor in the construction of national identities. Hobsbawm argues that communication is not necessary for the identification with a certain nation and therefore its identity. Anderson, on the other hand, states the opposite and claims that identity building is only possible through language. A distinct language allows people not only to show their national identity but also to develop a stronger sense of it (see Weißenberger 59; 344). Also John Joseph ascribes language a major function in the identification process but he also claims that identity influences language. I agree with Anderson’s and Joseph’s opinion as later on I will present language as a decisive factor in the making of a Scottish national literature, which then creates a distinct national identity.\(^5\)

\(^5\) see chapter 6.3 Language Matters
National languages and national identities are inseparable as they arise together and have much the same functions (see Joseph 13; 124). Similar to identity itself, national languages are often constructed in order to strengthen nationalist claims. Linguistic independence is connected to the idea of political independence. Derrick McClure even claims that political autonomy is only possible when there is linguistic one. However not all scholars share this opinion but some think that a separate development of politics and language is possible (see Weißenberger 125-126). In addition to that national languages can be seen as culturally constituted because a common language is meant to create the feeling of cultural unity among group members. The national language is not invented as a whole but selected among the many already existing varieties. The construction begins when one particular language is represented as more useful and better, as more suitable to be the one language of the whole nation (see Joseph 94; 98-99; 104).

The concept of ‘otherness’ also plays a major role when it comes to language. The national speech of one’s own country is differentiated from that of others, from that of neighbouring nations. In that sense language works as a barrier, which denies access to the group. On the other hand it can be inclusive by binding people who speak the same language together. Even the smallest deviation is enough to differentiate between inclusion and exclusion from a particular community. This is also true for Scotland and England, where slight differences in the speech patterns are sufficient to construct two distinct national languages; Scots and English (see Joseph 106; Williams 16). Also Fichte argues in favour of the language as a determining factor in the construction of communities and nations. He gives a very excluding definition of how languages bind people together. It denies people who speak another language access to the community.

[...] Those who speak the same language are joined to each other by a multitude of invisible bonds by nature herself, long before any human art begins; they understand each other and have the power to continuing to make themselves understood more and more clearly; they belong together and are by nature one and an inseparable whole. (qtd. in Joseph 110).

In addition to language other symbols, for example flags, but also anthems, traditions and rituals are especially evident in connection with the national
identity. They are part of the state’s effort to create a unified identity for all the members living there. Especially multicultural states want to integrate all other minority cultures in order to have a unified identity for all its citizens. Whereas dominant nations try to unite their members, smaller groups use the national identities to mark their resistance. Certain institutions like the tourist industry and the education system help to constitute a certain image of the nation as such. Thereby specific myths are invented to strengthen the ideas and values of particular groups; a fact which should not be overlooked (see Weedon 20; Williams 13-14). Also Scotland uses the power of myth making, of a distinct national language, a common heritage and past in order to construct a Scottish national identity.

4.3 Scottish Identity

4.3.1 General Factors

Defining Scottishness is very difficult but one thing can be said for sure, like any other identity it has been subject to change. Nevertheless Alice Brown identifies three factors which contribute to the identity of a Scot. First there is the territory, which means living in Scotland, then there is ethnicity, having Scottish ancestors, and the last factor is the natal one, i.e. being born in Scotland. Whereas for politics the territorial aspect is the most important one, people living in Scotland named the natal definition as crucial for being Scottish (see 209). Ross Bond and Michael Rosie conducted a survey in Scotland and asked people what they think are the necessary factors which determine who is Scottish and who is not. The questions asked made clear that most people who were born in Scotland also see themselves as Scottish, whereas the majority of people who were born somewhere else identified with some other groups. The data also shows that ancestry, i.e. if both or one parent was born in Scotland, had an effect on how Scottish people feel. When the forefathers were linked to Scotland in some way also the following generations claim to have a Scottish identity. Also the length of residence plays a role; it can be seen that people who were not born in Scotland and have no Scottish parents can still adapt a Scottish identity but only after a lengthy period of time of living in Scotland. All
these three factors, the natal, the ancestral and the length of residence, are decisive for people to see themselves and others as Scottish (see 1-10).

What further complicates a clear-cut definition of Scottishness is that Scotland is not a homogenous nation; the clearest division can be seen between the highlands and the lowlands. There are several points for identification, like the language or some social aspects, but no singular aspect, which carries the label Scottish (see Weißenberger 46; 333). Like all cultures and identities also the Scottish one is a mixture of many different aspects. This is due to the influence other peoples had on Scotland in the course of time. But what has developed out of these various components is a unique culture of Scotland. It consists of indigenous elements, borrowings from other cultures through conquest or immigration, and features which had been foreign but which were then adapted into Scottish culture in a new way (see Martiny 43-44). As Weißenberger argues this leads to the conclusion that it “does not necessarily need a clear definition any more, considering that the independence of Scottish culture has become a widely accepted fact nowadays” (333). Gregor Townsend, an ex-Scottish rugby player, claims that defining any national identity is no easy task.

No doubt we would all prefer to belong to a nation that we think is unique and different. Thus there is inevitably much subjectivity in how we determine our national identity. Being Scottish must be considered as more than a question of nationality or place of birth. It is an expression of who we think we are, or, in other words, a state of mind. (qtd. in Douglas 19)

This statement shows that Scottish national identity depends very much on the values and ideas of the people who now live in Scotland. It is what people make out of it, how they relate to it, how they represent it and how it is perceived by others (see Douglas 20).

Nonetheless, also the Scottish national identity depends on shared values, myths and beliefs in order to allow people to relate to it and to others (see Condor 58). In this connection a shared history or a common heritage is frequently mentioned. A picture of the past is constructed in order to create a common base for identification. This picture does not have to be true or authentic but it should be understood as a representation to achieve a feeling of community. Nowadays history is used to promote a certain image, and items and icons are used to legitimize and strengthen the sense of Scottishness (see
Douglas 17-18). This has led to the establishment of the well-known stereotypical impressions everyone has of Scotland. Among those images are the bagpipes, the kilts, the landscape of the highlands, whisky, a Braveheart-like William Wallace, Bonnie Prince Charles or Robert Burns to name but a few. This is what tourists have in mind when they think about Scotland, and they are supported in their thinking by the tourist industry, which uses those representations to promote the country (see Jonak 114).

The best known stereotypical features, like kilts or bagpipes, have their origin in the Celtic tradition but nowadays they are connected to the whole country. The typical aspects of the highlands were taken over by the lowlands, and therefore the typical highland myths and symbols are associated with Scotland as a whole. Especially the Romanticism of the 19th century exploited those stereotypes. The writers of that period, Walter Scott in particular, supported the idea of a distinct national identity and presented such in their literature. Scott emphasized the uniqueness of the Scottish population and thereby created a sense of national identity. The images presented in Scott’s novels are that of a romanticized and picturesque landscape. “The cult of the Scottish Highlands, which had been largely created by Sir Walter Scott, found a permanent place in Scottish popular culture” (Hanham 18). But although he believed in a distinctive national identity, he was in favour of the Union. Scott held the opinion that Scotland was not able to rule itself, and therefore its future lay in the amalgamation with England (see Jonak 90; 92; 107-108; 116).

Although the presented basis for identification are mostly stereotypes, it is those images which make the country very obviously different from others; an important claim when arguing in favour of a separate national identity. Scots know about these representations and partly accept it as part of their cultural heritage (see Martiny 47-48).

In asking who we are, the totems and icons of heritage are powerful signifiers of our identity. We may find Tartanry, Bonnie Prince Charlie, Mary Queen of Scots, Bannockburn and Burns false descriptions of who we are, but they provide a source of ready-made distinguishing characteristics from England, our bigger, southern neighbour. (McCrone qtd. in Douglas 18)

In this quote another essential feature of Scottishness becomes apparent. The strongest trademark of identification as a Scot is that it is the counter-identity to
being English. The anti-English sentiment is a major factor in constructing a Scottish identity. The difference and distinctiveness of Scotland in relation to England is stressed, and this was also pursued after and during the Union through the distinct Scottish institutions, like the church or the legal system.

Also language plays an important role in defining the country against others, especially England. Scots and Gaelic are used to mark a Scottish identity different than that from the English speaking south (see Martiny 46-48). As there is no consensus if language generally influences national identity, it is also not agreed on in how far it constitutes a Scottish national identity. Moreover, there is a debate about which is the true national language of the country, Gaelic or Scots (see Douglas 23). But the opinion that Scots is a powerful factor in unifying the country and marking boundaries especially from the English neighbours is shared by most of the scholars⁶; and it is also this view that I will adapt and that I find convincing. There are various examples in literature which show that the usage of Scots emphasized the difference between Scotland and England. This can be seen in the poems of Robert Burns, who largely contributed to the forging of a Scottish national identity through his songs and poems. Even nowadays he is seen as the national bard, and a supper is held every year in his honour. One of his most famous poems is Scots Wha Hae, which was adapted as national anthem by the SNP (see Jonak 97; 102-104).

Moreover modern literature also provides illustrations of the influence Scots has on Scottishness. The most famous example of Trainspotting will be discussed in a latter section of this thesis.

4.3.2 Scottishness versus Britishness

These days Scottish national identity is mainly shaped by the struggle for independence and its distinctiveness from Englishness or Britishness. It is a conflict between nationalism and unionism.

This has been reinforced by the cultural politics of Scotland in the 1980s and 1990s; writers, folk singers, rock musicians, painters, and sculptors have all claimed to be creating a new Scotland that is democratic, European, and firmly not English. (Brown 207)

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⁶ Fiona Douglas, Benedict Anderson, Ricarda Weißenberger, John Joseph and Derrick McClure are among those who argue in favour of language as constituting Scottish national identity.
The fact that Scottishness is different from Englishness is largely accepted today. But as Scotland is still part of the United Kingdom it is interesting to look at the larger construct of Britishness, and how it relates to the Scottish national identity. In this respect the concept of dual identity, which means having two identities at the same time, namely British and Scottish, is important.

From the Union in 1707 onwards there were no real attempts to create a unitary British identity, which accounts for the fact that even nowadays a sense of Britishness is largely neglected in all parts of Britain. Moreover Britishness was more and more associated with being English in the course of the 19th century. During the World Wars, however, the British identity was strengthened through the fight against a common enemy. But the crumbling of the British Empire also led to a decline in the identification with British identity (see Ichijo 21-23). The Falkland War in 1982 brought another upheaval to the concept of a common British identity. The war with Argentina forged a bond between all nations of the United Kingdom as again a common enemy had to be fought. War and conflict are important means to overcome differences, to strengthen solidarity and to create another opponent, which can only be defeated together. But nowadays there are various challenges to British national identity as for example the European Union, which fosters the establishment of a new identity (see Cinnirello 52). The decline of Britishness was further reinforced through devolution, which affected the development of other national identities (see Ichijo 25). Therefore it can be said that the United Kingdom failed to create a single identity and culture. This can easily be proved through the fact that a distinct Scottish culture, with unique symbols, traditions and language, exists. Williams sees the acceptance of this failure to create a homogenous culture in the UK as reason for the establishment for an own Scottish Parliament (see 10).

The influence devolution had on identity is heavily discussed. Critics claim that it led to a further decline of the British identity. Moreover the newly devolved nations would undermine the United Kingdom as a political system. The local identities, such as Scottishness, were strengthened through the re-establishment of a separate parliament. This also led to increased calls for complete political independence, which in turn undermines the British state. Many scholars state that the United Kingdom can only remain in existence
when there is a common identity among its members. As there is no single identity and the attempts to create one are further weakened through devolution the whole constructed nation will crumble (see Condor 51). Another viewpoint reflects quite the opposite. There it is argued that devolution strengthens the British nation and the Union. It is seen as working against nationalist claims for separation, and therefore devolution was necessary to revive British national identity (see Ichijo 26). However Millar claims that devolution did not change the relation between Scottishness and Britishness. People from Scotland identified more with their own nation than with Great Britain before devolution, and the same trend can be observed afterwards. “Devolution has not caused the trend, but neither has it changed it” (Millar 169).

In connection to this there are various surveys which show how people in Scotland think of themselves in terms of their identity. In 1986 Luis Moreno came up with a set of questions, which investigated the relationship between Scottish and British identity. Nowadays there are numerous opinion polls, which deal with that subject using the same questions, the now-called Moreno questions. Table 1 recreates the data presented by Alice Brown, which gives an overview of the most influential surveys since 1986. I decided to leave out the second survey by The Scotsman conducted in September 1991 due to the similarities of the data to the other study in 1992 (see Brown 197-198).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scottish not British</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Scottish than British</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equally Scottish than British</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More British than Scottish</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British not Scottish</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample size</td>
<td>1021</td>
<td>1056</td>
<td>957</td>
<td>1664</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: National Identity (Brown 198)

Instead of copying the full table which is presented by Alice Brown I want to include data from the 1997 British Election Study, which also included the
Moreno questions. The numbers are given in Table 2, and it has to be noted that it consists of total numbers and not of the percentage as in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>British Election Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish not British</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Scottish than British</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equally Scottish than British</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More British than Scottish</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British not Scottish</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample size</td>
<td>882</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: British Election Study 1997

The data clearly displays that most people see themselves as Scottish only. This is true for all surveys except for the Scottish Election Survey and the British Election Study. Moreover, it can be observed that a large percentage of people have a dual identity. They are British and Scottish at the same time but they still prioritise their Scottishness (see Brown 197-198). What I also find interesting is that very few people see themselves as none of these. This means that there is a great accordance of people in Scotland to adapt some sort of national identity which relates to the place they inhabit. This is striking as I would have expected that, through factors like migration, more people would stick to their ‘original’ nationality. But maybe those groups are not part of this survey, and therefore their opinion is not present.

The analysis of these figures shows that the sense of a distinct Scottish national identity is very strong. Also the Union of 1707 was not able to shape and create a new British identity which overshadowed Scottishness. This can also be seen when looking at data from Wales and England, where similar surveys were conducted. In these two countries the sense of being British is slightly stronger than in Scotland but it is still not more important than Englishness or Welshness (see Brown 203-205).
In order to show that devolution did not affect the national identity of people I included another survey conducted by Rosie and Bond. They confronted people with the Moreno question in several consecutive years but in Table 3 only the more recent data is presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage in column</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2003</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scottish not British</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Scottish than British</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equally Scottish than British</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More British than Scottish</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British not Scottish</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample size</td>
<td>1,482</td>
<td>1,663</td>
<td>1,605</td>
<td>1,508</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: National Identity (Rosie 145)

The figures exhibit that the re-instalment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 did not affect how people see themselves. When comparing all three tables it can be seen that a strong sense of Scottishness can be perceived over the last fourteen years. Therefore devolution did not have an immediate effect on identity but can be seen as stabilizing and continuing an already existing trend. The question what full independence would mean to the Scottish identity still has to be answered. It may lead to an increase in Scottishness but it could also lead to a decrease as the counter-identity against which Scottishness is defined, namely English, would no longer be of importance (see Douglas 145).

Other interesting observations are also presented by Alice Brown, who focuses on the Scottish Election Survey (SES 92). It demonstrated how the different identity categories relate to the votes cast for the political parties in the 1992 general election. It can be seen that people with a strong sense of Scottish national identity are more likely to vote for the Scottish National Party, whereas Conservative voters stressed their Britishness. Furthermore the survey compared what people with different national identities regard as their preferred alternative concerning constitutional change. Someone with a Scottish sense of himself is favouring some sort of change, whereas feeling British and Scottish at
the same time correlates to being satisfied with the current situation as can be seen in Table 4 (see Brown 199-200).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage in column</th>
<th>Independence</th>
<th>Home Rule</th>
<th>No change</th>
<th>All</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scottish not British</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Scottish than British</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equally Scottish and British</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More British than Scottish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British not Scottish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample sizes</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>957</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Constitutional options (Brown 200)

4.3.3 Media - Constructed Identity

After having clarified some assumptions about Scottishness it is important to look at the way it is constructed in the media. Especially in modern times, where more and more people have access to different means of communication, the media are a powerful tool when it comes to shaping an identity. Newspapers, television, films, and so forth reach a broad mass audience, and the information they convey is often consumed without reflection. By this a certain underlying image and meaning is transported, which then influences how people perceive themselves and others.

If mass media are considered the leading and most effective agent of socialisation, and the basic element in the formation of public opinion, it is evident that its role in the formation, development, consolidation and even crisis, of cultural identity, is fundamental. (Parés i Maicos qtd. in Martiny 66)

Moreover the media play an important role in the creation of nation states and related to this national identity. Especially in stateless nations like Scotland they help to convey a feeling of community and unity among its members. Of course, national identity already existed before the rise of mass communication but it has made it easier to reach a wide variety of people. Therefore it is an important tool in fostering and maintaining the collective identity of the nation (see Martiny 67).
Newspapers, for example, present certain political attitudes, which create and support a feeling of national identity (see Kiely 473). At the time of the referendum in 1999 the Scottish press was engaged in a debate about the future of Scotland. All papers based in Scotland, except for the Daily Mail, supported and campaigned for a yes vote for devolution. Douglas Fraser partly attributes the success of the referendum to the strong support in the media. He underlines his argument by stating that nationalists in Wales and England, where the national media did not support the constitutional change, were not victorious in achieving their goals (see 5-6). This shows the influence and power the media has in society. It is involved in decision making and influences people and their opinions.

In addition to being politically active, newspapers create a sense of solidarity as they enable people to feel as part of a Scottish community. This community shares certain values, myths and beliefs and is able to understand the same allusions, metaphors and words. Although the pictures and notions newspapers convey are often stereotypical, they still help to make sense of the world as stereotypes present simplified images. Among the most commonly presented concepts, not only in the press but also in all other media, are Tartanry, Kailyard and Clydesideism. Tartanry, which obviously got its name from the clan tartans, refers to the idea of the highlands as the traditional Scottish and picturesque landscape. It presents a picture of the old times and relies on the old myths and heroes. The film Braveheart can be interpreted as being part of the Tartanry style. The next concept is that of Kailyard, which depicts the rural, domestic and poor Scotland and its people, who are not interested in the rest of the world. The name derives from the Scots word ‘kailyard’, which means cabbage patch, and cabbage was typically eaten by poor people in the countryside. Last, Clydesideism presents the working-class society, which is oppressed, poor and addicted in some way, most likely to alcohol. It is called like that because of the river Clyde and its ship-building industry. In addition, the Clyde runs through Glasgow, which is the biggest working-class city in Scotland. Billy Connolly is part of the Clydesideism tradition as he was born in Glasgow, and he was also part of the working-class; he worked in the Glasgow shipyards. As a comedian his jokes usually refer to the working-class society and his own experiences. Also Trainspotting can be seen as being in a new style of Clydesideism. The
presented stereotypes are not completely neglected by Scots. Some are accepted fully or at least partly, others are changed and renegotiated. As in the construction of identity people are also actively involved in the maintaining or neglecting of stereotypical images (see Douglas 24-26; 125). Susan Stewart argues in favour of supporting the cultural heritage as it makes the country specifically Scottish.

In the past we have been embarrassed by the shortbread-tin and Brigadoon associations, an age when these things were not considered cool. I think we have got over that. In tartan, we have an icon of international recognition. Modern Scotland is secure enough in its contemporary strengths, achievements and merits to assume icons of the past. (qtd. in Millar 168)

Newspapers also use the Scots lexis to show their belonging to the tradition of Scottishness. Fiona Douglas analysed several newspapers and came to the conclusion that tabloids as well as broadsheets use the Scottish language but to a different extent. This correlates with the difference in readership those have and also with the different identity, which is constructed by them. Broadsheet papers, for example, more frequently quote Scottish poems, especially Burns’ poems, as their readership is expected to have some knowledge of literature. All in all the use of Scots, specific expressions, sayings and proverbs are meant to fulfil a symbolic purpose; knowing the expressions is a sign of belonging to the Scottish culture. It enables readers to identify with others, who share the same knowledge and who are therefore also part of the group (see Douglas 27; 102-103; 108-111). Newspapers choose their content and language according to their target audience but also individuals choose their newspapers according to the degree of their Scottishness. People with a strong sense of Scottish national identity tend to read papers which are based in Scotland. They do not challenge the sense of identity people have, and in addition to that they cover stories which are of interest for the Scottish population (see Kiely 480).

The influence of newspapers on the construction of national identity should be obvious by now. But also the new media, the internet, affects national or cultural identities. The World Wide Web plays a major role in representing and constructing identities. Many stately institutions or political parties use the internet to promote their ideas and concerns. Sharon Millar analysed two
homepages, one from the Scottish Parliament (SP) and the other from the Scottish Executive (SE)\textsuperscript{7}, in order to show how they construct Scottishness.

The Scottish Parliament page is in my opinion rather confusing as the layout is peculiar, and there are many links and a lot of text. But one feature that can be seen immediately is the logo, which incorporates the St. Andrew’s cross. After looking at the homepage myself I cannot find the blue background which Millar identifies as typically Scottish. This is nothing unusual as homepages can easily be changed at short notice. All in all, very few symbols or pictures can be seen; instead it focuses on political subjects. For instance a section refers to the weekly happenings in Holyrood, and it also provides reports and publications for downloading. In addition to that the site offers a video portal, which gives the opportunity to see live streams from parliamentary sessions. Moreover the building of the Scottish Parliament is presented as a tourist attraction, and the homepage is offering information on visits, cafes and gift shops. What is also interesting is that one can choose between several languages in which to see the homepage, including Gaelic and Scots. In the end I come to the conclusion that the SP homepage is clearly marketing itself as Scottish, not through imagery but through the topics it deals with and the information it gives.

The Scottish Executive homepage is quite different as it is more clearly structured and as it seems more fresh-faced. It has a blue background, and it also features the Scottish flag at the top. This visual symbolism marks it as Scottish at first sight. As the Scottish Parliament is more tangible as it is also a building, it is more presented as a tourist attraction. The SE site on the other hand is more involved in marketing identities. It is presenting Scotland as a multicultural nation, which is also part of the campaign ‘One Scotland: No place for Racism’. To promote this idea the SE uses typical techniques such as TV commercials and cinema advertisements. In addition to that Scotland is presented as a nice and worthy place to visit and also for living. The homepage offers information on moving to or finding work in Scotland. In this respect Scotland is marketed as welcoming and open to new people. In addition to that the site has sections on culture, the environment or the economy, which all provide detailed information. What both websites have in common is that they

\textsuperscript{7} In the bibliography the according homepage can be found under \textit{Scottish Government}. 
want to present Scotland as dynamic and multicultural country. They both project regional and national identities and provide information for insiders as well as outsiders (see Millar 157; 163-167; 171).

The two websites analyzed are both Scottish, though in different ways. Whereas the Scottish Parliament homepage needs a closer look and reading of the text in order to be identified as Scottish, the site of the Scottish Executive showcases the stereotypical images. The same images can often be found in connection to Scotland\(^8\), and therefore it can be argued that at first sight the SE page is more Scottish. In my opinion it is also more modern as it is visually attractive and hence it appeals to a great variety of people.

\(^8\) Also other homepages make use of this imagery; especially websites connected to tourism as for example the Scottish Tourist Board. See http://www.visitscotland.com/
5 William Wallace, the National Hero

5.1 What Makes a National Hero?

Before talking about Wallace and the myth surrounding him, it is helpful to gather a few thoughts on national heroes in general. James Smyth\(^9\) claims that it is in the eye of the beholder who is regarded as a hero; the celebrated character of one country can be the villain of another. This is also true for William Wallace, who is heroic only for Scotland but was seen as the foe of the English. Moreover all heroes have a national element to them but they can be detached from one nation and can become symbols across boundaries. An example for this is Che Guevara, who fought for the liberation of Cuba. But nowadays he has become a symbolic figure for resistance, especially in communist societies. His face can be seen on flags and T-shirts all over the world and his convictions are praised by revolutionists. His cause is no longer restricted to the Cuban revolution but finds its equivalents in other countries as well. Related to the close connection to a nation is the idea of many scholars that national heroes are the “touchstone of nationalism” (Eriksonas 16). They are an integral part in modern day society as they give nationalism a human character and are crucial for the construction of national identities. When looking back at the requirements for national identities, which Anthony Smith established, a common myth and a common history is one of them. As events always include people which take part in them, heroes are created to whom other people can relate to and with whom they can identify. In Scotland the range of national heroes is typically connected to the idea of devolution and sovereignty; also William Wallace belongs to this category. The popularity of certain heroic figures also indicates the strength of national identities and the development of the nation itself. This can clearly be observed in Scotland, where the hype about Braveheart and William Wallace went hand in hand with a newly developed sense of Scottishness and the wish for devolution (see Eriksonas 15-16; 20-21). “William Wallace is one of the central figures of Scottish history, in official accounts and in popular myths and legend” (Edensor 145). The great appeal of Wallace can be explained through two factors. First,

\(^9\) James Smyth’s article can be found online and therefore no page numbers are available. For further reference see the according bibliographical entry.
William was a commoner and a rebel, who was fighting against authorities who did no longer guide and support the people but neglected their duties. This is a very universal topic and is attractive to many people who are in a similar situation as the Scots but also to everyone who believes in justice. The second reason is that his story is about independence, and therefore it is easy to relate the events to a nationalist ideology, especially in Scotland (see Eriksonas 161-162).

But the use of Wallace as an icon is also criticized as he is a military figure, who fought a brutal war against the English. Massie questions the fascination and asks if it “[...] really serve[s] us [the Scots] well to identify as our national hero a man who, however brave and honourable he may have been, has his hands red with English blood?” (Scotland on Sunday qtd. in Edensor 155). Despite all criticism William Wallace is a national hero who appeals to many people and who is used to promote a range of ideas and notions; a trend which started long before the release of Braveheart.

5.2 Starting the Myth

There are various different editions, versions and representations of Wallace’s story, and throughout time they have been appropriated by different groups for their purposes. Before coming to the modern example of Braveheart I want to present another, historic example in order to prove that William Wallace was part of the popular culture and myth of Scotland already about 200 years after his death. His story helped to build up a certain Scottish national identity and was a point of identification from the beginning onwards (see Edensor 144-145).

The first major work about William Wallace was written by Blind Harry, which is a synonym as his real name is not known, around 1478. The Wallace, as it is usually referred to, is a poem in twelve books and was produced with royal patronage during the reign of James III. Together with The Bruce, which will be discussed later on in more detail, it was meant to provide an extensive account of the events during the Wars of Independence. Although the two real persons never met, unlike in Braveheart, they are still seen as part of the same story. In
the minds of people they are the heroes who decided the war for Scotland even though they were fighting in different battles (see Eriksonas 56-57; Ash 85).

But what has to be kept in mind is that The Wallace is not a historical account but a fictitious story. It mixes some authentic elements with purely invented events, which makes it hard to differentiate between history and fiction (see Eriksonas 58-59). But this is also the reason why it is so suitable and open to various interpretations. For instance, the Protestants in the Reformation period used the text to relate their resistance against the Catholics to the battle of Wallace against tyranny. During the reign of Charles I (1633-1649), however, the Wallace myth was completely reversed. England was no longer an enemy, and a story which praises the fight against them was no longer fitting. So the anti-English sentiment was removed, and the story was turned into a moral lesson, which showed what can happen when a monarch is neglecting his duties and is mistreating his subjects. The Wallace myth acquired its modern meaning “as symbolical expression of sovereignty and statehood” during the Jacobite Revolution (Eriksonas 105). William Wallace “became an icon of Scottish resistance to the English” (Fisher 31). In the poems and songs of the Romantic period Wallace was frequently referred to as the hero who fought for Scotland and the nation. In the 20th century nationalists used his appeal and exploited the Wallace myth and the meanings attached to it (see Eriksonas 68; 76; 122; 164). This development reached its peak with the release of Braveheart.

5.3 Braveheart – The Film

Braveheart was produced and directed by Mel Gibson and also features Gibson as the main character William Wallace. It was released in 1995, which turned out to be a significant date, which will be discussed in the later sections. The film was nominated for ten Oscars and could take hold of five awards including those for best director and best picture of 1996 (see Graf 59). Mel Gibson commented on his success at the Academy Awards with the following words:

I can only presume that they [the Academy voters] saw in the story what I saw in it and that is it is one that sort of touched me in a deep spot and I
also found it – the kind of story that it was – very compelling visually at the same time. (qtd. in Pendreigh 18)

This statement also recalls Gibson’s main reasons for getting involved in the project. Success proved him right as the film was also very popular with audiences and mostly welcomed by critics.

5.3.1 Production

The script for Braveheart was written by Randall Wallace, who later published a book with the same title. Randall is an American, who became interested in William Wallace on one of his trips to Scotland. He was often criticized for deviating from the truth and altering historical facts. But Randall Wallace himself claims that he “wasn’t trying to write strict history any more than Shakespeare was in Macbeth” (qtd. in Pendreigh 183). The main source for Randall was Blind Harry and his poem The Wallace (see Pendreigh 181). Already this work contains major mistakes as it was written as “a protest against the pro-English drift of foreign policy by James III” (Oxford 635). Among these mistakes is the betrayal of Bruce, who is presented as fighting on the English side at the Battle of Falkirk, which was also incorporated into the film (see McArthur, Brigadoon 186).

The production process itself turned out to be very difficult and nerve-wrecking. At first financing was an issue as the estimated budget was too big. Gibson even had to invest his own money to save the project. It also caused problems that Mel Gibson was director and star at the same time. Pendreigh describes how hard he had to work and that only his personal commitment kept him going (see 187; 199).

The news that part of the filming will be done in the Republic of Ireland caused major disappointment in Scotland. The main reason, according to McArthur, was a financial one. Ireland offered tax inducements, and also extras for the battle scenes were taken from the Irish army. In opposition to that the United Kingdom had hostile conditions for film makers; still an aftermath of Thatcher’s conservative government (see Scotland 29). But Pendreigh also states other reasons, for example the availability of a studio in Ireland (see 197).
5.3.2 Characteristics

As *Braveheart* is a Hollywood production its main goal was to appeal to as many people as possible. The film had to fulfil certain criteria in order to be suitable for an international audience. This means that the very restricting, national connection to Scotland had to be expanded by more general themes such as a love story or an action spectacle. This is not unusual for Hollywood films as they often use stories and heroes from other cultures but the local context and the national connotation is removed in order to create a story which reaches beyond the nation. Tim Edensor calls this phenomenon the “denationalising tendencies of Hollywood cinema” (146). The interesting thing about *Braveheart* is that it is able to be both; a Hollywood production on the one hand which has a global appeal, but on the other hand it deals with Scotland and its identity, and therefore it is a national representation.

Through the wide appeal and the images which are presented in Hollywood films stereotypes can be created or enforced. They influence the opinion of those who see them and shape ideas about other cultures and nations. In the Scottish case the typical representations are films in the Tartanry, Kailyard or Clydesideism tradition. Also *Braveheart* shows stereotypical concepts of Scottishness and employs typical Hollywood strategies, which partly explain its great success (see Edensor 143; 146-148).

*Braveheart* is a typical mainstream movie which works with the same plot structure as various other films. There is an exposition which introduces the audience to the characters and the main problem, which in *Braveheart* is the English occupation. Next the audience can see a confrontation, which is represented by the murder of Wallace’s wife and the following rebellion. The last plot point is the resolution, which consists of two parts in the film. On the one hand, there is Wallace’s death which puts an end to his suffering. On the other, it is the rise of King Robert and the final defeat of the English, which are depicted as being motivated by Wallace (see Graf 63).

Moreover, there are certain other elements, so-called Hollywood aesthetics, which make *Braveheart* a typical Hollywood movie. The portrayal of characters is very stereotypical. There is a hero, Wallace, and an anti-hero, Edward I and his son. Both figures have different character traits and are contrasted to each
other. This becomes especially obvious when looking at Wallace and Prince Edward. William is presented as strong, charming, masculine and ready to fight for his conviction, and Prince Edward is portrayed as homosexual and weak. There is a strong emphasis on masculinity and physicality, which is characteristic for action movies, and which is present throughout the whole film. Wallace not only fights for his country but also to regain his male pride after King Edward diminished the male control by introducing the right of ‘primus nocte’. Another important factor in a Hollywood narrative is the love story, which has to be heterosexual. In *Braveheart* there are two of them, and again this can be linked to Wallace’s masculinity. “The two chief female characters are grateful recipients of Wallace’s hyper-masculine qualities” (Edensor 148). First the audience can witness William’s love for Murron and how her death provokes him to fight. Then an affair between Wallace and Princess Isabelle is presented, which is invented, but further determines the course of events. It is also interesting that the romantic scenes are mostly set in very stereotypical landscapes. They take place outside, in the nature, and evoke emotions by presenting a starry sky or a beautiful scenery (see Graf 64- 65, Edensor 148)\(^{10}\). The spectacle displayed in the battle scenes is also a major attribute of Hollywood epics. Moreover the fight for freedom and against oppression is very ‘American’. The country itself had to fight the English to gain its independence. Therefore the two stories can be easily compared and are presented in similar ways through the Hollywood film industry and its predetermined aesthetics\(^ {11}\). The need to fulfil these criteria imposed by Hollywood is a major source for the various historical inaccuracies in *Braveheart* (see Edensor 148; McArthur, *Braveheart* 170).

The representation of Scotland as a setting is also very stereotypical and part of the Tartanry tradition. *Braveheart* is mostly set in the Highlands, the wild and rustic landscape, and offers the audience a large number of scenes in which the camera travels along the mountains in a long shot. This evokes a sentimental feeling as the highlands are typically related to Romanticism. The provided shots are immediately associated with Scotland as they are similar to the

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\(^{10}\) These ideas are also presented in McArthur, *Braveheart*.

\(^{11}\) Tim Edensor comments that *The Patriot*, another film by Mel Gibson, which deals with the American War of Independence, can be compared to *Braveheart*. 
images that tourists see when introduced to the country. Thus, the highlands not only represent Scotland but they become the essence of Scottishness (see Graf 67-68; Edensor 148). In addition to that there are more stereotypical images which are presented as Scottish. Throughout the whole film the audience is confronted with kilts, bagpipes and whiskey. These are all notions that are associated with Scottish culture and lifestyle (see Graf 1). The symbols act, as Graf puts it, as “metaphor for the nation itself” (16). Considering the exploitation of symbols connected to Scotland it is even more striking that a major part of the movie was shot in the Republic of Ireland.

5.3.3 Criticism

It is interesting that the factors which made Braveheart so successful are also the ones which are most often criticized. The criticism is concerned with historical inaccuracies and the stereotypical representation of Scotland and its people and culture. “As an account of the real William Wallace, or of late 13th century Scotland, it is a joke. The list of cultural howlers and historical distortions rolls on forever” (Neal Ascherson qtd. in McArthur, Brigadoon 171). As an example I just want to mention some of the major mistakes. The love affair between Wallace and Princess Isabelle is invented as she came to Scotland three years after his death (see McArthur, Brigadoon 179). The reason for including this storyline is the demand of a Hollywood epic to include heterosexual love. Also the first love story between Murron and William has no evidence in real history. Another factor is that Wallace is portrayed as Highlander wearing the typical dress but he was actually from the Lowlands. But the picture which people mostly have from Scotland is the Highland landscape and people dressed in kilts and tartan. The film makers decided to include these factors to mark the film as part of the Scottish tradition. Another very obvious mistake is the missing of the bridge in the battle of Stirling Bridge. For the film it is not necessary and therefore not included, but in reality the location and the bridge were an important part of Wallace’s battle strategies (see Edensor 155-156).

Another aspect which is seen in a negative light is the overt sentimentality of the film. Various scenes exhibit emotions, romanticism or nostalgia underlined by
corny bagpipe music, which is seen as typically Scottish. One of these scenes is after the death of William’s father, where young Murron gives Wallace a thistle, the Scottish national flower, to console him. The music, the scenery, the young boy who has tears in his eyes, this all contributes to the feeling of grief and is meant to elicit tears from the audience as well. Seemingly incidentally another stereotypical Scottish image, the thistle, is presented and gains special significance in an emotional episode. It almost seems as if young Wallace is not only crying because of his father but also for Scotland. Another of these sentimental scenes is right at the end, shortly before William dies. He sees his dead wife in the crowd and holds on to the handkerchief he has from her since her death. Instead of seeing how William’s head is cut off, the audience sees the handkerchief fall (see also Heinzelmeier’s analysis 142).

That the film was a blockbuster despite all its faults and inaccuracies is explained by Jeffrey Richards with the following statement:

The massive success in Scotland and worldwide of what is essentially a simplistic, Anglophobe, ahistorical farrago, demonstrates the continuing power of Hollywood myth-making and the unaltered willingness of audiences to lap up ‘the inauthentic’ if it stirs the heart and wrenches the guts. (185-186)

Also other critics are aware of these shortcomings but still accept the film as what it is: a Hollywood movie. Neither the film nor the novel by Randall Wallace are meant to be a historical account but they have to be regarded as fiction. “The film’s inaccuracies have inflamed the usual bevy of historians... To be honest, the historians can keep their history... In this film, history boils down to just one thing, hunkiness. Braveheart is all about Gibson” (Sunday Times qtd. in McArthur, Brigadoon 179). Ken Dvorak, who wrote a review of Braveheart, has a similar view. Although he criticizes the brutal battle scenes and the execution scene at the end, he still thinks that Gibson succeeded in presenting an old Scottish hero to a modern audience (see 59). Also nationalists defend their positive view of the film by stating that the message the film delivers is not dependent on exact historical details. In addition to that it is almost impossible to recreate the past in a completely authentic way due to the lack of sources. But Braveheart renewed the interest in Scottish history, as can be seen when looking at the growing number of students subscribing to courses on Scottish history (see Edensor 156).
This lack of taking historical inaccuracies and mistakes into account when reviewing or assessing the movie is again criticized, especially by Colin McArthur. He thinks that those deficiencies can and should not be overlooked. He thinks that it should be analyzed why certain mistakes are incorporated rather than dismissing the film because of them or praising it despite of them. The reason McArthur finds are the economy and the prescribed aesthetics (see *Braveheart* 168-169).

### 5.4 The Braveheart Effect

Also before *Braveheart* Wallace was seen as a national hero, at least in Scotland, who fought for the independence of his people. The film presented Wallace to an international audience and moved Scotland and its history to the centre of attention. It has also led to a new interest in other arguments, images, rituals, or practices which are connected to Wallace and the idea of national identity. As already mentioned in the identity chapter, the belonging and fostering of a national identity is connected to culture and therefore also its products. One of these products is *Braveheart*, which came “to act as shared resource to underpin national belonging” (Edensor 139). The film shows “how myth is reinterpreted and recycled, reaffirming old and new meanings about national identity and history” (Edensor 142). It is a prime example of how one story can be interpreted and used in various ways and to support different arguments (see Edensor 144-145). *Braveheart* became so influential that a special term was coined to describe the effects it had.

The term “Braveheart Effect” came to describe the success, influence and popularity Mel Gibson’s movie acquired. In his book *Brigadoon, Braveheart and the Scots* Colin McArthur describes this phenomenon and argues that the release date of 1995 had a major impact in creating such an effect. McArthur mentions that *Brigadoon*, another successful Scottish film, could not be as influential as *Braveheart* due to its release date in the 1950s. In the 50s the

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12 The Hollywood aesthetics have already been discussed in the section about the characteristics of the film.
13 This term was coined by Colin McArthur. He makes use of that term in his book *Brigadoon, Braveheart and the Scots* as well as in the article *Scotland and the Braveheart Effect*. The article is a revised version of a chapter in the book.
general mood in Scotland was not supportive of independence; the wish for
devolution and a separate parliament was only at its beginnings. This idea was
further strengthened through the devolution referendum in 1979 where Scotland
failed to gain enough votes in favour of a regional administration (see 123-124).
In the following years leading up to 1995 the concept of an independent
Scottish nation was further promoted. Therefore *Braveheart*, a movie which
shows the old struggle for Scotland’s freedom, was released at a time when
Scottish nationalism was already flourishing. It gave another push in the right
direction. Moreover, the 1990s witnessed a crumbling of the British identity and
this left people in search for a new identity. *Braveheart* helped to foster a new
Scottish identity and a new awareness of Scotland’s troubled past rose. Hence,
a new understanding of the ongoing struggles for a free country was
encouraged. This means that *Braveheart*, although it is just a Hollywood movie,
had a major influence on recent debates. Magdalena Graf states that the effect
it had is an “example of how different representations of popular culture can
mirror national belonging” (61). Moreover, the film was and still is known by a
majority of people which allowed public institutions like the media to refer to the
film, mainly to the main character Wallace, to advertise certain beliefs and
ideas.

McArthur distinguishes between three major appropriations, namely the use of
politics, the sporting industry and the tourist industry. These three areas made
heavy use of metaphors taken from *Braveheart* in their speeches, media
coverage or promotion of the country’s national trust. The next few chapters will
be concerned with these three forms and will go into more detail by giving
examples.

5.4.1 Political Appropriation

The area in which *Braveheart* is mostly used and is referred to in various ways
is politics. Several political movements, among them political parties but also
fascist and racist groups, used Mel Gibson’s film for their purposes. In this
chapter I will show how and why such a political appropriation took place.
5.4.1.1 Scottish Politics

One of the most interesting aspects is the way in which the Scottish National Party, which is the party who fights for Scottish Independence, welcomed *Braveheart* and the following media interest. The party has adopted images from the film for their various campaigns, which all advertise an independent Scottish nation. This celebration of the film by the party goes hand in hand with the belief that successful nationalism and national identity must have a foundational myth. “*Braveheart* is exemplary in this respect, since it enables particular fantasies about Scottishness and nationalism to be translated into present political struggles” (Edensor 149). Michael Russel, the chief executive of the SNP, wrote a letter to *The Scotsman* in which he discusses *Braveheart* and the reasons why it is suitable for the Scottish National Party and their recent political discussions.

Indeed, as Collin’s Scottish Encyclopaedia describes Wallace as the ‘founder of Scottish Nationalism’ we would have had difficulty taking any other stance. Fortunately, we have a film which recreates as drama – not as historical documentary – the essential truths of Wallace’s life and beliefs and which does not take the easy but untrue options of racism or empty hagiography. [...] But the positive message that I saw seemed to be the one which was shared by most of the audience with whom I saw it. None left the cinema with broadswords, or looking for a one way ticket south to avenge historic wrongs. But many, I think, left with a new understanding of the heroic nature of at least one part of our past and a new enthusiasm for the future of our nation. [...] (qtd. in Jonak 16)

In this statement Russel not only excuses the historical inaccuracies but also states that the film is able to reawaken the interest in Scotland and its history. In addition to that it speaks to a broad audience, who all acquire a new understanding of the nation. This is in the interest of the SNP as they rely on the will of the people to change the current situation and want to strengthen the commitment to Scotland as an independent nation. He also tackles the often voiced criticism of anti-Englishness by giving his personal experience. The will to revenge injustice is rejected in favour of the positive message; the ability of Scotland to become independent again. From my personal experience I can tell that when I was watching the film in Scotland the audience cheered whenever an Englishman was killed. Whether this was youthful and rash behaviour or true anti-Englishness remains questionable.
The Scottish National Party frequently compared their struggle for an independent country to Wallace’s fight. They equated modern nationalism with the Wars of Independence, and Alex Salmond states that “the message is relevant today in that it is the Scots who are fighting for their independence the same way they are at the moment” (Glasgow Herald qtd. in Edensor 150). In addition to having a strong national myth and a national hero on their side, the SNP can also refer to the success Wallace had. After the wars the country was independent, and therefore this goal can be achieved again (see Edensor 150). It just needs another strong figure, which leads the nation onto this path. That the SNP sees itself as this powerful instrument can be seen when looking at a speech by Alex Salmond. It was held at the party’s annual conference in 1995 and makes clear references to Braveheart.

I believe that this party has the ability to change this country, to change Scotland - and that we alone can. That is our task. It is more important than you or me or any person in this hall or any person in the whole of Scotland. [...] So that we can say with Wallace - head and heart - the one word which encapsulates all our hopes - Freedom, Freedom, Freedom. (Salmond qtd. in McArthur, Scotland 30)

Salmond puts the destiny of Scotland above all other. He also makes clear that only the SNP is able to take matters into their hands and lead Scotland to its predestined future. This speech not only mentions Wallace’s name directly but also resembles the speech of Mel Gibson alias William Wallace, which he held before the battle of Stirling Bridge.

Aye, fight and you may die. Run and you’ll live, at least a while. And dying in your beds many years from now, would you be willing to trade all the days from this day to that for one chance, just one chance, to come back here and tell our enemies that they may take our lives but they will never take our freedom? (Braveheart 1:14:44-1:18:34)

A comparison with the movie makes clear that both, the filmic Wallace and Salmond, put the freedom of the country above everything else. It is more important to them than people’s lives, a message which has a completely different significance for people who are standing on a battlefield facing death. But Salmond plays with this and tries to elicit the same emotions people had when watching the film. He wants his followers to be as strong and brave as Wallace’s army and to stand behind him in his fight for Scottish Independence.
As this is a very crucial scene for the film and as Salmond’s speech plays with its significance, it is required to look at it in more detail. The background to the scene is that the nobles gathered their men to fight against the English but they are about to retreat when seeing the force of the English army. Also the one noble, who asks them to stay, cannot persuade them. The men are already leaving the battlefield but then there is a cut to a long shot, and one can see men on horses riding into the frame. Through another cut the men are then seen in a medium shot with Wallace in the middle, his face painted blue and riding towards the camera. He is looking directly at the camera and therefore directly at the audience. The Scots stop and look up to him which is presented in a high-angle shot from William’s perspective and indicates that he is superior to them. This feeling is further strengthened through the fact that he, like the nobles, is on horse. The camera travels along with Wallace as he makes his way through the crowd to the front. His entrance onto the battlefield is already indicating that he is the leader. He is in the middle of the frame most of the time, and when he talks he is in a close-up or medium close-up and the only one who can be seen clearly on the screen. In contrast to that the men who talk to him are always shown in medium shots with others standing next to them. The following conversation between Wallace and the Scots, which also contains the above quotation, is shot very dynamically. The camera always shows the one who is talking in the same manner as described before. This is only interrupted by a few shots which show Wallace from behind, standing before the army in a long shot and by a few travelling shots when he rides along the lines of men. The climax is reached when Wallace screams the word freedom. He starts riding faster and also the non-diegetic music, which has been in the background, becomes louder. Through his emotional speech he achieved what the nobles before him could not; the Scots are ready to fight for their country, their freedom (see Braveheart 1:10:45-1:15:19). The whole scene places Wallace in the position of the hero, who is able to persuade people, who is respected and to whom people look up to. He is singled out among all others by the way in which the camera follows his movements and by the close-ups he is shown in. To connect the SNP, or rather Alex Salmond who held the speech, to such a strong and meaningful representation, can only be in the interest of the party. Not only the words tell that the Scottish National Party is the one who can
change Scotland to the better, but also the connotation to this scene marks the SNP as heroic, strong, committed and respected. They can, as Wallace did, persuade people and are willing to give everything in their fight for independence.

The SNP also used the emotional appeal Braveheart had and started their so-called “head and heart campaign”. They produced leaflets and brochures with images of Mel Gibson as Wallace, which said “Today it’s not just Bravehearts who choose Independence – it is also wiseheads – and they use the ballot box” (Edensor 151). They tried to use the popularity of the film to convince people to vote for the SNP. Therefore the film is directly connected to the performance of the party in the next elections. That the SNP was quite successful with their campaigns and speeches relating to Braveheart can be seen in the poll ratings. Shortly after the film’s release the Scottish National Party had the highest rating since 1988. But this connection of recent events to the past is also criticized. Some say it is inappropriate to relate and compare the wars with the situation today (see Edensor 154). It is argued that it hindered a real political debate about important issues, like the Scottish economy. Moreover the image of Scotland which was presented in the film was criticized as it relied too much on Tartanry and romantic images. The SNP should not support the distribution of stereotypical depictions. “The SNP should stick to economics, social policies, international policies and its proposals for an independent Scotland. It should forget trying to stir up long dead emotions” (Sunday Times qtd. in Edensor 154).

Even Mel Gibson and 20th Century Fox were against a political appropriation of Braveheart. They denied that the film had any political context or intention. But Alex Salmond justified that the SNP made use of the film for their purposes.

In 1995, Braveheart mania broke out, and it had a pretty powerful political impact. The SNP campaigned on the back of the film, and surged to 30 per cent in the polls. I well remember 20th Century Fox sending the SNP a lawyer’s letter demanding that we ‘cease and desist’ from distributing Braveheart leaflets outside cinemas. They changed their minds when I gently pointed out that while we may have appropriated the stills from their film, they had appropriated the story of our hero. (qtd. in Riach 195).
5.4.1.2 Other Groups

*Braveheart* was also used in a political context outside Scotland due to its widely appealing story and its mythical character. Tim Edensor states that Wallace’s tale is used by different groups for their purposes. “The story of resistance to a more powerful foe, courage against the odds, and the images of brutal oppression and action-oriented heroics succour the fantasies of empowerment integral to the cultural elements of exclusivist movements” (167).

An important political appropriation took place by groups on the extreme right. McArthur gives several examples of how *Braveheart* was used to support right-wing ideas. On a website run by neo-Nazis the figure of Wallace was compared to Hitler, who was presented as a 20th century version of him. Also groups in the Republic of Ireland who were against immigration referred to *Braveheart* and William Wallace.

The film also appealed to neo-fascist groups, which raises the question if *Braveheart* is a fascist film. Noël O’Sullivan thinks that the film displays some aspects which can be interpreted as fascist, but that it does not represent a “fascist Weltanschauung” (qtd. in McArthur, *Brigadoon* 193). Among those fascist aspects is the emphasis on masculinity. Some other characteristics of fascism are xenophobia, appeal of heroism and martyrdom, the importance of the normal people, and irrationalism. In *Braveheart* most of these features can be found. I would argue that especially the execution scene in the end depicts martyrdom very explicitly. Wallace has to die but his death is not meaningless. He becomes a hero figure who is able to inspire others to fight in his name for the same goal. In addition to that the presentation of the sexes and the gender imbalance play an important role for neo-fascist movements. All the major characters in *Braveheart* are not only male but also do not have a mother; at least the mother is not part of the on-screen action. This dominance of the male gender and the mostly male topics are supporting fascist beliefs. McArthur mentions that it was not the intention of the filmmakers to produce a fascist film, although it can be seen as a weakness that they did not recognize that it might appeal to those groups (see *Brigadoon* 192-199).

Tim Edensor also mentions the power of the film in forging a Scottish- American identity. Americans who are descendent or believe to be descendent from
Scottish immigrants are able to identify with the ones who live in Scotland. The film created an imagined community which enabled them to connect with the Scottish society although they do not live in the same nation (see Edensor 167). The connection to Scotland is of special significance for the South as both have great losses and defeats at the centre of their history. Southerners see their culture and heritage related to that of Scotland and that is why they see themselves as Celtic, a phenomenon which is also called Southern Celtic. *Braveheart* strengthened that idea and gave it a new dimension. It allowed the Southern Celtics to present and justify their beliefs to a broader audience (see McArthur, *Brigadoon* 199-206).

The article *The Confederate Memorial Tartan* by Edward H. Sebesta describes in great detail how and why the neo-Confederate movements in the south of the United States see themselves as Celtic. He also mentions that they “adopt Scotland as their mother country and Scottish nationalism as their second nationalism” (55). They see the situation of Scotland, which lost its independence, similar to their own. The southern states have lost their independence during the Civil War and are now ruled against their wills by a central government just like Scotland was placed under the British Crown. Now that Scotland has a strong pro-devolutionist attitude and is fighting to regain independence, the movements in the south are picking up this idea. The release of *Braveheart* encouraged them and gave new rise to the theories that presented the south as Celtic. This led to the “League of the South Celtic Conference” in 1996 (63). A “Confederate Tartan” was also designed which is approved by the Scottish Tartan Authority. Moreover, various comparisons between *Braveheart* and the Confederate movement were drawn and presented to a great public (see Sebesta 55-84).

The different political appropriations show the great influence *Braveheart* had and in some ways still has. It was used by various different groups to develop, strengthen or popularise their ideas and beliefs. What is striking is that it was mostly used by movements which long for independence in one way or another, such as the SNP or the neo-Confederate movement. What should be kept in mind is that, although those two have similar goals, the underlying ideology is very different.
5.4.2 Sporting Appropriation

Sport in general is a big source for the use of allusions to independence and history. Newspapers frequently refer to past events in order to report about matches between Scotland and England. The song *Flower of Scotland*, which is used as national anthem, and which recalls the fight for Independence in the 13th century, is quoted in articles about rugby or football matches of the Scottish national team. This evokes the feeling of war, a metaphor often used in connection to sport (see Douglas 119). Moreover having a national team reinforces the Scottish national identity, and sport can even be seen as substitute for politics (see Weißenberger 113).

As well as a new local identity, football offered a Scottish identity - the first international match played against England was in 1872. Yet football was British, too. Both the national game and the British national game, football was an emblem of the condition of a nation living within a larger nation state. (Robbins qtd. in Jonak 83)

The condition of Scotland is compared to that of football. Football can be seen as Scottish as they have a separate team but the game itself is British. This mirrors the state of the nation; the independent nation on the one hand which is incorporated into a larger unit on the other.

Due to the importance of sport concerning independence it is not surprising that also *Braveheart* was and still is used in sporting or more precisely sports journalism. This was not restricted to just one sport in particular but various athletes were compared to Wallace. Especially tabloid newspapers referred to the Wallace portrayed by Mel Gibson, as for example when they presented a Scottish snooker player “the braveheart of the green baize” (qtd. in McArthur *Scotland* 34).

The sport in which images and references to *Braveheart* are used the most is football. In 1996 when the European Championship took place international newspapers alluded to the film to refer to the Scottish team. The national press described the team as “brave hearts”. But this was not always meant in a positive way. There were different puns and cartoons making fun of the team and *Braveheart*. At that time the English team was often described as “lion hearts”. This was a counter-image also taken from medieval times to contrast these two teams (see McArthur, *Scotland* 34). Another interesting story is that
of Ally McCoist, a Scottish footballer, who requested a special showing of \textit{Braveheart} before the match with Finland in the qualifications for the European Championship. He thought that this would strengthen the team and their patriotism and would lead them to victory (see Edensor 153). This shows how influential the film was in the imagination of people. The success story of Wallace was connected to every instance in which victory over another group, of course most typically the English, was the main objective.

\subsection*{5.4.3 Tourist Appropriation}

The tourist industry and the film industry present Scotland in a very similar way. They both rely on romantic and stereotypical images of the Highlands, kilts, or bagpipes; they play with the history and heritage of the country. “And again the selling of Scotland abroad tends to rely on stereotyped images such as kilt warriors, Highland scenery and romantic castles [...]” (Edensor 157). Also the military factor plays a role as many filmic representations and a lot of tourist attractions are related to some battle, war or war hero. The similarity in the representation of Scotland makes it very easy to use films, or to be more precise the images and stories they present, to promote places and sites to tourists. In addition to that the popularity of certain films enables the tourist industry to work with well known pictures and to reach a broad audience, a global audience. This leads to the exploitation of some attractions while others are used in a new way and are detached from their original meaning (see Edensor 152; 157- 158). “Popular films can provide important resources in promoting attractions and boosting the place-images of localities, as has been most evident in the case of \textit{Braveheart}” (Edensor 158).

This raises the question why people are interested and open to the marketing techniques of the tourist or film industry. Weedon argues that more and more people are craving to get to know their roots. They are in search for their own identity but also want to be part of a bigger community. The shared national past and the common customs are part of the identification process with an imagined community. Iconic sites and official places, which signify the power of the nation, such as a parliament, are points of reference for each individual. This explains the significance of Holyrood, the Scottish Parliament, which
stands for a devolved country and identity on the one hand, but also is marketed as a tourist attraction. The only problem is that different sites have different meanings for different groups and that all meaning changes with the time. There is no fixed connotation, and therefore they can relate to different identities and signify different messages (see Weedon 85; Edensor 45-47).

The release of *Braveheart* was welcomed by the Scottish Tourist Board as it saw its chance to use the film for its promotional purposes. It started tours to the locations of the film, and this so-called film tourism turned out to be very lucrative. Statistics from the Scottish Tourist Board say that almost one third of the visitors in 1996 came to Scotland because of Mel Gibson’s movie. The Scottish Tourist Board also used images from the film for their brochures and to promote holidays in Scotland. They also provided raffles together with a video company distributing *Braveheart* in which one could win trips to Scotland. But also more than ten years after its premiere the film still attracts tourists as the country is still marketed as Wallace’s home country. Through this the heritage of Scotland is presented in connection to a Hollywood movie. But not all critics see this as a good and desirable development even though it supports the Scottish economy.

The city that profited most from the release of *Braveheart* was Stirling. The Wallace Monument, which was erected in 1869, had more than 100,000 additional visitors in the year after the release. In 1997 a statue was erected in the car park of the ancient Wallace Monument, which very much resembles Mel Gibson in his role as William Wallace (see McArthur, *Scotland* 35-37). It even says ‘Braveheart’ on the shield and underneath the word ‘Freedom’ is written. As this is the last word spoken by Mel Gibson alias William Wallace before he dies, it can be immediately associated with the film. That most people nowadays relate Gibson’s film to the historical Wallace and to the attractions connected to him shows the widespread appeal of the film. It even goes so far that people first think of the filmic Wallace and only then question the accuracy of the plot and the depiction. A friend told me that when she was visiting Stirling and the Wallace Monument American tourists near to her admired the ‘Braveheart’ statue and praised Gibson for his close resemblance to the real Wallace. They did not understand that the statue was modelled after the film
figure and not the other way round. This again shows how much the film is present in people’s minds. This is also the argument of the Scottish Tourist Board, which defended the decision to erect the statue by claiming that most visitors associate Mel Gibson with William Wallace. But many others were against this development and called it an exploitation of a Scottish myth. They also thought that it would distract from the real history and that the monument would become connected and maybe secondary to the film (see Edensor 162). "I think they [the critics] were maybe a bit angry that some people just wanted their picture taken with the statue and didn’t bother going into the monument” (Tom Church, the sculptor, qtd. in Wallace). However, the statue was removed in 2008 to make place for a new visitor centre. The Tourist Board claims that it was a practical decision only and had nothing to do with the continuing criticism (see Wallace).

In addition to promoting Stirling through the film the whole surrounding environment was also advertised in relation to Braveheart. The so-called ‘Stirling Triangle’, which comprises three major sites, namely Stirling Castle, the Wallace Monument and Bannockburn, was presented as the area where Scottish Independence was shaped and achieved. The region has become a symbol for successful Scottish nationalism, and many people not only travel there but rather make pilgrimages to all the important attractions. They are tempted by slogans such as the following: “Where the Highlands meet the Lowlands, step into the echoes of Rob Roy, Robert the Bruce and William Wallace – Braveheart Country” (Edensor 158-159).

Another attempt to promote the country through the film was made by airing commercials in the cinema before the showing of Braveheart. They combined film scenes with real images from Scotland, and thereby they directly located the film in a realistic context. But this heavy use of the movie for marketing purposes was criticized a lot. Not only did Braveheart show the country in a certain light but the Tourist Board supported this by relating the real country to the film. Many feared that Scotland would only be seen in such a stereotypical way and that no modern representation of culture and society exists (see Edensor 158-160). Furthermore the restrictive way in which the tourist industry uses the history and the heritage of Scotland is attacked.
However, popular tourist appropriations of history tend to repress contradictions. The tourist appropriations of *Braveheart* and Wallace stress the qualities of heroism and patriotism. Few outside a small group of professional historians of medieval Scotland would be aware, for example, that far from being a spontaneous outpouring of patriotic feeling, Wallace’s army was raised by conscription, with those refusing to serve being hanged, or that, far from resisting England to death, Wallace made overtures to sue for peace. (McArthur, *Scotland* 37)

The major objection here is that the tourist industry only takes out positive and appealing images to promote Scotland. That is of course the main goal of marketing campaigns but, nevertheless, it should be taken into account that there is more to Scottish history and Scotland than shown in brochures for tourists.

### 5.5 The Neglected Hero, Robert Bruce

The popularity of William Wallace and the many groups which use him to promote different ideas are even more interesting when looking at another important figure in Scottish history, Robert Bruce. The appropriation of *Braveheart* and the dominance of Wallace in popular culture become more remarkable because Bruce is somehow neglected; neglected in the sense that he is not internationally recognized. People in Scotland and experts know about him and his story but apart from that he is not widely known. This does not mean that there is no evidence at all in literature or popular culture which relates to Bruce.

One example is a historical account published in 1375 by John Barbour, Archdeacon of Aberdeen. *The Bruce* tells the story of King Robert I and his companion James Douglas. The focus is on how Scotland is threatened by the old enemy England, which tries to conquer Scotland and its people (see Schwend 31; Eriksonas 60). It is a poem in 20 books written in Scots and covers the period between 1306 and 1329. Therefore it also tells how Douglas takes Bruce’s heart on a crusade after his death. In *The Bruce* a very positive image of the King is shown; he is presented as God-fearing, smart and brave. Moreover, Bruce is fair and just, he is on good terms with his soldiers as well as with the people. Without doubt he is the hero of the epic poem but also the negative aspects are not omitted. Barbour also mentions Comyn’s murder by
Bruce in a church. This is very different from Blind Harry’s *Wallace*, which exclusively represents positive aspects. This inclusion of all events also leads to the assumption that *The Bruce* is an authentic historical account. But it has to be kept in mind that it is also only a narrative and not a history book.

The situation of Scotland is described by Barbour as unjust, and England is shown as the oppressor. The following battle is not one for territory or possession but for freedom. The justification of Scotland’s actions is achieved by comparing the wars to a holy war; God is on Scotland’s side as the English occupation is wrong (see Schwend 33-34; 40). A very important passage in Barbour’s text is concerned with freedom. This part is still known today and is often applied for various different purposes as its meaning is not limited to Scotland only (see Ash 89).

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A! freedom is a noble thing!
Freedom permits man to have liking,
Freedom all solace to man giffis,
He levys at es that frely levys.¹⁴ (Barbour 7)
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This passage is, similar to Wallace’s speech, concerned with freedom and the importance of it. As there is no direct reference to a specific place, every group who is longing for freedom and fights against oppression can use this passage to relate to its situation.

Although *The Bruce* is an important document and is partly appropriated in popular culture, Power claims that “Wallace has meant more to Scotland than ‘The Bruce’ ever did” (qtd. in Jonak 53). This can be explained through the different statuses of Bruce and Wallace in people’s minds. Whereas Wallace is a stereotypical national hero, Bruce’s case is more complicated. First of all Robert Bruce is not a true Scot but his ancestors came from the Continent. Wallace, on the other hand, is originally from Scotland, which makes him more suitable as a national hero (see Schwend 33). In addition to that the position of Bruce as a noble, who frequently changed sides and also plotted against King John, is very controversial. This does not make him the likeable, appealing figure who is only interested in the country’s good; the way in which Wallace is presented. Robert Bruce is also not marketed and appropriated in the ways in

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¹⁴ A! Freedom is a noble thing!/ Freedom permits man to have happiness;/ Freedom gives all solace to man;/ He lives at ease who freely lives. (my translation)
which Wallace is due to the fact that no Hollywood blockbuster supported Bruce’s story and made it popular throughout the whole world.

In contrast to the very successful Braveheart only a minor, low budget film about Robert Bruce was produced. The Bruce was released in 1996, a year after the release of Gibson’s film, and can be seen as a response to it. It was a counter-reaction to the rather negative image of King Robert, which is presented in the Hollywood production. But this aim was not achieved as it did not reach a broad audience. This missing presence can also be seen when looking at the secondary literature which does not contain anything about The Bruce. During my whole research I did not come across any entry about the film in works about Scottish film, let alone a single work which deals with the film or its effects.

This failure can be explained through the aesthetics of The Bruce. It is very different from a typical Hollywood film; the lighting and the camera work are somehow peculiar, it misses big stars and big spectacular battle scenes. Most of the war scenes are very short and do not show much of the ongoing fights. In addition to that the story is hard to understand if one does not have some background knowledge. The characters are not introduced, and the storyline is not clearly explained. Already the first scene is hard to understand as it takes place in a desert, obviously not Scotland, and shows a few men on horses. It only became clear to me that this is the scene where Bruce’s heart is taken on a crusade when one of the characters is kissing a heart-shaped box. For someone who does not have any knowledge about Robert Bruce this scene does not make any sense at all. Moreover the typical stereotypical images of Scotland are not exploited as much as in Braveheart. People do not wear kilts on the battlefields, and the highlands are not overtly shown. This might appeal to critics, who argue that this is a more realistic presentation, but this does not appeal to audiences who associate those images with Scotland.

However, there are some elements which resemble the stereotypical Hollywood formula. For example, there is a great emphasis on the love story. Bruce also fights to free his wife from Prince Edward, who has taken her as a captive. Also the focus on one character, who is presented as the hero, is present in The Bruce. Robert is seen as the only one who can free Scotland from the English
oppression, and although he did commit a murder God is on his side. Comyn never was the rightful king as he only achieved the crown through betrayal. This excuses Bruce's actions, and as he is the only hope for Scotland his deed is forgiven for Scotland’s sake. In addition to that there is one scene which very much resembles the famous speech filmic Wallace holds before the battle of Stirling Bridge. It takes place before the battle of Bannockburn, which will be the decisive victory over England, and therefore places it in the same context as *Braveheart*’s speech. Moreover the setting is very similar; Bruce is on a horse standing before his man and delivers the following words:

Now is the day; now is the hour. It is not for glory or honour or riches that we fight this day. We fight for freedom alone, which no man will willingly give up under his life. See even now your enemy approaches, proud Edward brings with him the chains of slavery. Why? They have not lands here, or homes here. Yet they’ve come here to make this nation their own. We alone can stop them. (*The Bruce* 1:24:46-1:25:31)

In addition to being very much alike Gibson’s talk on freedom, it also resembles the text of the *Declaration of Arbroath*. Both emphasise that it is only for freedom that the Scots fight and not for possessions or territory. It also states that no man can accept to be under any foreign rule and has to fight for his liberty even if this means his death. Visually the scene is comparable to the scene in *Braveheart*. As already mentioned the context and setting are very much the same. But also the cutting technique is almost identical; there are shots of Bruce while he is talking, and in between his men are shown. Bruce himself is also mostly seen in medium close-ups or medium shots, and like Wallace he is sitting on a horse while he delivers his speech. The difference between the two scenes can be found when looking at those shots where other people are shown. In *Braveheart* there are no close-ups of other people but *The Bruce* shows many different individuals in great detail. To the audience the scene also appears slower and more steady as it misses some dynamics. Robert Bruce is sitting very statically on his horse, whereas William Wallace is moving around a lot in front of his men. The different techniques evoke the feeling of proximity to other Scots and make the audience more aware of the importance of this battle for all inhabitants of Scotland. But there are still enough similarities to grasp the connection to *Braveheart* immediately (see *The Bruce* 1:24:46-1:26:29).
All in all, it can be said that Robert Bruce is a national hero but that he is not as popular as Wallace. This is due to the fact that his status as hero is not as clear cut and that no major Hollywood blockbuster presented his story to an international audience. Therefore there is no such thing as a “Bruce Effect” which indicates that different groups, like politicians or the tourist industry, made use of Robert Bruce to support and underline their ideas as it is the case with William Wallace. In this respect Bruce is a neglected hero.
6 Trainspotting

6.1 The Novel

Irvine Welsh’s debut novel *Trainspotting* was published in 1993. The author was born in 1961 in Leith, a district in Edinburgh, in which also the story takes place (see Weißenberger 355). He was part of the working-class society and also experienced the drug culture, which led to his decision to write about his experiences. Some parts of *Trainspotting* appeared as early as 1991 in various magazines, as for example the *Clocktower Press*. The finished novel itself was at first not welcomed by publishers as the topic was not commercial enough, and therefore the success was not guaranteed. But they were proven wrong, and the novel became a bestseller, which sold more than one million copies in the United Kingdom. This triumph was further strengthened by the release of the film in 1996, which also re-increased the book sales (see Kelly 36). Among other titles written by Irvine Welsh are *The Acid House*, which was published in 1994, and *Porno*, which is a sequel to *Trainspotting*.

6.1.1 The Title

Before looking at the themes of the novel in more detail it is also worth analyzing the title. *Trainspotting* refers to an actual activity, which consist of collecting and observing train numbers. Irvine Welsh comments on that hobby with the following words:

Trainspotting is an activity which is completely pointless. I can’t understand why someone would want to stand on a freezing platform trying to collect the number of every train in the country when it’s both impossible and futile. I can’t understand why someone would want to nullify their existence in this way. Trainspotting and heroin […] both fill in time, but are otherwise completely futile. They are both a symptom of some sort of lack, of a deep spiritual crisis. (qtd. in Kelly 38)

The similarity of train spotting and taking drugs lies in the pointlessness of both. People who spot trains are usually dull and boring, and they miss something in their life. In this way they are similar to drug users, whose life is meaningless and unchanging because of the heroin they take. The emptiness in life is filled with drugs or by collecting train numbers; both activities are just substitutes and not able to solve the real problems. Both kinds of people are stuck, one on the
platform and the other in the drug culture, and are not able to turn their back on it. This also relates to the fact that both acts are addictive and obsessive in some way. It traps them into a routine, which people cannot escape easily. Like the train spotters, who are standing on the platform but are never actually going anywhere, drug addicts are not moving on with their life but are just watching it passing by. They are both not able to accept or to be confronted with real life and the problems that come with it. Instead they escape into another world where only the next train or the next shot matters. Other things in life, which everyone else would see as more crucial, are not important anymore.

Another allusion to the activity of train spotting is made in the smaller sections in between the main narration. The Junk Dilemmas or later on the Straight Dilemmas are numbered like the trains (see Kelly 38-39; Weißenberger 453-454). It is also interesting that only one chapter in the book directly refers to the title. In Trainspotting at Leith Central Station Begbie and Renton are asked by an old man, who turns out to be Begbie’s father, if they are spotting trains there. In some way the man is right as they are stuck in Leith and are unable to escape. There are not even trains operating from the station anymore, and therefore Begbie’s comment that he would leave if there still were trains makes him a hypocrite. It is easy to say that one wants to escape and leave everything behind if the possibility is not given at that moment. In the end only Renton is able to escape by betraying his friends and travelling to Amsterdam.

6.1.2 Themes and Characteristics

As can already be seen from the underlying meaningfulness of the title, also the rest of the novel is full of important and complex themes and issues. Trainspotting offers a great variety of interpretation and many aspects for analysis, such as gender relations, HIV or masculinity. But this chapter will only shortly introduce the most important themes and characteristics. Aspects about Scottish independence and national identity, which are present in the novel as well and with which this thesis is mainly concerned, will be dealt with in more detail later on.
At first sight the most obvious theme in *Trainspotting* is that of drugs and heroin. Therefore the novel is often referred to as “drug novel” but a major aspect is that Welsh does not make any judgments. He neither presents drugs as something bad nor does he glorify its usage. This is rather unusual as previously stories about drug users contained some didactic elements. Instead the novel is an account of young people and how each individual is dealing with life and its difficulties. Most of them are addicted to drugs and also tell how much pleasure they give them. On the other hand there are many scenes which show the dark and brutal sides of being dependent on a certain substance (see Brooks 65; 68). Welsh is not interested in presenting heroin as such but he tries to explain why people take it without condemning them. The drug theme can be seen as the red thread which keeps the narrative together. The action and the characters are motivated by the need to buy new heroin, they talk about their experiences with it and their struggles against it (see Weißenberger 354; 361; 427). “The novel shows why young people take drugs, how they do it and what it does to them, how hard it is to quit, and which (social and personal) consequences the addiction has” (Weißenberger 361).

But Welsh’s work is much more complex than that; he presents young people in Edinburgh in the 1980s who have to deal with social stagnation and decline. They see no chance in life and no opportunities for their future, and because of that they escape into the drug sub-culture. Moreover Welsh is concerned with the working-class identity – it is interesting though that none of the characters has a fixed job - and the problems they encounter. *Trainspotting* is about how individuals lead their lives, about the relationships they have to others, about the environment they live in and about the crisis in which they are, concerning their own identity but also that of the nation. The whole community is in crisis, and drugs are a way of escaping the sad and depressing reality (see Kelly 39-40; 49).

What also has to be mentioned is the way in which Welsh criticizes the consumer-orientated society. This aspect is especially foregrounded as the “Choose Life” monologue also features as opening scene in the film version.

Choose us. Choose life. Choose mortgage payments; choose washing machines; choose cars; choose sitting on a couch watching mind-numbing and spirit-crushing game shows, stuffing fuckin junk food intae
yir mooth. Choose rotting away, pishing and shiteing yersel in a home, a total fuckin embarrassment tae the selfish, fucked-up brats ye’ve produced. Choose life. Well ah choose not tae choose life. If the cunts cannae handle that, it’s their fuckin problem. (Welsh 187-188)

In this speech Renton rejects all the typical values which are predominant in modern day capitalist society. He mocks them as useless and not desirable, and therefore he chooses something different. He disapproves of the dominant ideas and principles of society, which are mainly based on purchasing and selling. Instead he and also the other characters in the novel decide to spend their lives in a different way. They revolt against the dominant culture by being part of a sub-culture which is seen as negative by most people in society (see Weißenberger 415-417; 454; 460). Kelly states that


[The fact that freedom is defined in economic terms – or those of consumer choice – rather than through meaningful political or ethical emancipation is articulated by Renton’s now famous tirade against the dominant strands of his society. (45)]

Mark’s monologue criticizes the importance of consumerism in modern day life. It is the only thing people care about anymore, and it suppresses other more significant values. Moreover making the right choices, whatever right might mean in this context, has become the main target of everyone in society. All people try to live in accordance with certain rules and morals, which have been imposed on them by others. This bandwagon effect is also criticized by Welsh by presenting people who decided to make their own choices. But even they are dependent on something which determines their lives, namely drugs and the struggle to get them.

The way in which Welsh presents the story is as unconventional as the narrative itself. First of all most of the novel is written in the vernacular, which means that it is representing the actual speech habits of the characters. The Scots dialect, or rather the local Edinburgh dialect, they use evokes a feeling of authenticity and relatedness to the personas. Moreover, there is no omniscient narrator but each chapter is narrated by one of the individuals in the first person narration from his point of view. This gives Trainspotting an episodic structure and makes it appear as a series of short stories. If there is something like a main character it could be Mark Renton as he narrates most of the chapters. But also every other character’s viewpoint is shown in great detail, and this
allows for various different perspectives on each of them (see Weißenberger 304; 349; 362; 366).

Also the presentation of Edinburgh, in which the novel is set, is not stereotypical. Not only is the preferred setting for narratives dealing with the working-class Glasgow, like in James Kelman’s works, but Edinburgh is also mostly shown in a positive light. Usually the capital is presented as a lively, vital, beautiful town, which tourists visit for its various attractions and its culture. But the picture of Edinburgh that is shown in *Trainspotting* is that of the working-class and the underground or drug scene. “He [Welsh] portrays Edinburgh as his characters see it: as a world of drugs, unemployment, alcoholism and violence” (Weißenberger 369-370). In addition to that Welsh’s work is not a realistic account of the hardships of working-class Edinburgh but it is written in a very surrealistic style (see Brooks 68). There are a lot of grotesque scenes or comedic sequences, and the language Welsh uses is full of vulgarisms and exaggerations (see Weißenberger 384). One of the best known episodes in this respect, also through its further exaggeration in the film adaptation, is the one where Mark dives into faeces to retrieve his suppositories. In the novel the description of how Renton almost shits into his own pants is very detailed and illustrative. For me the pictures which were transported through the language were grosser than the filmic version, which explicitly shows excrements and the like.

### 6.1.3 Criticism

The unique style and the thematic innovations of *Trainspotting* are also among the factors which are most often criticized. Often the book is not seen as a real novel as it appears more as a series of related short stories. Many critics comment on the loosely connected episodes, which in their view are not enough to call it a novel. Even John Hodge, who wrote the screenplay for the film, agrees with that opinion. But Kelly comments that those critics analyze *Trainspotting* according to their expectations which a novel has to fulfil. Instead of seeing it as a “failed novel”, Kelly changes the focus and calls it “decentred fiction”. Just because it is different and not like all the other already existing works does not mean that the book has fewer rights to exist (see Kelly 14-15).
Quite the opposite, and Welsh himself argues that for his purpose and the story he wants to tell the conventional middle-class fiction is not suitable.

This medium, literary fiction, is a middle-class plaything, so you’re analysed, dissected and defined by people who have come from a certain cultural viewpoint. They are looking into a world that they don’t have direct first-hand experience of so they rely on intuitive views and prejudices which may or may not be appropriate. (Welsh qtd. in Kelly 15)

He states that people who analyze his works come from the wrong environment and that they cannot understand the world he wants to present. Therefore they also cannot say if his way of writing is the right one for this subject matter.

Another point which is heavily attacked is the display of drugs. Many people share the opinion that *Trainspotting* glorifies or at least fosters acceptance of heroin usage. They fear that through the novel young people would become attracted to drugs. I cannot understand this criticism as while reading the novel the last thing I wanted to do was take drugs. The description of how people suffer withdrawal symptoms and how getting a new shot dictates their lives are stuck in my mind much more than the few comments on the pleasures heroin can bring. It is true, however, that one can sympathize with the characters of the novel. It becomes clear why they take drugs and why they are like they are. In this way Welsh’s novel does promote greater understanding for people which are in a similar situation. Nevertheless I would argue that this is not a negative point but makes people more aware of other aspects of the society.

Although Welsh is not presenting Scotland in the typical way as Highland country, full of people in kilts playing bagpipes, he is still criticized for exhibiting other stereotypes about the country. He may not be engaged in Tartanry but *Trainspotting* still shows its Scottish characters as drunk, violent, addicted, and therefore possibly in the stereotypical way in which many English people like to see them. “*Trainspotting* […] present the Scots as the English like to see them: drunken or drugged, aggressive, illiterate, socially inept, boorish” (Gordon qtd. in Kelly 23).

All this criticism can of course not deny the success of the book; it became a bestseller shortly after its release. Irvine Welsh became one of the most influential writers in contemporary Scotland. His writings also contributed to a new sense of identity, an effect which will be discussed later on. Together with
the film adaptation, *Trainspotting* became a major source for identification and a new impulse for Scottish film and literature.

### 6.2 The Film

First of all it is important to note that this chapter is not meant as a comparison between book and film. Therefore it is not going to include adaptation theory or a full assessment of mistakes and changes, which are present in the film version. However some scenes will be analyzed in more detail, and if it is necessary for the further argumentation they will be linked to the novel.

Then it is also worth mentioning that the film version of *Trainspotting* was not the first adaptation but that there is also a theatrical production from 1994 (see Petrie, *Screening* 197). This led to the conclusion that the novel was suitable for visual adaptation. The novel was already successful and so was the stage play, therefore the consideration to make a movie out of it was reasonable. Two years later, in 1996, the cinematic adaptation was released, and it became a box-office hit around the world. It was the most successful British-funded film in the United Kingdom of that year, and it made over 72 million pounds worldwide. The film was also nominated for an Oscar for the best adapted screenplay, which was written by John Hodge, but lost the award to Emma Thompson and her screenplay for *Sense and Sensibility* (see Brooks 95-96; 100-101).

#### 6.2.1 Production

The production team consisted of Andrew Macdonald, who was the producer, Danny Boyle, who directed the film and, as already mentioned, John Hodge. The three of them already worked together on *Shallow Grave*, another successful production which was released in 1994. It was mainly Andrew Macdonald, who, after reading the novel, wanted *Trainspotting* as next film project. The team could convince Welsh, who previously rejected other offers, to give them the rights. Welsh’s decision was mainly based on the Scottish background of Hodge and Macdonald, which he saw as an advantage (see Brooks 65). The production was financed by Channel 4, like *Shallow Grave* before, with a rather small budget but the team already knew that it will be a film...
for the big cinema screen. This can already be seen in the aesthetics, which are not based on realism as many TV productions but on a surrealistic style. In that sense _Trainspotting_ can be seen as a crossover film, which is alternative and similar to art house films on the one hand but also fitted for the multiplex and mainstream in its success on the other (see Cooke 373).

Also the decisions for the cast were influenced by the team's previous film; Ewan McGregor already worked with the trio on _Shallow Grave_ and was chosen to play the main part of Mark Renton in _Trainspotting_. McGregor, who was born near Glasgow, already had some parts in other films and TV productions but the role as Renton can be seen as his breakthrough. After his enormous success with it, his career led him to Hollywood, where he starred in films like _Star Wars_ or _Moulin Rouge_. He was compared by many to Sean Connery, another Scot who made a worldwide career in acting. “Der größte schottische Exportschlager seit Sean Connery” (Müller 83). Like Connery also McGregor stayed true to his Scottish roots. “I mean, I’m fiercely Scottish, totally patriotic and I will always consider myself a Scot” (Brooks 12). Ewan regularly appears in kilt, uses his Scots accent in interviews and stresses his identity as a Scot. It is interesting, however, that he is not politically involved like Sean Connery, who actively supports the Scottish National Party. Connery is in favour of political and cultural independence for Scotland, which can be seen in various speeches and also in his book _Being a Scot_. Ewan McGregor is not so outspoken about independence for his country but nevertheless he is part of the Scottish film revival, and he presents himself as distinctively Scottish. Those aspects also lead to a strong connection with the country and its separate national identity, which fosters the claims of those who seek self-government.

Coming back to the cast of _Trainspotting_ it is noteworthy that Ewen Bremner played Renton in a stage production but he was not offered that part in the film; instead he took the role of Spud. This decision can be seen as “Hollywoodish” as Bremner had no experience in film, and McGregor was regarded as more attractive for the lead part. Other cast members included Jonny Lee Miller as Sick Boy and Robert Carlyle as Begbie. Carlyle turned down an offer to play a part in _Braveheart_ as he searched for a more challenging role, and he definitely found that in Begbie. Also Irvine Welsh himself has a part in the film as the drug
dealer Mikey Forrester. This idea of the producers was a smart step as Welsh cannot declare that he does not like the film because he himself is in it (see Brooks 74-77; 82).

Although Trainspotting is non-realistic in style the acting and performance of the cast is very authentic. This is due to the research that was done before filming in the Calton Athletic Drug Rehabilitation Centre in Glasgow. There ex-junkies showed the actors how to cook up, how to place a shot and told them about their experiences. The cast then remained in Glasgow, where most of the shooting, except for the outdoor shoots, took place in a studio, although the novel is set in Edinburgh (see Müller 41).

6.2.2 Characteristics

As with every adaptation some scenes from the novel had to be left out, others have been expanded and again others have been changed. This is due to the different formats and principles novels, or films respectively, have to fulfil. The task of a filmmaker is to visually create what is written down. With a novel like Trainspotting this is especially difficult as it consists of loosely connected episodes. To give it a coherent structure in the film the narrative structure was changed. Moreover the character of Renton became the main protagonist, much more than in the book, who is leading the audience through the story with his voice-overs (see Brooks 71; 80-82).

The style of Trainspotting is, as already mentioned, imaginative. This does not mean that the topic or the characters are not realistic but that the way in which they are presented is not naturalistic or conventional. The filmmakers decided to show the effects the drugs have in hallucinations or comic-like sequences. I would argue that, although stylistically this cannot be termed realistic, it is much more authentic. The audience gets to know what it is liked to be high and what happens to the character when he has withdrawal symptoms. The pictures on the screen complete the experience of being part of the drug culture. Therefore the style of the film matches the novel as it also presents the characters’, or at least Mark’s, inner life and feelings.
This effect is achieved through fast cutting and the music that accompanies the scenes. Many critics argue that the film resembles a pop video or a TV commercial, and therefore its target audience is the young MTV generation. They feel addressed because *Trainspotting* presents them a world full of young people and the troubles they have. It deals with their concerns, and it speaks their language without trying to teach or reform them (see Brooks 96-97). Moreover there are instances of split screens, on-screen subtitles, or freeze frames. All these methods emphasize the dislocated and untraditional lives the characters lead. Their experiences and stories are as unconventional and rebellious as the ways in which they are presented.

Some of these methods can already be seen in the first scene. The audience can hear Renton’s voice in a voice-over reciting the famous “Choose Life” monologue while he is running down a street. Then he crashes into a car and he can be seen grinning through the windscreen. The image suddenly freezes and his name appears to introduce him as Renton. Also the other characters are introduced with the same freezing frame technique during a game of football, while in the background still Renton’s voice can be heard (see Petrie, *Screening* 193-195). This scene, along with others as for example the toilet scene, became iconic. The typical orange colour, which was part of the film posters and also features on the DVD, was used in merchandising and for promoting the film. *Trainspotting* is, as Duncan Petrie argues, the perfect commercial package. It offered the possibilities to combine a cult movie with a profitable soundtrack, and in addition to that it also contributed to higher book sales (see *Screening* 196; Brooks 102).

Another important characteristic is that the film does not present Scotland in a stereotypical way. Like the novel, of course, it is not part of the Tartanry tradition but depicts the urban working-class in a new way. In contrast to Welsh’s work, however, the film cannot do completely without typical imagery of Scotland. But the one scene which is set in the Highlands does not fulfil the audience’s expectations. Instead of praising the beauty of the landscape, Renton attacks the national identity and being Scottish. Therefore the filmmakers play with the

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15 The speech differs slightly from that in the novel but all in all it has the same meaning and underlying assumption. Therefore it is not cited again.

16 This scene and the following implications will be dealt with more closely in chapter 6.3.
stereotypes and subvert them. This also becomes obvious in the scene where Renton comes to London. The typical tourist sites, like Big Ben, are shown in a way that resembles an advertisement for tourists. Usually such images are presented to English visitors who come to Scotland but again the filmmakers overturn expectations. This presentation of London also stays in clear contrast to the way in which Edinburgh, normally a tourist attraction, is shown, namely not through stereotypes (see Luckett 92; Petrie, *Screening* 195; 204).

6.2.3 Criticism

The major point for criticism was, as with the novel, the overt presentation of the drug culture. For many it was a scandal that drugs and their consumption was not condemned or doomed. But, as with Welsh’s book, they did not understand the real meaning and underlying assumptions. Also the actors defended the film and stated that is was not glamorizing drug abuse. Robert Carlyle said that he could not understand why people would want to be like the characters in any way. “I don’t see how anybody could see *Trainspotting* and fancy taking smack. […] Begbie’s disgusting. Renton’s disgusting. They all are. There’s nothing nice about these people” (qtd. in Brooks 92). Danny Boyle also pointed out that the film clearly shows how drugs can lead to death (see Brooks 91-92).

But the film was also criticized on an aesthetic level from other directors like Ken Loach. It was accused of presenting a wrong impression of British life and society and that it is not like Britain really is. The very visual and in-your-face presentation of drugs, excrements, sex and violence was also disapproved of. “In style, structure and subversive imagination, it recalls Stanley Kubrick’s *A Clockwork Orange*. […] Kubrick’s film made one think. Boyle’s film, overall a clever pastiche of the senior director’s style, makes on puke” (Alexander Walker *Evening Standard* qtd. in Brooks 90).

Of course some of the criticism was concerned with the differences between film and novel. One of the major points here is that the class aspect is no longer present in the film version. Instead of showing how the characters are forced into their lifestyle by “socio-economic realities” it seems as if the characters have choosen this way of living (Kelly 69). In both, book and film, the personas
are not portrayed as victims but the adaptation is weakening the political aspect. The social circumstances in which they have to live are not depicted as consequences of inequality but as cultural diversity (see Kelly 68-69; 72). Another missing aspect in the film is the presentation of different voices. Whereas the novel is narrated by different characters in their languages, the film focuses on Renton and his experiences. He is the central protagonist, and hence only his viewpoint is presented through voice-overs. The action revolves around him and this leads to a one-sided picture. Also the strong connection between the language and each individual, which is present in the novel, is lost (see Weißenberger 362; 486).

Moreover the film is criticized for engaging in consumerism, which Welsh rejected so apparently. The marketing campaign of *Trainspotting* used the “Choose Life” monologue, which originally was against consumerism, to promote the film, the soundtrack, posters and the like. There is a contradiction between the novel’s rejection of it and the status of the film as a product, which has to be sold. In addition to that the people which were part of Welsh’s work were on the margins of society but the film is part of the dominant discourse. It was used in a global context to foster new ideas about Britain and Britishness. Especially the New Labour Party took the vogue of British film which followed *Trainspotting* as source for referring to Britain as cool and trendy, much to the dislike of Irvine Welsh (see Kelly 70-74).

After all the negative aspects it is also important to point out some positive critique. A lot of people welcomed the film as being the right mixture between Hollywood and British film. “Hollywood come in, your time is up. *Trainspotting* is here and it’s toe-curlingly good” (*Empire* qtd. in Brooks 93). It has a new way of telling a story but it is still concerned with British landscapes and societies (see Brooks 92-93). Furthermore *Trainspotting* promoted the British music industry through its soundtrack and also strengthened the British film industry. Nevertheless it still preserves a specific cultural setting; first and foremost it is a Scottish film. It displays Scottishness, which is distinct from Englishness, and this led to a new discussion about issues like nation and national identity (see

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17 This is connected to Tony Blair’s idea of “Cool Britannia”, an allusion to “Rule Britannia”.

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Cooke 374-375). These aspects will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters with respect to (post-) colonialism and language.

6.3 Scotland - a Colonized Nation?

The question if Scotland is a colonized nation arises in connection with *Trainspotting* because of a crucial scene in which Renton holds his famous complaint about Scotland and its relation to England.

Fuckin failures in a country of failures. It’s nae good blamin it oan the English fir colonising us. Ah don’t hate the English. They’re just wankers. We are colonised by wankers. We can’t even pick a decent, vibrant, healthy culture to be colonised by. No. We’re ruled by effete arseholes. What does that make us? The lowest of the fuckin low, the scum of the earth. The most wretched, servile, miserable, pathetic trash that was ever shat intae creation. Ah don’t hate the English. They just git oan wi the shite thuv goat. Ah hate the Scots. (Welsh 78)

Instead of being proud of his national identity, he attacks it and calls the country a disgrace. Although the scene is also part of the novel it is worth looking at the filmic adaptation as it takes place in a different context, which makes it even more significant. The scene starts out with a train taking the whole screen; the only time an actually train, which relates to the title, can be seen. The train is starting to leave and reveals Tommy, Sick Boy, Spud and Renton standing on a platform in the middle of nowhere. They are seen in a long shot with trees and green around them, which is a clear contrast to the urban environment. Then there is a cut, and the audience gets to see what they can see; the Highlands. The friend’s heads are seen from behind while they are looking at a small hill with a bit of snow on top and a blue sky. They leave the platform and start walking into the landscape. Boyle then provides the audience with a long shot of the Highlands only, which very much resembles an establishing shot for a typical tartan film. This idyll is broken by Tommy, who walks into the picture. They walk for a while, and they almost seem like tourists visiting the Highlands for a hiking trip. The only differences are that they brought alcohol with them, and that Spud, Sick Boy and Renton do not seem enthusiastic about the trip. Another long shot of the Highlands is shown with Tommy standing there like the lone man in the rough landscape. The other three do not follow him, and the following few shots always show either Tommy, the three others in long shot or
a medium close up on Renton’s profile. No matter which character is before the camera, the director made sure that the landscape can always be seen. In this setting Renton holds his speech after being asked by Tommy, “Doesn’t it make you proud to be Scottish?” Renton’s answer is very similar to the book version therefore I only want to cite the first sentence: “It’s shite being Scottish” (see Trainspotting 00:30:44-00:32:46). Boyle plays with the expectations the audience has when seeing such a landscape on the screen. Instead of appreciating the beauty of the Highlands or being proud of their country, they reject those stereotypical images and Renton even hates being Scottish. What the characters see, the green, hilly, picturesque countryside, even highlights the frustrating situation and the state they are in. By just paying a visit to the countryside the entrapment in the city with all its obstacles is not resolved.

As this scene provides many different interpretations a lot of critics and experts analyzed it and stated their opinions about it. One of them is Allan Riach, who claims that this speech is not, as it might seem at first, a denial of nationalism. Ideas about the nation, and about oppressor and oppressed are still present as Mark clearly differentiates between Scotland and England. But the way he does that is different; instead of relying on the positive aspects, Renton has a negative attitude towards his own country (see 196). I agree with Riach that, although Welsh claims to be not political, this statement does reveal something about the power relations between Scotland and England. The Scots are clearly declared as the colonised, i.e. not independent, ones, whereas England is the colonizer. Even if the characters do not blame the English but themselves, the situation they are in is related to the status of Scotland in the Union.

When applying post-colonial theory to Trainspotting it becomes clear that this critical commentary on Scotland is very typical for a colonised country. It is usual for them to have a negative self image, which is also called inferiorisation. Frantz Fanon’s work on post-colonialism The Wretched of the Earth investigates how the relation between colonizer and colonized leads to the inferior status of the oppressed culture. “Every effort is made to bring the colonised person to admit the inferiority of his culture which has been transformed into instinctive patterns of behaviour, to recognise the unreality of his nation” (qtd. in Kelly 62). Kelly goes on and states that “Renton’s outburst is
entirely in keeping with Fanon’s diagnosis since it not only locates the Scottish as inferior but also castigates Scotland’s failure to be a coherent nation” (62). This negative self image emerges when one is looking at oneself through the eyes of the oppressor (see Kelly 62). The dominant power is interested in persuading the subordinate society that their culture is unworthy. They aim at an integration of the colonized culture in order to weaken the identity of the people. This guarantees that people are not questioning the existing power relations as they are feeling inadequate and unable to rule themselves (see McGuire 118). In the chapter about national identity I already outlined the importance of a unique and unified culture for a strong sense of national identity. Culture is a factor that can make it easier to distinguish between ‘us’ and ‘others’. If this factor is missing it is difficult to maintain an intact community. But this also means that through a revival of the indigenous culture a new sense of identity and hence nationalism can be fostered. Irvine Welsh and his novel took part in such a cultural revival, and therefore can be seen as fostering the idea of a devolved Scotland.

In seeing Scotland as a colonized nation also the drugs can be seen metaphorically as that which keeps the characters dependent. Through their addiction to heroin Renton and his friends lack independence but they have to rely on something which will finally ruin them. This is similar to a colonial situation, in which the subjects are not free but governed by someone else which will bring down their own culture and society (see McGuire 136-137).

Ricarda Weißenberger argues that the fact that Welsh deals with the topic of nation and colonization is already some sort of propaganda. It might be a negative one but often this is more influential and evokes more responses than a positive statement. In his work Welsh deals with concepts of nation, national identity, class and society, and therefore he is involved in politics. He presents the Scottish society as in search for their identity. They lack a coherent community and a unified way of identification, both of which is based on the co-existence of Scottish and British identity. But Renton cannot identify with either of the two. He hates being Scottish, he hates politicians, and concepts like nationality or nation are no good to him (see 339; 478-479; 506).

Ah’ve never felt British, because ah’m not. It’s ugly and artificial. Ah’ve never really felt Scottish either, though. Scotland the brave, ma arse;
Scotland the shitein cunt. We’d throttle the life oot ay each other fir the privilege ay rimmin some English aristocrat’s piles. Ah’ve never felt a fuckin thing aboot countries, other than total disgust. They should abolish the fuckin lot ay them. Kill every fuckin parasite politician that ever stood up and mouthed lies and fascist platitudes in a suit and a smarmy smile. (Welsh 228)

Therefore Welsh rejects the already established notions of nation and identity and is in search for a new way of understanding them. The way in which they are presented nowadays is not satisfactory for him (see Weißenberger 483). Childs also sees this as an acknowledgement of the failure to invent a British national identity (see 243). I would argue that this dismissal of already existing concepts plays in the hands of nationalists. They can claim that the new system Welsh is searching for can be found in an independent country. Renton may plea for abolishing all nations but this is not a realistic wish as the whole world is organized around different nations. Hence, the only possibility to change something is to re-order them by making Scotland independent. This would lead to a new identity and a better economic state of affairs, which would result in a better life for the Scots. The argument that an independent Scotland would gain economic benefits is also strongly supported by the Scottish National Party.

Although in this respect *Trainspotting* would also be a powerful tool in marketing political ideas, it was rarely used\(^{18}\). This is due to its controversial treatment of drugs and also because its message is not as clear cut as for example in *Braveheart*. Nevertheless it had some influence on Scottish politics and contributed to the desire for a new Scotland (see Weißenberger 360). The film definitely led to a “call for a new cultural independence for Scotland which could raise the country’s prestige” (Brüggenmeier and Drescher qtd. in Kelly 62). Duncan Petrie also identifies a “Trainspotting Effect”\(^{19}\) which refers to the idea that through the film the Scottish film industry was strengthened. The colonization of Scotland in cinematic terms by the British film industry came to an end through the success of *Trainspotting*. It made it fashionable to show Scotland in a new way; away from the stereotypical Tartanry and Highland representation. There was a new emphasis on the contemporary country and the urban experience. *Trainspotting* enabled a new and greater diversity in the

\(^{18}\) The appropriation of the Labour Party, which was mentioned above, was not so much concerned with *Trainspotting* directly but with the new trend it established.

\(^{19}\) Unfortunately it is not mentioned whether Duncan Petrie coined that term in response to the “Braveheart Effect”.

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cinematic representation of Scotland. But Petrie also states that one cannot speak about a completely independent cinema but rather a devolved one as it still depends on foreign support; this mirrors the situation of the country as a whole (see *Screening* 186; 196-199).

Also Andrew O’Hagan attributes the new representation of Scotland to the success of *Trainspotting*.

This kingdom is in trouble at the extremities. If there are to moves in such places towards self-government... then such moves are unlikely to be hurried on their way by the wits of Mel Gibson. *Trainspotting* is set in a Scotland that has hitherto been without existence for filmgoers. It features places that are little known outside of themselves. It is to the like of *Trainspotting* that people will go for a sense of what life is like there, for a new sense of what has gone wrong... *Trainspotting*, of course, will carry little of this by itself, and neither would it want to... The makers of *Trainspotting* and the novelist with whom it originated, won’t be looking for much more than a few laughs. And they’ll get their laughs. But it is laughter in the murk – once the giggling stops, people may start to examine the murk. (Andrew O’Hagan qtd. in Blandford 71-72)

He also claims that it is films like that, and not *Braveheart*, which shows people what is wrong in society and where the problems come from. But O’Hagan also questions if the subverting of the stereotypical image of Scotland was intentionally done by Welsh and the film makers. I would argue that it was, especially as the novel is too complex to be critical by accident. Moreover the choices of language, setting, character and topic which Welsh made deliberately are also a political statement. “Modern writers using Scots in their novels make a point simply by writing in their language, by choosing Scottish characters, a Scottish setting and by presenting problems (of identity or nationality) which are raised by Scottish society” (Weißenberger 507).

After having analyzed what ideas and notions emerge when regarding Scotland as a colonized nation it has to be mentioned that this status is by no means uncontroversial. Some critics say that Scotland can be seen as first target of English expansion but later on, as part of the British Empire, Scotland was also engaged in colonizing other countries. Was Scotland therefore a colonizer or a colonized country? This only shows how complex the colonialism question is. Moreover it is difficult for outsiders who do not live in Britain but were subjects of the British colonization to compare their experiences to the Scottish ones. Michael Gardiner is among the experts who denies Scotland a postcolonial
status but he also is aware that some aspects of the Scottish culture are subordinated (see Kelly 62-63). Also Hill sees the ambivalent relation of Scotland and the Empire. Economically speaking Scotland benefited from British colonialism, but on a cultural level it was or still is subordinate (see 18).

As can be seen critics do not agree on whether Scotland is a colonized nation or not. But I want to claim that this question is secondary in so far that merely the discussion about it already suggests something about the situation of Scotland. No one would ever think about referring to England as colonized, which shows the difference in power of the two countries. The inclusion of this controversial topic in *Trainspotting* by Welsh also displays its importance for contemporary Scotland. Moreover Welsh accomplished that through his work the cultural colonization, if one agrees that something like that existed, ended.

### 6.4 Language Matters

The following chapter is not an extensive account of the history of the Scots language or a full explanation of the development of literature in Scotland. Instead it will show how language and national identity, a point already established in previous chapters, are connected in relation to Scotland. In addition to that Irvine Welsh’s *Trainspotting* will serve as example of how the usage of Scots can be linked to nationalism.

As known by now an important aspect for the construction of national identity is language. Speech patterns are used to show belonging or to exclude those who do not talk in the same way. People are drawn to the idea that they have a distinct language, and they base their nationalist claims and their wish for independence on it. In the case of Scotland the language question is not clear cut as Scots and Gaelic compete for the position as national language. This was a disadvantage for the development of a nationalism based on linguistic factors. Instead of taking actions against the predominance of English, the two languages competed against each other. Moreover Scottish people saw a benefit in using English, a world language, and neglected the values attached to the more traditional ways of speaking (see Joseph 94). In the course of time, however, the importance and the interest in attaining a separate language grew.
Although Gaelic should not be neglected the use of Scots is more prevalent as it is seen as truly national; it is the one language which is unique to Scotland, and therefore it strengthens the Scottish national identity.

In addition to the contested status of Scots as national language the use of language as an argument for nationalists is fairly recent. This is due to the fact that Scots was not having a high prestige in the beginning. After the Union in 1707 Standard English became more powerful and Scots was reduced to the level of a vulgar, inappropriate language. It was no longer adequate for literary purposes. One of the most prominent figures who lashed out against Scots was Samuel Taylor Coleridge. With the decline of Scots and the move of James I of England to London after the Union Scottish literature was left in crisis. The prolific court writers and the support of the king were gone.

Soon, however, writers like Walter Scott and Robert Burns engaged in a literary renaissance. Through their works the rise of a literary nationalism in the 18th and 19th century was possible, which had far reaching consequences for the development of modern Scottish literature. Although not using broad Scots in their works, they established a new sense of national identity, which enabled writers like Kelman, Gray or Welsh to engage in Scottish topics, present Scottish characters and write in the Scottish vernacular. Although Scots was used again in literature since the 18th century politics was not taking advantage of it to foster the idea of independence through language. Even nowadays the Scottish National Party is not basing their arguments on cultural or linguistic factors. They focus on economic issues, and this is what they are often criticized for as there are voices who plea for the revival of Scottish culture and language in the official agenda. However, the opinion is not that independence is necessary because of cultural divergence but that through independence Scotland can take matters into its own hands, also the language politics and the cultural revival. The SNP grounds their wish for independence on the economy, and only after independence is achieved cultural matters can be taken into account (see Martiny 18; 49- 55; Kelly 21; Hows 22).

Nevertheless, a new literary revival has taken place as in more recent times writers refuse to write in Standard English only; instead they turned to the vernacular. Examples of this are Irvine Welsh, James Kelman and Tom
Leonard. “I had all these voices in my head and I wrote them down. I thought, I can’t write this book in “proper” English” (Welsh qtd. in Kelly 24). The new contemporary literature in Scotland is concerned with finding its individual voice, different from the English. This also includes a shift from the rural landscape to the urban working-class environment and rejecting or mocking of old traditions and myths. A motivation behind this development is the crisis of identity, which has been part of the Scottish psyche since the 20th century. The aim of literature was to create an imagined community, which is based on a common cultural and national identity. This could be achieved best through the rediscovery of a specific language. Since Scots was already used in the literary renaissance in the 18th and 19th century the language also seemed suitable for a new beginning.

This strong sentiment and tendency in literature could no longer be overlooked by politicians. Even though the Scottish National Party does not have cultural issues, such as language, on its political agenda more and more people believe that the question of language is related to politics. The newly emerged literary nationalism goes hand in hand with the wish for political independence. Some critics even claim that the literary movement has achieved what politics has not yet reached; the establishment of an independent and distinct Scottish national literature. Therefore the establishment of a Scottish national literature and the linguistic independence can result in a political one. The increased use of Scots and the development of a separate literary movement highlight the cultural difference of Scotland from England. This is taken by many as a reason for the country to become independent as the diversity is too big to be ruled under one government. Nationalists start to see the potential of literature to legitimate and strengthen their claims. Moreover it is an easy way to reach a broad audience and to combine politics and popular culture (see Weißenberger 105; 110; 289; 297-298; 302; 321; 325).

Nationalists can use literature for their purposes, which does not necessarily mean that all literature is written with a nationalist purpose. Most novels express ideas about the nation, about identity and society without following a specific political purpose. Even in this case, they still make a statement about these topics, merely by dealing with them. (Weißenberger 342)
This is also true for Welsh, who claims to be apolitical, but who places himself in this tradition by his choice of language. Moreover his novel is concerned with issues of class and identity; it even mentions the problems of the Scottish nation and identity. Therefore novels like Irvine Welsh’s *Trainspotting* can be seen as fostering the idea of devolution.

As already mentioned *Trainspotting* is written in the Scottish vernacular, more precisely in the Edinburgh working-class dialect. The presentation of the working-class is a very crucial topic in Welsh’s work. Interestingly however none of the characters has a fixed job. Instead of showing the hardship of the working man, Welsh concentrates on the “world of unemployment and social deprivation” (Childs 247). He shows his characters as frustrated, violent and in stagnation (see Childs 247). Through this and his unconventional use of the spoken vernacular Welsh subverts the typical Edinburgh representations as the tourist metropolis or the middle-class town (see Petrie, *Contemporary* 91). Irvine Welsh comments on why he used this kind of language to write his novel with the following words:

I grew up in a place where everybody was a storyteller, but nobody wrote. It was that kind of Celtic, storytelling tradition: everybody would have a story at the pub or at parties, or even at the clubs and raves. They were all so interesting. Then I’d read stories in books, and they’d be dead. I got to thinking that it had a lot to do with Standard English. I mean, nobody talks like that in cinema, nobody talks like that on television, nobody sounds like that in song. In any other cultural representation, we don’t talk like that, so why do we in the novel? [...] It’s a basic question really: how do people think, in Standard English or in colloquialisms? (qtd. in Weißenberger 380)

Welsh thinks that writing in the colloquial variety is much more authentic and more true to real life. This is the way in which people usually speak and he does not see a reason why this should not be the case in novels as well. The most interesting fact is that in *Trainspotting* each character has his distinct way of speaking. The different languages are sometimes the only indication the reader has for who narrates which chapter. Welsh’s work also contains some sections which are written in Standard English. Nevertheless there is no omniscient narration but he still presents an individual character’s viewpoint. By using the different dialects Welsh gives a voice to a group of people which are usually not part of the dominant discourse. Moreover he allows them to speak their own language and to have a voice of their own (see Kelly 24; 50). Welsh’s use of
language rejects conventional values and rules and “what is accomplished specifically is that English people and other literary readers are prevented from supposing that they can readily assimilate Scotland, as if it were merely an extension of Englishness, or merely a tourist theme park” (Sinfield qtd. in Kelly 25). The way *Trainspotting* is written is not easy to understand but it makes sure that its readers know that they are dealing with something Scottish. With every page they turn it reminds them that this is not an English book but part of the Scottish national literature.

Welsh is also aware of the power relations within the language context and so is his character Mark. He, in contrast to Spud, is able to code-switch in certain situations. This is of special importance in the chapter *Courting Disaster*, where Spud and Renton are in court. Renton is acquitted as he is able to persuade the judge in Standard English that he is regretting what he did. He uses the power of language to his advantage, and by this he ridicules the perception that this kind of language is more objective or truthful. Spud, on the other hand, is sent to prison because of his inability to speak ‘proper’ English. He cannot explain his feelings to the judge, who on the other hand is not able to understand him (see Kelly 53-54). Not only does Welsh undermine the power of Standard English through his characters but he himself is also non-Standard for his narration. Welsh uses Scots, a language which was long regarded as not suitable for literature, and also shows this in his orthography. Thereby he diminishes the status of Standard English as the only language appropriate for literature.

*Trainspotting* is part of the new literary revival in Scotland, which makes use of the Scottish vernacular on the one hand and on the other hand presents the country and the society in a new way. As Welsh’s novel is one of the most famous examples it is most suitable to relate it to the struggle for Scottish independence. The text itself and the way in which it is written offer enough possibilities to see the book in this light. Not only is the use of Scots a marker for a distinct Scottish identity but also the various passages which are related to identity, class and the nation allow for such interpretations.
7 Conclusion

As the historical overview showed Scottish nationalism has been a decisive force throughout centuries. The influence the media have on this issue, however, has changed. Although there are early instances of nationalistic writings or texts that promote devolution, such as the Declaration of Arbroath, Blind Harry’s Wallace or Barbour’s Bruce, the modern media world has a wider appeal. It also has become more commercialized and exploited which can be seen when looking at Braveheart.

The aim of this thesis was to show in how far media representations are concerned with and influence the discourse of Scottish independence. It also analysed the impact especially Braveheart had on actual political events. This can be seen when looking at the Scottish National Party, which profited most from the release of Braveheart. It helped them to foster their ideas and opinions in their struggle for independence. Especially in recent years and after the establishment of the new Scottish Parliament the SNP has become a leading power in politics. Through films like Braveheart a new awareness of the old conflict developed and the SNP knew how to use this to their advantage. It is interesting though that the film also became a political tool for various other groups as for example the neo-Confederate movement which used it to promote their beliefs. The diversity of Braveheart’s appropriations shows its popularity as well as the multiple ways of interpreting it. The film itself may not be different in its aesthetics from other Hollywood movies, a major reason for the historical distortions, but what people made out of it is astoundingly.

It was surprising, for me at least, that Trainspotting can also be read and interpreted with regard to Scottish devolution. Although it is very different from Braveheart, which overtly and obviously showcases its connection to Scottish independence – which is also the reason why it was appropriated by the SNP – Trainspotting does not promote a positive image of Scotland at first sight. Nevertheless the importance of the book and film alike for the Scottish cultural revival cannot be overlooked. Through them a new self confidence and a new identity for the people in Scotland was forged and celebrated. Moreover the language used is that of the Scottish people. The connection of Trainspotting to claims of nationalists who demand a distinct culture in order to strengthen the
country is therefore not farfetched. Alan Riach even states that *Trainspotting* is the contemporary version of *Braveheart*. The two very different films can be seen as “two sides of the same coin” (Riach 196). William Wallace who is portrayed by Mel Gibson is the Hollywood version of Mark Renton who is the drug taking anti-hero (see Riach 196).

Therefore, these two, *Braveheart* and *Trainspotting*, can both be described as representations of Scottish independence. The impact they had on further developments in this direction cannot be denied. The theoretical background given at the beginning of the paper supports this argument by showing the close connection of nationalism, identity, history, culture and language. Both examples are associated with some of these abstract concepts and give it a real dimension by actually engaging in them. *Braveheart* can be related to politics and the successful re-establishment of the Scottish Parliament, whereas *Trainspotting* influenced the country on a cultural level and advanced the Scottish identity. Through their involvement in debates about devolution Scotland is one step closer to become an independent country again.

This thesis only provided a small insight into the power of the media and its connection to nationalism in the case of Scotland. Other related questions may come to one’s mind while reading the paper. One point for further investigation, which came to my mind while doing my research, is how nationalism in different countries is perceived by people. This idea developed during my last trip to the United States where nationalism and patriotism play an important role. However the American pride and the overt displaying of their nationality are often perceived as negative or annoying by other parts of the world. I did not notice that people have this opinion about Scottish nationalism. Why is this so? One explanation I came up with is that the United States already is an independent nation-state, which is a world power and is interfering in international matters. Scotland, on the other hand, is a rather small country and of minor importance on an international scale. Moreover it is not yet independent, so many people may feel compassionate and think that the nationalism is necessary to regain independence. The United States as already established country do not need to express their nationalism or patriotism so strongly in order to achieve a goal anymore. However America would not be where it is now without nationalism. It
would not be independent or a world power. Therefore it would be interesting to compare the perception and media representation of the nationalism in the United States to that of Scotland. Also because their histories show many similarities as both searched or are still searching for independence from the United Kingdom in some way.
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German Abstract


Des Weiteren beschäftigt sich die Arbeit mit der Frage der nationalen Identität, die im Zusammenhang mit der Idee eines unabhängigen Staates steht. Auch hier ist der Fokus auf die schottische Identität zu legen, wobei vor allem die Differenzierung zwischen England, Großbritannien und Schottland aber auch das Konzept der dual identity im Vordergrund stehen. Zuletzt wird hervorgehoben, dass Medien Identitäten beeinflussen können, womit auch die Wahl der zwei folgenden Beispiele begründet ist.

Sowohl Braveheart als auch Trainspotting werden in Bezug auf die schottische Unabhängigkeit präsentiert. Der erstere Film wurde vor allem von der Politik dazu verwendet die Idee einer unabhängigen Nation zu verbreiten. Im Falle von Trainspotting sind die Sprache und der Einfluss den sowohl Buch als auch Film auf das Aufleben der schottischen Kultur hatten zu erwähnen. Dies wiederrum führte zu neuem Selbstvertrauen und einer neuen selbständigen Identität, die auch den Wunsch nach Unabhängigkeit stärkt.
Curriculum Vitae

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