5-1-2013

Brave hearts and minds: the devolution revolution and the (re)building of the Scottish nation

Cody Lynn Neidert
University of Northern Colorado

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

BRAVE HEARTS AND MINDS: THE DEVOLUTION REVOLUTION AND THE (RE)BUILDING OF THE SCOTTISH NATION

A thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

Cody Lynn Neidert

College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Department of History

May 2013

This Thesis by: Cody Lynn Neidert

Entitled: *Brave Hearts and Minds: The Devolution Revolution and the (Re)building of the Scottish Nation*

has been approved as meeting the requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences in the Department of History, Program of History

Accepted by the Thesis Committee:

_____
Fritz Fischer PhD., Committee Chair

_____
Jacob Melish PhD., Committee Member

_____
Aaron Haberman PhD., Committee Member

Accepted by the Graduate School

_____
Linda L. Black, Ed.D., LPC
Acting Dean of the Graduate School and International Admissions

ABSTRACT

Neidert, Cody Lynn. *Brave Hearts and Minds: The Devolution Revolution and the (Re)building of the Scottish Nation*. Unpublished Master of Arts thesis, University of Northern Colorado, May 2013.

In 1995, the myth-history presented in Mel Gibson's award winning film, *Braveheart*, sparked the fires of nationalism in Scotland, leading to the nation's partial autonomy. *Braveheart*'s influence on politics, historical memory and cultural identity are undeniable, yet few historians give the film the credit it rightly deserves. This demonstrates that, while it may not have single handily led to Scotland's devolution in 1999, *Braveheart* did play a major role in the lead up to the 1997 devolution referendum. The film infused Scotland's society, culture, and politics with nationalistic pride.

Utilizing James DeFronzo's five critical factors for revolutionary success as a framework, this project shows that *Braveheart*, a film about the legendary Scottish hero named William Wallace, had a vast political, social and cultural impact on Scotland, thus leading to the restoration of a Scottish parliament after three-centuries of dormancy. However, Scotland is not an independent country, as it remains a member of the United Kingdom. Therefore, this thesis also examines the ongoing nation-building, or rebuilding, process in Scotland, in the period immediately prior to the independence referendum in 2014.

In all, the fact that *Braveheart* managed to revive, alter, and create Scotland's greatest historical and mythological hero, as well as forever change the course of Scottish political and social history, makes it one of the most influential films of all time.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of any major academic work is never the achievement of the individual alone. Therefore, I would like to thank those who have helped me during this journey. First, I need to thank the superb faculty at the University of Northern Colorado for their guidance and wisdom throughout the nearly seven years I spent there. In particular, I must thank the members of my graduate committee: Dr. Fritz Fischer, Dr. Aaron Haberman and Dr. Jacob Melish. In addition, thought-provoking conversations and projects with Dr. Robert Weis and Dr. T.J. Tomlin have been most enlightening. I am also forever indebted to Dr. Marshall Clough, whose course on History and Memory inspired me to peruse a master's degree by introducing me to historical concepts and approaches of which I had no previous knowledge, including Film and History. Yet, it was more than the excellent faculty that made my time at UNC unforgettable; it was also the great friends. Thus, I would like to thank my fellow graduate students, notably Chandra Powers, for helping me through grad school, and for humoring me each and every time I went on and on about Scotland and *Braveheart*.

Beyond UNC, I want to thank those who I had the opportunity to meet with on my travels to Scotland in the summer of 2012. These conversations vastly expanded my comprehension of Scottish politics, culture, history, and people. Special thanks goes out to Scottish historians Fiona Watson and Elspeth King. I would also like to thank Duncan Fenton and George Boyle from The Society of William Wallace, whose unsurpassed passion for Scotland and spirited hospitality will never be forgotten. Furthermore, the exemplary works of Scottish historian Graeme Morton and of film and history historian Robert Brent Toplin have been inspiring, and their informative email correspondents have been most appreciated.

Additionally, I want to thank my loving parents, Dennis and Gayle, who not only let me watch *Braveheart* at a surprisingly young age, but also took me to Scotland when I was a child, solidifying both my love affair with history and with Scotland. My parent's unwavering support – emotionally, financially, and otherwise – has enabled me to achieve my academic and personal dreams, and for this, I am eternally grateful. Furthermore, I want to thank my long-time friends, as well as my brothers, whose continuous intellectual challenges and conversations over the years have led to my academic endeavors. And a special thanks to my brother Travis and his wife, Faith, who helped a great deal with some last minute proofreading. I need to also thank my adoring wife, Allison, who last year said "yes" to my proposal of marriage atop the two-hundred foot National Wallace Monument in Stirling, Scotland. Allison's humor and all too frequent, but most welcomed distractions kept me sane throughout this project. Words cannot express how much I have appreciated her constant love, support, and smiles.

Finally, I must thank the people of Scotland for inspiring me, and for their hospitality during my time in their homeland, including my unforgettable semester at the University of Stirling. Therefore, it is to the people and the nation of Scotland that I dedicate this thesis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: PREPARING THE WAY FOR A COMPLETELY PEACEFUL REVOLUTION

> *Wallace made Scotland. He is Scotland; he is the symbol of all that is best and purest and truest and most heroic in our national life. You cannot figure yourselves Scotland without Wallace. He prepared the way, and is preparing the way, with your assistance, for a National Legislature in Scotland. He is a man whose memory can never die. So long as grass grows green, or water runs, or whilst the mist curls through the corries of the hills, the name Wallace will live.*
>
> Robert Bontine Cunninghame-Graham
> Elderslie Wallace Commemoration, 1930.[1]

> *It had been a long, quiet process, and ended in a completely peaceful revolution. Many hearts had been worn down or broken by it, but no one had died. Scotland upheld its modern civic tradition, and in the end had also managed to emancipate itself from the limits of that tradition. Thus far, an equivalently civic and decent nationalism had prevailed…. This was a low-profile success, in a world pre occupied by…military high drama…. But the fact was, not such a small one either. An old nation – one of the original 'nation-states' of the early-modern world – had embarked upon the process of regaining its independence.*
>
> Tom Nairn on Scottish Devolution
> *After Britain: New Labour and the Return of Scotland*, 1999.[2]

The above quote by early-twentieth-century Scottish patriot, and arguably the father of Scottish political nationalism, R.B. Cunninghame-Graham, honors William Wallace, who in late-thirteenth-century Scotland began a revolution against the usurpation of the Scottish throne by Edward I of England. This movement would eventually succeed in ousting the English from Scotland and the recovery of the Scottish kingdom. Yet, this political independence only lasted until 1707 when the Act of Union effectively made Scotland a voiceless, stateless-nation within the United Kingdom. However, seven centuries after his original movement, Wallace led yet another revolution that again secured more autonomy for

---

[1] R.B. Cunninghame-Graham quoted in Linas Eriksonas, *National Heroes and National Identities: Scotland, Norway, and Lithuania* (Brussels: P.I.E.-P. Lang, 2004), 162-163.
[2] Tom Nairn, *After Britain: New Labour and The Return of Scotland* (London: Granta, 2000), 194.

Scotland, thus reconvening a Scottish parliamentary assembly, a major event in Scotland's nation-building – or more appropriately, rebuilding – process. Tom Nairn described this revolution as a peaceful one with low-profile success, but he asks: "are not tranquil revolutions as lasting and important as those of barricades and bombs?"[3] Indeed, unlike Wallace's first revolution, it was not the sword or the mace that inspired this revolutionary step in modern Scotland's nation-(re)building process, rather it was Mel Gibson's award winning 1995 movie, *Braveheart*. Ten years after this film, the leader of the Scottish National Party, Alex Salmond, proclaimed: "the story of Wallace – and the release of *Braveheart* – was certainly a factor in spurring Scotland on to the restoration of our national Parliament."[4] Understanding how this is possible, is the primary concern of this study.

On September 18, 2014, the most important referendum in Scotland's history will be voted on when the Scots will decide whether or not their nation should once again be fully independent. As this vote draws nearer, it becomes increasingly evident that *Braveheart* is one of the most politically and culturally influential films of all time, because no other film has ever managed to so drastically affect the politics, culture and history of a nation like Gibson's. Therefore, this study will examine how, in the mid- to late-1990s, this film revived the centuries old nationalistic myth of William Wallace, which in turn fueled a revolution in Scotland, altering a modernized European nation, thus leading to Scottish devolution and perhaps even full independence. Indeed, some contend *Braveheart* gave Scotland a new "voice," which, according to Nairn, "is very important for both nation-building and (the Scottish example) nation-retention, or reconstitution."[5] Devolution was a major development in Scotland's turn of the millennium nation-(re)building process; a process that will not be

---

[3] Ibid., 16.
[4] Alex Salmond, "Wallace Commemoration," SNP.org, August 24, 2005, (Speech), accessed March 9, 2011, http://www.snp.org/media-centre/news/2005/aug/wallace-commemoration.
[5] Lin Anderson, *Braveheart: From Hollywood to Holyrood* (Edinburgh: Luath Press, 2005), 11; and Nairn, *After Britain*, 13.

complete, in terms of political nationalism as it is widely understood today, without Scottish independence. This thesis will explain that *Braveheart* – in helping to bolster the nationalistic sentiment that led to Scottish devolution – was, and remains, a primary component of Scotland's nation-(re)building.

As of yet, no serious attempt has been undertaken to connect the film to Scottish devolution, and *Braveheart* rarely receives the credit it deserves. Film and history scholar Robert Brent Toplin suggests that scholars can only speculate how much historical films impact our culture as "this fascinating question" has received little attention to date.[6] In a 2005 interview, Gavin MacDougall, the director of Luath Press, a publisher of many Scottish history-based texts, said of *Braveheart*: "Historians in the future will no doubt argue its influence on the outcome of Scotland's devolution referendum of 1997."[7] The future is now, and this study represents the first academically detailed look at this "fascinating question" as it relates to *Braveheart* and Scotland.

One stunning aspect of this examination is the temporal coincidence between Wallace's age and contemporary Scottish politics. In 1297, Wallace won his only major military victory at Stirling Bridge, showing the English that the Scots could stand up to the might of their southern neighbor. Exactly seven-hundred years later to the day, in 1997, the Scots again convincingly demonstrated that they wanted more control of their own affairs, and voted in favor of devolution. In addition, on the fields of Bannockburn in 1314, seventeen years after Wallace's victory, Robert the Bruce defeated the English in a decisive battle that paved the way for Scotland's full independence. And in 2014, seventeen years after devolution, the Scots will once again have the chance to reclaim their freedom, only this

---

[6] Robert Brent Toplin, *Reel History: In Defense of Hollywood* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 204.
[7] Senay Boztas, "Wallace Movie 'Helped Scots Get Devolution': Book Credits Hollywood with Giving Country Back Its Hero… And Political Confidence," *The Herald, Scotland* (Glasgow), July 31, 2005, accessed May 7, 2011, http://www.heraldscotland.com/sport/spl/aberdeen/wallace-movie-helped-scots-get-devolution-book-credits-hollywood-with-giving-country-back-its-hero-and-political-confidence-1.47219.

time by democratic means. As in Wallace's time, there are those who feel Scotland can go it alone, but currently, the latest polls suggest there are even more who feel Scotland is better off united with England.[8] At this pivotal time in Scottish political and cultural history, it is imperative to understand the contested and uneven development of Scottish nationalism and how one man, and his myth, managed to lead two revolutions, with similar goals, seven-hundred years apart.

This study will thus draw on theories from the field of film and history. The importance of this field is escalating because Hollywood has become an "enormously influential cultural force," as people the world over are learning more about history from film than from any other source.[9] In recent decades, concepts of national identity and of nation-making have increasingly been transmitted through popular culture outlets. Toplin, whose pathbreaking methodology for understanding how film's impact historical, cultural, personal, and political issues – which he calls looking "Behind" and "Around" cinematic productions – will serve as the base of this analysis.[10]

Despite the agreed upon fact that movies are highly influential, there has yet to be any comprehensive research on the revolutionary capabilities of film. The father of revolutionary studies, Crane Brinton, observed: "Revolution is one of the looser words."[11] In order to fix *Braveheart* into a quantitative revolutionary framework this study will utilize the "factors" for revolution found in the first chapter of James DeFronzo's, *Revolutions and Revolutionary Movements*, first published in 1991, now on its fourth edition released in 2011. DeFronzo

---

[8] "Latest News: Scottish Independence Poll," TNS BMRB, January 14, 2013, accessed February 4, 2013, http://www.tns-bmrb.co.uk/news-events/latest-news-scottish-independence-poll; Poll results found in the pdf. at http://www.tns-bmrb.co.uk/assets-uploaded/documents/independence-poll-14th-jan-2013_1359047388.pdf.
[9] Toplin, *Reel History*, 9; also see John E. O'Connor, "History in Images/Images in History: Reflections on the Importance of Film and Television Study for an Understanding of the Past," *The American Historical Review* 93, no. 5 (1988).
[10] See Robert Brent Toplin, *History by Hollywood: Screening the American Past* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 1-3.
[11] Crane Brinton, *The Anatomy of Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), 3.

supplies a comprehensive and understandable breakdown of what a "revolution" consists of, explaining what characteristics and conditions such movements need to be successful. By comparing various revolutions and synthesizing "the appraisals of leading academic scholars on the phenomenon of revolution," DeFronzo simplifies this complex subject.[12]

DeFronzo writes a revolution is "a social movement in which participants are organized to alter drastically or replace totally existing social, economic or political institutions."[13] *Braveheart*, which became an "event" in Scottish culture, helped Scotland dramatically alter the way it was governed, as devolution led directly to the creation of a Scottish Parliament for the first time in nearly three-hundred years.[14] In the words of Tom Nairn, although it was a quiet revolution, an "earth-shift did occur, once and for all, and it will never be undone…. Scotland was – or at any rate had started to be – a nation again."[15] Devolution was a "major event" in the history of Scotland, and one that drastically altered existing social, economic or political intuitions, and therefore fits within DeFronzo's revolutionary structure.[16]

However, devolved powers are not to be confused with full independence. Devolution gave Scotland back its parliamentary assembly at Holyrood, yet this body maintains only limited power within the wider Union. Nevertheless, this "earth-shift," and the legitimization of Scottish nationalism in general, was augmented by the film, or as Andrew Ross writes, the "*Braveheart* tendency played a supporting role, stirring up populist

---

[12] James DeFronzo, "Social Movements and Revolutions," in *Revolutions and Revolutionary Movements*, 4th ed. (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2011), 12.
[13] DeFronzo, "Social Movements and Revolutions,"10.
[14] Colin McArthur, "*Braveheart* and the Scottish Aesthetic Dementia," *Screening the Past*, 168; and David T. Denver James Mitchell, Charles Pattie, Hugh Bochel, *Scotland Decides: The Devolution Issue and the 1997 Referendum* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), 48, xvi.
[15] Nairn, *After Britain*, 111.
[16] Denver, Mitchell, Pattie, Bochel, *Scotland Decide*, 98.

sentiment as only a good flag-waving fight can do."[17] Still, this fascinating instance of a film assisting a revolution is seldom referenced in contemporary historiography.

The True Story of Braveheart, a 2000 History Channel documentary produced in the wake of the film's global popularity, is the only significant platform in which this theory has received attention.[18] While discussing Wallace in the special's introduction, the off-screen narrator blatantly asks: "How did a man, dead some seven hundred years, contribute to a *non-violent political coup* in twentieth-century Europe? Was this man, or his myth, the motivation behind the change?"[19] And from the very start, the program attributes much to Gibson's film. The narrator claims that, after devolution, the Scots "got a parliament of their own after centuries of English domination," (ignoring the fact that Scotland entered peacefully into a *union* with England) then goes on to say that "One reason the efforts succeed is the resurgence of Scottish pride *fueled* by a movie, Mel Gibson's film, *Braveheart*."[20] Yet, the documentary fails to explain this impact in full, and leaves the viewer with many unanswered questions. It is the purpose of this study to come to a better understanding of this important nation-(re)building event, and it will argue that, although *Braveheart* may not have created the devolution revolution, it certainly "fueled" this "non-violent political coup."

To accomplish this goal, this study will examine *Braveheart* and Scotland in accordance with the most significant aspect of DeFronzo's analysis; his five "critical factors" for revolutionary development. These factors frame the chapters of this thesis, providing a framework for understanding how this film affected the devolution revolution and the national (re)building project. While DeFronzo admits these factors may not "in themselves

---

[17] Andrew Ross, "Wallace's Monument and the Resumption of Scotland," *Social Text*18, no. 4 65 (2000), 104.
[18] By "significant platform," I mean consumed by a broad, even global, audience – unlike publications which sold/sell relatively few copies and lack wide consumption, such as texts by Lin Anderson, Susanne Wallner or David R. Ross.
[19] David Ackroyd (Narrator) quoted in *History's Mysteries: The True Story of Braveheart*, dir., prod. Sueann Fincke, by Adam Hyman, perf. David Ackroyd (Narrator), Andrew Fischer, "Historical Consultant" Fiona Watson (MPH Entertainment, Inc. for The History Channel/ A&E Home Video-New Video, 2005), DVD. (Emphasis added).
[20] Ackroyd (Narrator), *History's Mysteries: The True Story of Braveheart*, dir. Sueann Fincke, (Emphasis added).

constitute a complete theory of revolution," he maintains that they are nevertheless "necessary and sufficient for the occurrence and success of a revolution." Although the Scottish revolution of the 1990s was bloodless, it still contained all of DeFronzo's revolutionary factors, which include: (1) mass frustration, (2) dissident elites, (3) unifying motivations, (4) severe state crisis, and (5) permissive world context.[21] Each of these five factors will be a focus of the chapters that follow, but first a brief outline is necessary.

DeFronzo describes the first of these factors, "mass frustration," as a "large proportion" of a society's population becoming "extremely discontented," leading to "mass-participation protests and rebellions against state authority."[22] Scotland's perpetual frustration with England and the Union was reignited after the release of *Braveheart*. The Scots were angered that it had taken an American film to educate them about one of Scotland's most heroic national symbols, and many accused the Union of suppressing Scottish history. This called attention to the condition of Scottish history education, which was lacking throughout the twentieth-century. Moreover, under British Conservative rule, the gap between expectations and reality, something social scientists call "relative deprivation," increased in Scotland. Thus, the second chapter will discuss how *Braveheart* reminded the Scots of their past, inspired their patriotism, and raised their expectations for what Scotland could be.

Defining these expectations and voicing Scotland's frustrations were modern elites who supplied the revolution with the second critical factor: "dissident elites." By "elites," DeFronzo means "groups that have access to wealth or power of various types or are highly educated and possess important technical or managerial skills."[23] DeFronzo also explains that "elites usually play a role in formulating ideology for the revolutionary movement."[24] In the

[21] DeFronzo, "Social Movements and Revolutions,"23.
[22] Ibid.,10.
[23] Ibid.,10.
[24] Ibid.,13.

1990s, the "ideology" of *Braveheart* was transformed into a revolutionary ideology that stirred nationalistic sentiment, helping to secure a "Yes" vote for devolution, and in the ongoing nation-(re)building process these debates remain prevalent. Chapter three will thus examine modern "civil elites" as well as "cultural elites." The former held polarizing opinions, becoming participatory revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries who engaged in a war of words. Furthermore, in modernized societies, the products and skills of "cultural elites," such as filmmakers, are capable of influencing ideologies.

This revolutionary ideology bleeds into the next critical factor, "unifying motivations," the focus of the fourth chapter. DeFronzo defines this as the "existence of powerful motivations for revolution that cut across major classes and unify the majority of a society's population behind the goal of revolution."[25] Thus, although nationalism in Scotland is hundreds of years old, *Braveheart* rekindled these patriotic sentiments, and this heighted sense of united Scottishness was a primary motive for the devolution revolution. Attempting to capitalize on this empowered feeling, the Scottish National Party utilized *Braveheart* in their political propaganda, notably their controversial, yet successful "Head and Heart" campaign, which directly appropriated the film.

This recruitment drive was a key element to the fourth critical factor, "severe state crisis." This event can occur for several reasons including defeat in war or economic depression. In turn, these factors create a "political crisis paralyzing the administration and coercive capabilities of the state," and one that "may deplete the state of loyal personnel [and] legitimacy in the eyes of the public."[26] The depletion of support thus hinders the state's normal operations and it becomes incapable of coping with the revolutionary movement.[27] Chapter five will explain that *Braveheart* depicted a war in which Scottish patriots defeated

[25] Ibid.,10.
[26] Ibid.,13.
[27] Ibid.,13.

the English, and in effect the Union, thus reviving a potent myth which inspired national self-confidence in Scotland. *Braveheart* brought legitimacy to the Nationalists' cause in the form of historical continuity, while it depleted the Union's authority, ultimately led to a major crisis for the UK. This is evident in the two events which occurred on the 11 September, 1997: the unveiling of the "Braveheart statue" and the passing of devolution.

Yet as made clear in chapter six, *Braveheart* not only inspired the Scots. It also promoted the Scottish cause to a global audience, thus fitting DeFronzo's final critical factor, "permissive world context," which he defines as the lack of interference or general ambivalence by outside nations.[28] Although *Braveheart*'s worldwide popularity did not entice any foreign countries to interfere politically or militarily, it did raise popular awareness of Scotland's situation, giving the Nationalists the moral high ground. This popularity was in large part due to the film's American ideological themes. In turn, millions of Americans identified with the film and became proud of their real or imagined Scottish heritage. The film then supplied the Scots with a tangible reason to reject the Union, as many of these newly inspired diasporic Scotsmen traveled to Scotland, flooding the economy with tourist revenues and decreasing Scotland's perceived dependence on the UK economy. The impact of this "film tourism" is obvious in renewed financial success of the Wallace Monument.

Before applying these "critical factors" to Scotland's twentieth-century revolution, one must first examine to what extent Wallace's original movement was revolutionary. Although very little is actually known about the real William Wallace, there is no doubt that the movement he led in the mid-1290s was a nationalist revolution, or at least included all of DeFronzo's necessary factors. In Wallace's era, there was plenty of *frustration* as Edward I of England usurped the Scottish king. The action forced all nobles to choose between supporting an independent Scottish kingdom – as Wallace did – or siding with the powerful

[28] Ibid.,13.

English, thus creating *dissident elites.* The cause Wallace fought for also reached across class lines, if only because many Scottish soldiers were forced to fight for their feudal lords. Yet, some scholars maintain that these soldiers fought because they actually had an acute awareness of their Scottishness, supplying the movement with a *unifying motivation*.[29] This armed conflict was obviously a *severe state crisis*, and finally, the French, and in time, the Pope in Rome supported the revolution by recognizing Scottish sovereignty, thus expressing *world permissiveness*.

But is the term "nationalist" applicable to Wallace? Many scholars argue that because "nationalism"– as it is defined today – "is a product of *modernity*," finding no equivalent prior to the late-eighteenth-century, Wallace himself was *not* a nationalist, nor was his movement a product of nationalism, and therefore, the patriotic hero in the film is utterly anachronistic.[30] Yet, Marinell Ash argues that "wars of national liberation," such as the one led by Wallace, "create – or heighten – a sense of national identity," and the biggest contributing factor to "fourteenth-century Scottish nationalism was English imperialism." Yes, Wallace may have fought for a king, but it was undoubtedly a *Scottish* king. Ash also argues that the emergence of Scottish "national consciousness was, in European terms, precocious."[31] If this is true, then Wallace's popular myth-image as Scotland's "first freedom-fighter," as seen in the film, is entirely sustainable.[32]

As discussed later, the main source that fixated this nationalist image in popular imagination was the epic fifteenth-century poem, *Wallace*, by the mysterious minstrel known only as Blind Hary. According to Felicity Riddy, *Wallace* was the most commonly read Scottish poem for nearly four hundred years, and helped to teach "the people of Scotland a

---

[29] See Marinell Ash, "William Wallace and Robert the Bruce: The Life and Death of a National Myth," in *The Myths We Live By*, ed. Raphael Samuel and Paul Richard Thompson (London: Routledge, 1990), 86.
[30] Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History*, 2nd ed., (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2010), 49-51; and see McArthur, "*Braveheart* and the Scottish Aesthetic Dementia," 171.
[31] Ash, "William Wallace and Robert the Bruce," 86.
[32] Boztas, "Wallace Movie 'Helped Scots Get Devolution.'"

way of conceptualising the nation."[33] However, by the twentieth-century, Hary's poem was widely neglected and nearly forgotten, along with Wallace himself. That is until Hollywood put the story on the silver screen. In the end, it matters not whether Wallace was actually the martyred patriot that Hary and *Braveheart* present. What does matter is how he has been understood and used within the context of Scotland's modern nation-(re)building process.

In the early-twentieth-century, R.B. Cunninghame-Graham praised Wallace as the most heroic national figure whose myth was "preparing" the way for a Scottish legislature. In his time this was overly-optimistic, however, Cunninghame-Graham still helped form the National Party of Scotland (NPS) in 1928; signifying the emergence of Scottish nationalism as a distinct political movement. In 1930, hoping to awaken ancient sympathies, the NPS developed their Nationalist Covenant, which demanded an independent Scottish parliament.[34] In 1934, this home-rule driven party joined forces with the likeminded Scottish Party, thus creating the Scottish National Party, or the SNP, of which Cunninghame-Graham was elected the first president. Today, the SNP is the most popular political party the nation and is steadily leading Scotland on its grand nation-(re)building project. Thus, it is no surprise that Cunninghame-Graham, the man who was called "the uncrowned king of Scots," and who is often regarded as the founder of modern Scottish political nationalism, was an admirer of Wallace.[35] Although he never saw an independent Scotland, nor did he live to see the day when the whole world knew the deeds of William Wallace, Cunninghame-Graham started a nationalist force that continues to (re)build the nation he loved. This is just one of example of how Wallace has permeated the history of Scotland, and with *Braveheart*, Wallace's influence would be felt once again.

---

[33] Felicity Riddy, "Unmapping the Territory: Blind Hary's Wallace," in *The Wallace Book*, Ed. Edward J. Cowan, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2007), 107.
[34] John Keay and Julia Keay, eds., *Collins Encyclopaedia of Scotland* (London: Harper Collins, 2000), s.v. "National Party of Scotland, the (1928-34)," 766; and "Nationalist Covenants, The (1930 and 1949)," 766.
[35] Keay, Keay, eds., *Collins Encyclopaedia of Scotland*, "Cunninghame Graham, Robert Bontine (1852-1936)," 217. Before the NPS, he was a Liberal MP as well as the first president of the Labour Party upon its founding in 1888.

In all, utilizing DeFronzo's "critical factors," this study will make it clear that the devolution of Scotland in the 1990s was in fact a revolutionary movement, and that *Braveheart* was vital to its eventual success, and to Scotland's ongoing nation-(re)building process. DeFronzo's five factors show that *Braveheart* is one of the most influential films of all time. And that in the 1990s, Scotland's grass still grew green, water continued to run, and the mist still curled through the corries of the hills, and as Cunninghame-Graham so eloquently predicted, the name Wallace lived on. However, the enduringness of this name was not always so certain.

Methodology and I.R.B. Approval

In order to evaluate DeFronzo's five factors as they relate to *Braveheart*, this study will utilize secondary source work on Scottish politics, nationalism and culture as well as film and history scholarship. Moreover, newspapers, journal articles, documentaries, political speeches, and behind-the-scenes footage will act as invaluable primary sources. The knowledge accrued from personal interviews also contributed to this study. Authorization from the Institutional Review Board, or I.R.B., was required in order to incorporate such information. Official I.R.B. approval was received after an expedited process on the 13th of July 2012. This was in advance of a research trip to Scotland in August of that year, in which I interviewed several historians, politicians and Wallace enthusiasts. The questions these participants fielded related directly to the topic of this thesis, as well as to general Scottish history, culture, and politics. The interviews were conducted in various locations around Scotland, and were recorded after receiving written consent from each of the interviewees. Copies of the questions asked, and the signed and dated participatory consent forms, as well as full interview recordings, are housed at the University of Northern Colorado in the main office of the Department of History.

CHAPTER II

WALLACE AND THE NEW HAMMER OF THE SCOTS: SCOTLAND'S MASS FRUSTRATION

Scotland has had a long tradition of frustration within their "partnership" with England. This is especially true in relation to the Act of Union in 1707. Discussing *Braveheart*, Andrew Ross observes:

> The story of aristocratic perfidy fit neatly into the Hollywood repertoire of lowborn heroes and blue-blood villains. It also played well [in Scotland] among popular nationalists long receptive to the belief that the Scottish peerage had repeatedly sold out the nation to its southern paymasters, most notably in 1707 when they were offered money bribes and other incentives to sign away the nation's sovereignty.[1]

Thus, for centuries the Scots have experienced what DeFronzo calls "mass frustration." In the early-1990s, this feeling was palpable, and after Mel Gibson (as William Wallace), screamed out "Freeeedom!" at the conclusion of *Braveheart*, this frustration became revolutionary.

As mentioned, DeFronzo explains that mass frustration occurs when a society becomes discontented, leading to mass-participation in protests against state authority.[2] Included in this is the idea that a population will become disgruntled due to unfulfilled expectations. These perceived societal deficiencies are "relative" because they are in comparison to other societies which have achieved the desired level of existence. Social scientists call this envious frustration: "relative deprivation." This may also occur when one country (England) controls another (Scotland), and the former exploits the resources of the latter, thus prohibiting the weaker nation from achieving the level of success it feels it is capable of. This rise in expectations, according to DeFronzo, is a "shift in a people's

---

[1] A. Ross, "Wallace's Monument and the Resumption of Scotland," 99.
[2] DeFronzo, "Social Movements and Revolutions,"12.

conception of what is morally right," and this is most easily "brought about if the message is communicated by recognizable moral authorities."[3]

By educating the Scots about Wallace in a way that presented him as an ethical martyr, *Braveheart* made "freedom" the new moral expectation. Thus, Gibson's film became a morally recognizable authority. Jonathan Miller contends that, despite its inaccuracies and romanticism, *Braveheart* "struck a responsive chord in Scotland, where it rekindled a resentment of the English that had smoldered since Scotland lost political independence in 1707."[4] *Braveheart*, and the rekindled frustration it produced, achieved all of the components of this critical factor, and it even inspired a "New Braveheart" in Scotland.[5]

If indeed Scotland votes in favor of independence in 2014, the man that will receive the most credit for delivering this outcome will be the leader of the SNP, Alex Salmond. This charismatic politician is also the First Minister of Scotland, the highest ranking official in the Scottish government. In 1995, Salmond was still the leader of the Nationalists, as well as a representative in Westminster. That year, at the SNP's annual conference in Perth, Salmond delivered a keynote address while riding high on the wave of patriotism brought on by the film. This passionate speech – entitled "Winning with Wallace" – coming eleven days after the film's release, highlights the frustrations many nationalists felt.[6] One aspect that particularly frustrated Salmond, and other nationalists, was how little Scotland's youth knew about their national past. Thus like Cunninghame-Graham before him, Salmond made it clear that Scotland could not figure itself Scotland without Wallace. [7]

---

[3] Ibid.,14.
[4] Jonathan Miller, "Breaking Up Britain: A Kingdom No Longer United," *World Policy Journal* 16.1 (1999), 90.
[5] Catherine Mayer, "The New Braveheart? Scotland's Salmond Eyes Independence from the U.K.," *World.time.com,* January 11, 2011, accessed March 9, 2013, http://world.time.com/2012/01/11/the-new-braveheart-scotlands-salmond-eyes-independence-from-the-u-k/.
[6] Title of speech found in Graeme Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth* (Stroud: Sutton, 2004),185.
[7] Cunninghame-Graham quoted in Eriksonas, *National Heroes and National Identities,* 162-163.

In his speech, Salmond recited a story by *Braveheart*'s American screenwriter, Randall Wallace, who said that while he was in Stirling, the site of an enormous monument to Wallace, he asked "some local youngsters" what they knew about the man the memorial commemorated. The kids told Randall that they knew nothing about William Wallace.[8] This frustrated Salmond, who lamented: "The story of [William] Wallace should and does inspire us, but the story of the youngsters who had never heard of Wallace should make us pause and ponder." Education fails a nation, he continued, "if it does not instill within our young people a sense of their history, for it is from that that will often spring the determination to create a better tomorrow."[9] This notion, or expectation, of "a better tomorrow" was key for Salmond. He wanted to educate Scotland's youth, making them proud to be Scottish, in hopes that when they grow older they may support initiatives to dissolve the Union. This coincides with Ernest Gellner's theory that nationalism is a product of sociocultural engineering, specifically school-transmitted ideals supported by a mass, uniform and mandatory public education system.[10] Prior to *Braveheart*, an atmosphere of British intellectual elitism had indirectly dictated this system in Scotland. Assisting Salmond in this endeavor to win over the hearts and minds of Scottish youth was a big budget Hollywood film, which no doubt went a long way in inspiring impressionable young Scots.

Salmond's frustration was due in part to what Marinell Ash described as the killing off of the Wallace myth by the late-1980s by the overt Anglicisation of Scottish history syllabuses [sic].[11] In the 1970s, some historical curriculum was even repressed by the Labour

---

[8] Alex Salmond, "Winning with Wallace," Address to the 61st Annual National Conference of the Scottish National Party, Perth, Scotland, September 22, 1995 quoted in McArthur, "Braveheart and the Scottish Aesthetic Dementia," 180.
[9] Salmond, "Winning with Wallace," quoted in Ailsa Henderson, "Political Constructions of National Identity in Scotland and Quebec," *Scottish Affairs* 29 (May 1999), 17.
[10] Smith, *Nationalism*, 51.
[11] Riddy paraphrasing Ash in "Unmapping the Territory," 111.

government because its tone was deemed too "nationalist."[12] And a few weeks prior to the failed devolution attempt of 1979, *The Scotsman* complained that "in every country, except Scotland, it is taken for granted that national history and literature should be well taught in the schools."[13] Some saw Wallace as a victim of class conflict and a "conspiracy theory of historiography." This opinion, also found in the pages *The Scotsman,* came a full ten years prior to *Braveheart,* and expresses the frustration many Scots felt. The author writes of the dastardly actions of the pro-Union "ruling class," who censored the memory of pro-Scottish commoners like Wallace: "The ruling class would have appeared to have achieved their aim," laments the author, "when Scottish children grow up in ignorance of their true heritage."[14]

Ash wrote her essay, "William Wallace and Robert the Bruce: The Life and Death of a National Myth," in the late-1980s. But despite her pessimistic title, she claimed that the myth of Wallace, and of The Bruce, "still flickers in Scotland itself, sustained especially by the contemporary nationalist revival."[15] Yet, there is no way she could have foreseen how this flickering myth would soon explode into a phenomenon, inspiring the imaginations of millions, and turning the "nationalist revival" into a full blown revolution. After *Braveheart*, Ash's personal dissatisfaction with the lack of Wallace education transformed into a mass frustration that would be a major factor in Scotland's move towards devolution; because in Scotland, history and politics often share the same stage.

"Pre-*Braveheart*," writes historian Graeme Morton, "the Wallace narrative was marginalised."[16] But after the film, education on – or at least basic knowledge of – William Wallace and Scottish history rose considerably. This is evident in the fact that the sales of

---

[12] Richard J. Finlay, "New Britain, New Scotland, New History? The Impact of Devolution on the Development of Scottish Historiography," *Journal of Contemporary History* 36, no. 2 (April 1, 2001), 384.
[13] Quoted in Murray Pittock, *The Road to Independence?: Scotland Since the Sixties*, (London: Reaktion, 2008), 132.
[14] *The Scotsman*, August 27, 1985, found in Ash, "William Wallace and Robert the Bruce," 84.
[15] Ash, "William Wallace and Robert the Bruce," 92.
[16] Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth*,133.

books on Scottish history skyrocketed.[17] Indeed, even those who attacked *Braveheart* profited from the film. Colin McArthur, one of the film's most unforgiving critics, managed to publish a book predominately devoted to lambasting the film, and there is no doubt that McArthur was conscious of the film's powerful and profitable imagery, as the cover of his text consists of a full page picture of kilted Mel Gibson from *Braveheart*.[18] Morton explains that, compared to the Victorian age, the story of Wallace had lost some of its impetus in Scotland's national memory during the twentieth-century. Wallace was not totally forgotten, he contends, but *Braveheart* did oversee a mass revival in the attention given to Wallace, which had been lacking.[19] Moreover, the film not only "stirred patriotic feelings in most Scots," argues David R. Ross, "but it was a catalyst for the huge increase in sales of Scottish history books."[20] Therefore, one cannot entirely fault Lin Anderson, at least as far as Scottish history is concerned, for believing that *Braveheart* was "the biggest history lesson ever."[21] But this lesson frustrated many Scots, as they were made aware of their historical ignorance, leading them to feel subjugated within the Union. This corresponds with the most astonishing aspect of *Braveheart*: its timing. Historian Richard J. Finlay sums this up nicely:

> When *Braveheart* was released, it coincided with a period of demand for constitutional change and a growing upsurge in Scottish history, as well as a Scottish cultural revival generally, but the position of Wallace had been marginalised in the story of the nation to such an extent that it exploded on popular consciousness in a way that few could have predicted.[22]

Thus, following *Braveheart*, eager students all over Scotland wanted to learn more about the man they had seen in the film. In addition, to capitalize on the new-found interest in Scottish history, major media outlets, like the BBC and The History Channel, produced

---

[17] David R. Ross, *On the Trail of William Wallace* (Edinburgh: Luath Press, 1999), 141.
[18] Colin McArthur, Brigadoon, Braveheart, *and the Scots: Distortions of Scotland in Hollywood Cinema* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003), Front Cover. Perhaps this was done to draw in supporters of the film to an anti-*Braveheart* book.
[19] Graeme Morton, Personal E-mail Correspondents, January 24, 2013.
[20] D. Ross, *On the Trail of William Wallace*, 141.
[21] L. Anderson, *Braveheart*, 50.
[22] Richard J. Finlay, "The Wallace Cult in the Twentieth Century: The Making of a Nationalist Icon," in *The Wallace Book*, Edward J. Cowen, Ed., 191.

television documentaries about Wallace; most of which refer to Wallace as "Braveheart," as if it were more than an imaginary word that made for a good movie title.[23] Still, there is no doubt that *Braveheart* revived interest in the figure who, for hundreds of years, had been the most important and well known hero in the nation, and the cornerstone of nation-(re)building endeavors. For many, this highlighted their historical ignorance, creating mass frustration; but at the same time, the film managed to ease the minds of many by helping to fill the "great empty well" that was the average Scots knowledge of their history.[24] Although the film is inaccurate, angering many intellectual elites, *Braveheart* managed to get the basics of the Wallace story across, increasing popular awareness of a national hero who had been widely ignored, subdued, suppressed, and forgotten.[25] This neglect pre-*Braveheart* was overt, and Finlay explains that by mid-1970s, "Scottish history was a fringe subject… and students were advised to stay clear of it and do 'real history' instead."[26]

The current Director of the Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum Elspeth King, and renowned Scottish historian Fiona Watson were two students who received such advice. Although a generation apart, both say their Scottish history education growing up was sufficient, but that this was rare.[27] Within Watson's academic generation, Scottish history began to acquire greater academic respect. Watson describes how after *Braveheart*, Stirling University realized that – for "sheer bums on seats" – it could not afford to be so close to the National Wallace Monument and not teach that history. Therefore, the university began to

---

[23] *History's Mysteries: The True Story of Braveheart*, dir. Sueann Fincke, (2005); *The Three Lives of William Wallace*, dir. Ross Harper, prod. Ross Harper, perf. Ross Harper (Narrator), Ted Cowen, Tim Edensor, Graeme Morton (Saltire Television for BBC Scotland, 2007), television, accessed September 18, 2012, http://www.mercurymedia.org/programmes/william-wallace/; and *Lost Worlds: Braveheart's Scotland*, dir. Bill Markham, by Bill Markham, perf. Corey Johnson (Narrator), Fiona Watson, Amanda Beam, David R. Ross (Atlantic Productions for The History Channel/ A&E Television Networks, 2006), DVD.
[24] L. Anderson, *Braveheart*, 19.
[25] Ibid., 16.
[26] Finlay, "New Britain, New Scotland, New History?," 383.
[27] Fiona Watson, interview by author, August 8, 2012; Elspeth King, interview by author, August 9, 2012.

offer a class on the Wars of Independence, which continues to be popular.[28] This school-transmitted education is important because learning about Scotland's national heritage reinforces Scottish pride, making Scottish self-rule seem morally right, if not wholly natural.

King explains that it was not only the lack of Wallace education in Scottish schools that was frustrating, but also its neglect by Scottish academics.[29] Five days prior to the '97 devolution vote, King wrote an article for *The Herald*. Here she expressed her frustration with Scotland's historical amnesia, lamenting that in the half-century prior to *Braveheart*, serious historical research and discussion on Wallace was nearly impossible to find. In this time, she observes that a major academic journal, *The Scottish Historical Review*, had devoted a measly nine pages to arguably the greatest Scottish hero of all time. That is *nine* pages in *fifty* years. She also attacked the film's critics, arguing that the "hysterical reaction of academics to *Braveheart* reveals more about the maintenance of a taboo than any wish to shed light."[30] Indeed, in the 2005 *Herald* article – "Wallace Movie 'Helped Scots Get Devolution'" – Lin Anderson said that *Braveheart* "has become part of the fabric of Scotland. [And] There was *anger* that people didn't know who William Wallace was, and had been *cheated* of their history."[31] Fortunately, King concludes, with *Braveheart*'s help, the memory Wallace reemerged.[32] Yet, overall, the "anger" of being "cheated" of one's heritage undoubtedly aided the nationalist revolution.

Evidence suggests that from the onset of the twentieth-century, the majority of the history education Scottish students received focused on the prowess of the Empire. Timothy Baycroft explains that schoolchildren in the UK learned about the Empire, and thus it became

---

[28] Watson, interview by author.
[29] King, interview by author.
[30] Elspeth King, "The True Story of Braveheart," *The Herald, Scotland* (Glasgow), September 6, 1997, accessed March 11, 2011, http://www.heraldscotland.com/sport/spl/aberdeen/the-true-story-of-braveheart-1.380973.
[31] Lin Anderson quoted in Boztas, "Wallace Movie 'Helped Scots Get Devolution,'" (Emphasis added).
[32] King, "The True Story of Braveheart."

an object of pride for all British society.[33] Nairn says that Scottish history "went into recess" for almost three centuries, but since the mid-1990s has been slowly returning from limbo.[34] In general, by the mid-century it appears that one's Scottish history education depended a great deal on the preferences of the individual teacher. However, Scottish education also seems to depend on one's selective memory, dictated by their contemporary political outlook. In interviewing Scots from the ages of forty to sixty years old, one will likely find that those who are pro-Union will often say their education was quite fair, with a good balance of Scottish and British history; while others, generally pro-independence, contend the teaching of Scottish history was purposely suppressed to bolster unnatural loyalty to the Union.[35] An example of the latter came in 2005 when Alex Salmond expressed his frustrations. "Generation after generation of Scots learned [Wallace's] epic story and were inspired," said Salmond, "And when many of our children had this history deliberately withheld from them at school, and when popular oral tradition made way for television, along came a Hollywood blockbuster and brought the story back to life for young Scots."[36]

Years after the film, in 2001, Richard Finlay observed that "a quiet revolution" in Scottish history writing began in the early-1980s but that "little of this has percolated into the popular historical consciousness."[37] *Braveheart* helped revive the popular appeal of Scottish history, raising expectations and making many proud to be Scottish, and thus more apt to support the devolution revolution. This was an important shift. In somewhat of a contradiction to Finlay's analysis that Scottish history had yet to seep into popular consciousness, Watson, also writing in the early-2000s, found the new thirst for information about Scotland's past to be "astounding," and claimed that Scottish history was enjoying a

[33] Timothy Baycroft, *Nationalism in Europe: 1789-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 63.
[34] Nairn, *After Britain*, 93.
[35] Information accrued from interviews with conducted in Scotland, August 2012.
[36] Salmond, "Wallace Commemoration," (Speech).
[37] Finlay, "New Britain, New Scotland, New History?," 383.

"Golden Age." Watson does say, however, that this was not wholly due to *Braveheart*, but that the film certainly played a role in making Scottish history "fashionable."[38]

Thus, at the dawn of the new millennium, according to Watson, Scottish history had gone from a neglected "fringe subject," to a profitable mainstream interest, and this continues to play a role in the nation's (re)building process. This calls attention to the interesting – and for some, frightening – issue of film as history teacher. Despite the fact that *Braveheart* got much of the myth-history of Wallace, as told by Blind Hary, "correct," and managed to transmit the base idea that a man named William Wallace once lived and fought for Scottish freedom, much of the film is pure fantasy.[39] As mentioned, cinematic presentations are, for good or ill, the main source of history for a large percentage of Western society, as well as powerful transmitters of nationalism. For many traditional historians this is something to be feared, countered, and attacked. Yet, film and history scholars, such as Robert Rosenstone, Paul B. Weinstein and Robert Brent Toplin advocate for the use of film as a gateway to historical consideration.[40] In this capacity, *Braveheart* was second to none, as it "sparked a resurgence of curiosity" in the history of Wallace and the Scottish nation.[41]

The myth-history of Wallace and the work of Blind Hary were nearly forgotten by the mid-twentieth-century. This was rectified by Gibson's film because, as Toplin explains, *Braveheart* skillfully engaged the audience's sympathies for the characters while arousing "hunger for greater knowledge about the historical contents." The film, by forcing the audience to "think emotionally about the experiences of William Wallace," provoked the concerns of audiences, especially in Scotland, where many left the theaters eager to learn

---

[38] Fiona Watson, *Scotland: A History* (Stroud: Tempus, 2002), 15.
[39] For discussion of inaccuracies and anachronisms, see McArthur, Brigadoon, Braveheart *and the Scots*, 187-190.
[40] See Paul B. Weinstein, "Movies as the Gateway to History: The History and Film Project," *The History Teacher* 35, no. 1 (November 2001).
[41] Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth*, 113.

more about their national history, augmenting national pride.[42] One Scot who was emotionally affected by *Braveheart* was Alex Salmond, who said, "If you don't cry during this film there is something wrong with your heart."[43] And Salmond would no doubt agree with Toplin who contends that most academic historians are often too concerned with small "lies" in films like *Braveheart*, that they fail to recognize the larger "truths."[44]

The "truth" that nationalists like Salmond drew from the film was that Scotland's freedom was morally necessary, and should be Scotland's "relative depravation."[45]Anthony D. Smith highlights Nairn's socioeconomic understanding of this collective frustration which includes vast unevenness between regions, thus creating dissention.[46] Such socioeconomic frustrations were prevalent in Scotland in the 1990s, and were significant to the devolution revolution, but Scotland's relative depravation was also brought on by emotional and cultural circumstances. "Typically, a nationalist movement will commence not with a protest rally, declaration or armed resistance," explains Smith, "but with the appearance of literary societies, historical research, music festivals and cultural journals."[47] In Scotland's case, this non-violent revival was due to the appearance of a wildly popular nationalistic film.

Obviously, the sheer quality of the film increased its revolutionary impact. In fact, *Braveheart* is generally regarded as a superb piece of filmmaking, and was nominated for ten Academy Awards, winning five, including Best Picture.[48] *Braveheart* was also tremendously popular in Scotland, where the Scots were understandably excited to see a big budget

---

[42] Robert Brent Toplin, "In Defense of Filmmakers," in *Lights, Camera, History: Portraying the Past in Film*, ed. Richard V. Francaviglia and Jerome L. Rodnitzky (College Station: Published for the University of Texas at Arlington by Texas A&M University Press, 2007), 127.
[43] McArthur, Brigadoon, Braveheart *and the Scots*, 160.
[44] Toplin, *Reel History*, 61.
[45] DeFronzo, "Social Movements and Revolutions,"14.
[46] Smith, *Nationalism*, 51.
[47] Ibid., 7.
[48] *Braveheart* won Oscars for Director, Cinematography, Effects in Sound Editing, Makeup and Best Motion Picture of the Year. It was nominated for Costume Design, Film Editing, Sound, Music and Original Screenplay.

Hollywood movie about their homeland.[49] *Braveheart* played to packed houses all over the nation, ending up as the UK's fifth highest grossing film of 1995. The Scots' enthusiasm was clear in the fact that Scottish ticket sales that year accounted for 28% of the annual British box office revenues, which was a full 20% higher than their usual 8%.[50] These numbers are significant, because as the authors of *American Idol After Iraq: Competing for the Hearts and Minds in the Global Media Age* argue, those who understand politics know that "the voting booth and the box office share the same public."[51] This popularity inspired the masses in Scotland while also adding to their frustration, and for many, freedom became the new frustratingly unobtainable expectation.

Again, the timing of *Braveheart* was unprecedented. It emerged in an era of transition for Scotland and the UK, both politically and culturally. Noticeably, by this time, the sun had finally set on the British Empire, and the Cold War was becoming mere history. The Scots were no longer benefiting – economically or politically – from the mighty Empire they had helped construct, nor was it necessary to be allied with a powerful nation in order to preserve Western capitalism. In all, as Nairn observes, the "maimed state-nation of the Scots [had] outlasted the Empire."[52]

But in the 1980s, the Scottish nation felt it was facing a new, yet all too familiar, foe. During Wallace's thirteenth-century revolution, Edward I's brutality towards Scotland earned the English king the nickname, "The Hammer of the Scots." A source of pride during his lifetime, this fitting moniker is actually engraved on the king's tomb. Centuries later, in 1979, the UK general elections resulted in a collapse of SNP support and it appeared as if Scottish

---

[49] See comments by David O'Hara in *Braveheart: A Look Back,* from *Braveheart (Sapphire Series) Special Features*, perf. Mel Gibson, David O'Hara (Paramount, 2009), Blu-ray Disc.
[50] Tim Edensor, "Reading Braveheart: Representing and Contesting Scottish Identity," *Scottish Affairs* 21 (February 1997), 1.
[51] Nathan Gardels and Mike Medavoy, *American Idol After Iraq: Competing for Hearts and Minds in the Global Media Age* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 23.
[52] Nairn, *After Britain*, 98.

political nationalism was "dead in the water." This same year, the late Margaret Thatcher became the Prime Minister of the UK. One of her first actions as leader was to repeal the Scotland and Wales Act, which was the proposal for devolution set forth a few months prior.[53] The Conservative Thatcher was a "champion of the Union," yet her party was unpopular in Scotland, where Conservative support steadily declined between 1979 and 1992. In her own words, she admitted that there had been "no Tartan Thatcherite revolution."[54] The Scots frequently rejected Thatcherite policies which were said to have destroyed traditional industry, accrued brutal cuts in public services, and, in 1988, the Scots had major qualms with the imposition of the community charge known as the "poll tax." This controversial policy, introduced in Scotland a year before England, made many Scots feel like unwilling test-subjects of an unfair English ordinance.[55]

During this time, the British government consistently ignored Scotland's grievances, and the Conservatives in Scotland were vocal in their opposition to home-rule or devolution. Therefore, historian Ronald Kowalski explains that "the majority of Scots saw Thatcherism as a manifestation of English nationalism insensitive to Scottish interests."[56] "Mrs Thatcher's mind seemed fixed on the north, much as Edward I's had been in 1300," writes Christopher Harvie, "The Scots assumed this interest to be vindictive, and hated her with a venom scarcely seen since Edward's day."[57] Therefore, Thatcher herself "came to be regarded as a new 'Hammer of the Scots,'" a direct reference to Wallace's infamous adversary.[58]

---

[53] Keay, Keay, eds., *Collins Encyclopaedia of Scotland*, "Scottish Parliament, The," 895.
[54] Margaret Thatcher's memoirs quoted in David Torrance, "Margaret Thatcher and the Scots," *The Scotsman* (Edinburgh), April 8, 2013, accessed April 8, 2013, http://www.scotsman.com/news/david-torrance-margaret-thatcher-and-the-scots-1-2882885.
[55] Ronald Kowalski, "'Cry For Us, Argentina': Sport and National Identity in Late Twentieth-Century Scotland," in *Sport and National Identity in the Post-World War*, ed. Adrian Smith and Dilwyn Porter (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), 71.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Christopher Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics, 1707 - 1994* (London: Routledge, 1995), 203.
[58] Kowalski, "'Cry For Us, Argentina,'" 71.

This appraisal of Thatcher's economic policies in Scotland fits neatly into DeFronzo's theory that many revolutions are often preceded by a period of economic improvement, leading to a rise in expectations, followed by a steep decline, thus creating mass frustration. Indeed, in the prosperity of post-war Scotland, economic expectations were high, and were elevated even more when, in the mid-1970s, oil was discovered off the coast of Scotland in the North Sea. With this it seemed Scotland had finally found a way to break away from its dependence on the Union.[59] Yet, this failed to occur and Thatcherism only proved harmful to Scotland's economic wellbeing. DeFronzo explains that relative deprivation occurs when a stronger country takes advantage of the resources and labor of a weaker one, and after the "poll tax" and the debates over North Sea oil revenues, the Scots felt as if they were objects of unjustified exploitation. Therefore, by the mid-1990s frustration with Union control was rampant, and Scotland teetered on the edge of revolution, albeit a democratic one, void of violent or destructive tendencies.

Incidentally, in the years immediately prior to *Braveheart*, the widespread unpopularity of Conservative polices, and of the "latter-day Hammer of the Scots," actually worked to bolster Scottish nationalism.[60] Backlash against Conservative rule increased the Scots frustrations within the Union, encouraging demands for greater self-rule. In 1990, equally staunch supporter of the Union, John Major, succeeded Thatcher. Five years later, *Braveheart* was released, sending shockwaves through the UK's political landscape. In the 1997 general elections, the Conservatives' reign came to an end, and in Scotland, the party won zero parliamentary seats. In this election, the Labour Party was victorious, running on a campaign that promised the Scots a referendum on devolution; a measure to which the

[59] Michael Lynch, *Scotland: A New History* (London: Pimlico, 1994), 446.
[60] Diane MaClean, "Looking Back at The SNP's 78 Years of Independent Thinking," *The Caledonian Mercury-Online*, April 18, 2012, accessed March 12, 2011, http://caledonianmercury.com/2012/04/18/looking-back-at-the-snps-78-years-of-independent-thinking/0032310.

unpopular Conservatives were the only opposition.[61] The point here is that *Braveheart* just so happened to emerge at one of the most critically volatile times in Scottish political history, a time when Scottish frustrations were already growing. Thus, for many, *Braveheart* did not *change* their minds; rather it *confirmed* to them that Scotland needed more autonomy. *Braveheart* made this seem possible, and because of the "freedom" the Scots accrued at the end of the film, this became Scotland's relative deprivation. Indeed, Lin Anderson – who also compares Thatcher to Edward I – says that the film may have been set in the distant past, but it had plenty of "political echoes" for the mid-1990s Scottish audience.[62] Unintended as it may have been, people saw in the film issues that appeared relevant to their time.

DeFronzo explains relative depravation, or the widespread belief about what is possible and what is right, is best conveyed by a "recognizable" moral authority.[63] In the mid-1990s, *Braveheart*'s revival of the nationalistic Wallace myth produced this kind of moral shift, and Scottish self-rule again became morally right as well as politically possible. Like R.B. Cunninghame-Graham earlier in the century, Anderson saw Wallace as an "immensely powerful symbol for Scottish independence," and she understands him to be a key moral authority for the Scottish nation, and one that all Scots should aspire to be like.[64] "Perhaps no other person in Scotland's history," she claims, "more symbolizes what we want to be as a people and as a nation. Myth or reality, the values and characteristics we attribute to Wallace, we would like to achieve in ourselves."[65] Likewise, when explaining the contemporary relevance of Wallace as a moral authority, amateur historian David R. Ross used seemingly revolutionary rhetoric to express his frustration, saying:

> Wallace's popularity comes in waves, but when *Braveheart* came out in 1995, an upsurge was inevitable. In 1997 we had the "Yes" vote to devolution, and I think that

[61] Keay, Keay, eds., *Collins Encyclopaedia of Scotland*, "Scottish Parliament, The," 895.
[62] L. Anderson, *Braveheart*, 87.
[63] DeFronzo, "Social Movements and Revolutions," 14.
[64] L. Anderson, *Braveheart*, 106.
[65] Ibid., 16. Prior to this Anderson (inaccurately) quotes R.B. Cunninghame-Graham.

> the film made Scots re-examine their situation: he was fighting against London, and we're still ruled from Westminster.[66]

A decade after the film, in 2005, former Member of Scottish Parliament for the SNP, Duncan Hamilton, identified "another wave of popular interest in the subject."[67] This new surge was brought on by the hype surrounding the symbolic funeral for Wallace organized by Ross and held on the 700th anniversary of Wallace execution near the spot where he was killed in London. Hamilton's article, "Scots Wha Hae About Wallace Learned Are But a Lucky Minority," appeared the day before the funeral proceedings, and made it clear that despite the film's impact, Scottish frustrations, and devolution, the situation in Scotland had changed little. The Hamilton piece confirmed that Scottish history education was lacking in the latter half of the twentieth-century, as he claims he "was offered little or no education on Scottish history" as a child, which was regrettable, but it was intolerable that this continued to be the case in the early-twenty-first-century. "Scotland, a country with one of the richest and most fascinating histories on earth," Hamilton frustratingly declares, "has a population who are almost entirely ignorant of that heritage. That, in any analysis, is unacceptable."[68]

Although *Braveheart* undoubtedly helped highlight Scottish historical ignorance in the mid-1990s, and for a short time ignited Scotland's national spirit, a decade after the film, the Scots remained frustrated, and again, this was more than just a social issue, it was also a political problem, and an obstacle for the nation-(re)building project. Discussing the subjugated position of Scotland, Hamilton writes:

> There remains an irrational fear that greater interest in, and teaching of, Scottish history might stir a wider sense of Scottish nationalism. Frankly, that is not a decision for the state to make in a democracy. Steering the population towards an Anglicised historical slant is a political decision in itself. Access to national history is not

---

[66] David R. Ross quoted in Boztas, "Wallace Movie 'Helped Scots Get Devolution.'"
[67] Duncan Hamilton, "Scots Wha Hae About Wallace Learned Are But a Lucky Minority," *The Scotsman* (Edinburgh), August 23, 2005, accessed March 7, 2013, http://ellymac.proboards.com/index.cgi?board=Freedom&action=print&thread=37.
[68] Ibid.

> something which should be controlled at the whim of government – that form of thinking died with the collapse of the Soviet Union.[69]

Yet, ten years prior, *Braveheart* managed to prove that this fear Hamilton describes may not be entirely "irrational," and teaching the Scots about their past did in fact turn into politically active, anti-Union, Scottish nationalism. But his point here is that the Union has suppressed Scottish history, and for nationalists this frustration goes beyond the academic, as educating the Scots about their past, and making them proud of their heritage was, and is, politically vital. Murray Pittock, writing in 2008, supplies a similarly pessimistic view of modern Scottish education. He claims that since the late-1970s – when *The Scotsman* grumble that every other nation besides Scotland took it for granted that their national history was taught – the situation remained "fundamentally unchanged," which he maintains impedes Scotland's nation-(re)building. "The school curriculum remains a major hindrance to the emergence of a proper understanding of Scotland by Scots themselves," he writes,

> in part because interest in history in Scottish society – which is manifest and widespread – has a leaning towards conspiracy theory and anti-Englishness in part arguably because people have been deprived of their own history at school. To paraphrase Edwin Muir, rob people of their history and they will create a legend to take its place: the lack of Scottish history in Scottish schools does nothing to promote either national self-confidence or mutual understanding within the UK. Moreover, it leaves people ignorant of the many world renowned figures Scotland has produced.[70]

One such renowned figure – and, thanks to *Braveheart*, perhaps the only Scottish character known worldwide – is William Wallace. The revival of this national hero was a major component to the devolution revolution, as well as fundamental to the continuous nation-(re)building process in Scotland.

Regardless of the appraisals by Hamilton and Pittock, the people of Scotland know much more about their past today than they did prior to *Braveheart*. Indeed, it would be no small feat if Gibson's film was *only* able to give Scotland back arguably the nation's most

---

[69] Ibid.
[70] Pittock, *The Road to Independence?*, 132.

important national myth. Yet, it seems *Braveheart* managed to do much more than this. After the film, hundreds of thousands of Scots were inspired to learn more about Scottish history, as they wondered what else had been kept from them. Even those who chastised the film on the basis that it was historically inaccurate were forced to learn the "true" history of Wallace in order to backup their criticisms. So although Scottish history education may still be lacking, *Braveheart* managed to save Wallace from oblivion, and in the end, supplied Scotland's devolution revolution with much patriotic fuel. In the nation's (re)building process, devolution may lead to independence, and in a free Scotland, the Scots will have no one else but themselves to blame if their society continues to lack knowledge of their own history. Yet, in a free Scotland, the importance of such myths will be depleted, as their political significance will be muted, and the memory of Wallace will have to rely on nationalism for nationalism's sake, not as a means to a wider political end. But one thing is certain, there is not a Scotsman today who is not at least aware of William Wallace and the freedom he fought for. This in itself is significant, and is *Braveheart*'s lasting legacy.

In the 1990s, *Braveheart* communicated to the Scots that they did not need the Union, and Nationalists argued Scotland would be better off economically, politically and socially if it were independent, or at the very least, devolved. Helping the Nationalist's cause was the unpopularity of Conservative rule which kept these expectations unobtainable. On top of this, the frustrations felt by many Scots when they discovered that one of their most significant national heroes had been apparently suppressed and nearly forgotten, further bolstered nationalist support. One of the most telling signs that *Braveheart* made a lasting impact came on devolution day, 1997. It was not at the voting booths, nor at the political rallies, that this enduring legacy was found, rather it was in the words of a nine year old Glaswegian boy of African origin named Rudi Neequaye. When asked who his hero was, Neequaye proudly

declared "William Wallace!," a response that would have been unheard of three years prior, but was on devolution day, a common Scottish sentiment.[71]

In mobilizing this frustration into a cohesive movement, DeFronzo explains that that "expanding educational systems" – in this case the revival of Scottish history – tends to "create new, educated, and politically conscious elites that demand participation in government."[72] After *Braveheart*, the Scots were (re)educated about Wallace and many became more conscious of their subjugated position within the Union, and in 1997, they demand greater political participation. Even if the film only managed to plant the seeds of political nationalism in Scottish hearts and minds, its impact was significant. There is no doubt that the mass frustration created by *Braveheart* helped the revolution, but all successful revolutions, and nation-building projects, need politically conscious elites to construct a coherent ideology in order to unite the citizenry against the state, thus achieving DeFronzo's second "critical factor."

[71] "Your Daily Record Devo Special," *Daily Record* (Glasgow), September 11, 1997, accessed July 15, 2010, http://www.thefreelibrary.com/your+daily+record+devo+special.-a060995473.
[72] DeFronzo, "Social Movements and Revolutions," 13.

CHAPTER III

A VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS: SCOTLAND'S DISSIDENT ELITE

According to DeFronzo, dissident elites aid revolutions by creating confusion, as people are unsure what to believe or who to follow, detracting support from the state. Four years before *Braveheart*, a nationwide opinion poll indicated that at least fifty-percent of the Scottish people were already confused – to varying degrees – about their national identity. Some claimed to be more Scottish than British, others said they were equally British and Scottish, while a few even said they were more British than Scottish.[1] Thus, *Braveheart*, along with other elements, helped the Scots identify more with their Scottishness; yet, at the same time, the negative aspects of the film, highlighted by critics, achieved the opposite. Still, Scottish author Lin Anderson claims that the film showed the people of Scotland that they were Scots before they were "anything else."[2] But was this revolutionary?

More than simply adding confusion, DeFronzo explains, some elites actually help lead the revolution by formulating the ideological dimensions of the movement that cut across class lines, thus inspiring widespread support for the uprising. In other words, elites give the revolution its voice. They often accomplish this by criticizing the existing power structure, and by devising "a set of justifications for the necessity of resorting to a revolutionary movement."[3] In modern democratic societies, the "elites" DeFronzo describes need to be redefined as "modern elites," who have the same impact on revolutions as their

---

[1] 1991 *Scotsman* poll quoted in Alan Bairner, "'We Are the England Haters!': Sport and National Identity in Scotland," in *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization: European and North American Perspectives* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 49.
[2] L. Anderson, *Braveheart*, 79.
[3] DeFronzo, "Social Movements and Revolutions," 15.

historical counterparts. The one group of "modern elites" that led and countered the revolution in Scotland are the so called "civil elites" – consisting of critics, amateur historians, and Wallace enthusiasts – and who held polarizing opinions of *Braveheart*, adding to the confusion of the time while drawing from the film ideological inspiration which they subsequently attempted to spread amongst the wider Scottish population. Another group that will briefly be examined – defined here as "cultural elites" – consist of the filmmakers themselves, whose mastery of their craft allowed them to produce a highly influential movie which – although unintended – helped voice the revolution's ideology.

Tom Nairn explains that after the Union in 1707, Scotland lacked "collective political voice." However, this "voiceless social order in the North" was galvanized in the 1990s.[4] Anderson believes much of this was due to the fact that, "*Braveheart* rose above accusations of national embarrassment to give voice to the Scotland of the new Millennium."[5] According to Nairn, "Voice is very important for both nation-building and (the Scottish example) nation-retention, or reconstitution."[6] Therefore, *Braveheart*, with its message of "freedom" and confidence, supplied Scotland with a collective "voice" or a revolutionary ideology, perpetuated by optimistic commentators all over Scotland. Yet, with hundreds of opinionated newspaper articles and thousands of random online posts, this ideology is difficult to pinpoint. Thus, it is necessary to frame the ideological dimensions of the devolution revolution within the viewpoints of the two most vocal "civil elites" of the era, Lin Anderson and Colin McArthur. Although these outspoken authors wrote much of their material on the film retrospectively and after devolution, their opinions perfectly illustrate the ideologies of both the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary movements in the 1990s. In the end, the ideology defined by civic and cultural elites had a role in influencing "political elites," the

[4] Nairn, *After Britain*, 13.
[5] L. Anderson, *Braveheart*, 11.
[6] Nairn, *After Britain*, 13.

focus of the ensuing chapter. First, the ideological framework of the revolution must be unmasked, starting with the film's critical reception.

In Scotland, with its relatively small size and population, a major Hollywood production about its past was bound to cause quite a stir. There have certainly been other films about Scotland, but *Braveheart* is by far the most controversial. The primary reason for this was the film's popularity and quality. Because it was so well liked and won so many awards, it was a prime target for critics who knew that readership on issues concerning the film would be high. But more than this, *Braveheart* was attacked because of its explicit pro-Scottish themes. This is clear when examining the different reactions that followed *Braveheart* and another Scottish-history based film released in 1995, *Rob Roy*. Headed by Scottish born director Michael Caton-Jones, *Rob Roy* tells the story of an eighteenth-century Scottish Highlander who fights for his family, his honor, and his lands against evil Scottish nobles and their British-English allies. Overall, the character of Rob Roy does not necessarily fight for Scottish independence, rather it is communal and personal freedom that he seeks. In terms of popularity, influence, and profitability, *Rob Roy* pales in comparison to *Braveheart*. This is also true for the amount of controversy it provoked.

Scottish historian Elizabeth Ewan wrote that when viewing *Rob Roy*, "the historian should not look so much for historical accuracy as for how successful the film is in bringing the legend to life." This is something *Braveheart* managed to do well, yet Ewan does not credit it with such an accomplishment. "When there is a complete disregard for historical context, however, as in *Braveheart*, which almost totally sacrifices historical accuracy for epic adventure," she continues, "the inaccuracies become hard to ignore." In all, she claims that the factual errors in *Rob Roy* distract "less from the central 'truth,'" than *Braveheart*.[7]

[7] Elizabeth Ewan, "Europe: *Braveheart*, *Rob Roy*," *American Historical Review* 100, no. 4 (October 1995), 1220.

In contrast to Ewan's assessment, Murray Pittock says both *Braveheart* and *Rob Roy* "took Scotland seriously as never before – the trashy stereotypes of *Highlander* (1986) were left behind."[8] In Scotland, *Braveheart* was a huge success, he writes, "though many voices were raised critical of its historical accuracy which had been strangely silent over *Rob Roy*, a film that took even more liberties with the known facts, but was *not* explicitly nationalist."[9] These opposing opinions are representative of the contemporary appraisals of the film, thus creating confusion. Yet, there is no doubt that one's political leanings helped dictate their reactions to the film. For instance, Pittock claims the reason some critics attacked *Braveheart* more than *Rob Roy* – a more inaccurate film – was because *Braveheart* was more "nationalist." Thus, independence supporters overlooked the historical liberties by highlighted the film's larger "truths," while counter-revolutionaries used the historical inaccuracies to undermine its credibility, attempting to reduce the public's favorable reaction to its messages. Overall, the universal appeal of nationalism made *Braveheart*'s legacy and popularity exceed that of the less nationalist *Rob Roy*. In discussing *Braveheart* as a revolutionary factor, the film's historical validity is less important than the debates over its political use and cultural impact. Indeed, despite the public's positive response to the film, many journalists, historians, media studies academics, and politicians relentlessly attacked *Braveheart*.

The "educated opinion," says Pittock, was "sneeringly" skeptical of the film.[10] Likewise, Andrew Ross observes that *Braveheart*'s "crude ethnic nationalism appalled Scots intellectuals and civil elites."[11] One of these disgusted "civil elites" was Colin McArthur. Having written extensively on Scotland's representation in film for over a decade prior to

[8] Pittock, *The Road to Independence?*, 120.
[9] Ibid., 120. (Emphasis added).
[10] Murray Pittock, *Celtic Identity and the British Image* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 111.
[11] A. Ross, "Wallace's Monument and the Resumption of Scotland," 103.

Braveheart, McArthur has published more about the negative effects of the film than any other critic, firmly believing that it is Hollywood historical junk.[12] He also takes issue with Hollywood's facilitation of the "Scottish Discursive Unconscious" which projects Scotland as a "timeless mélange" of Scottish stereotypes such as bagpipes, kilts, castles, and whisky.[13] Moreover, he writes avidly about the film's appalling historical depiction, its overly violent bloodlust and its apparent sexist, homophobic, racist, and all around bigoted messages.[14] In all, MacArthur recommends *Braveheart* be "swept into the garbage heap of history."[15] However, perhaps a deeper understanding of the film and its impact is required, and one should heed the advice of Toplin, who (seemingly in response to McArthur) says that "Few modern films can simply be relegated to the trash heap."[16]

McArthur utilizes the theories of pioneering film and history historian Robert Rosenstone in his analysis, and argues that critics who denounce the historical shortcomings of *Braveheart*, tend to "be rather less appreciative of what cinema might bring to the understanding of history."[17] The fact that McArthur claims to be appreciative of this fact, however, is often lost in his ridiculous criticisms. For instance, he somehow finds *Braveheart*'s score to be immoral, and "wholly in accord with *Braveheart*'s xenophobia and exclusivist conception of the nation – it is also congenial to *Braveheart*'s proto-fascism."[18] A similar argument comes when he claims a character in the film says, "Playing outlawed tunes on *blood* pipes." McArthur then rants that this "reference to 'blood pipes' reveals the traces of fascist ideology – blood and soil – which the film, probably unwittingly, subscribes to."[19] Yet, in reality, the character clearly states "playin outlawed tunes on *outlawed* pipes," thus

---

[12] L. Anderson, *Braveheart*, 59.
[13] Jeffery Richard's definition of McArthur's term, Brigadoon, Braveheart *and the Scots*, viii.
[14] See McArthur's Brigadoon, Braveheart *and the Scots*, 123-212.
[15] Ibid., 182.
[16] Toplin, *Reel History*, 107.
[17] McArthur, Brigadoon, Braveheart *and the Scots*, 183.
[18] Ibid., 163-169
[19] Ibid., 143.

making no reference to "blood and solid" fascist ideology.[20] It seems here that McArthur is either irresponsible, or intentionally altering lines in order to prove his farfetched allegations and to undermine *Braveheart*'s credibility and the nation-(re)building prospects. Either way this is inexcusable, and at odds with his claim that he appreciates cinemas' ability to help people understand the past.

More than anything McArthur complains about the effects *Braveheart* had in inciting dangerous xenophobia, rather than constructive patriotism, thus fearing a violent revolution. He claims that, although a "properly-mounted sociological study" is needed, the film sparked rampant anti-immigration sentiments in Scotland and had an "unpleasant" effect on young Scottish men, particularly in their relations with the English.[21] He even feared that Scottish soccer fans on their way to the Euro 96 tournament would be whipped into a xenophobic "frenzy." However, Scottish soccer supporters, nicknamed the Tartan Army, are regarded as some of the most courteous international fans.[22] And later McArthur admitted his fears were "unwarranted," and the only significant effect the film had on this international sporting event was that the media consistently referred to the Scottish team as "Bravehearts," causing that English commentators to counter by calling their squad "Lionhearts."[23] Overall, as a "civil elite," McArthur's attempts to discredit *Braveheart*'s ideology put him at odds with the ideological foundations of the devolution revolution and the subsequent (re)building of the Scottish nation, thus making him an active participant of the counter-revolution. Still, some of McArthur's fears did come to fruition, yet on a much smaller scale.

As is the case with many movies, real-world violence can be traced "directly" to *Braveheart*. In one instance, the anti-Englishness in *Braveheart* is said to have inspired two

---

[20] *Braveheart*, dir. Mel Gibson, prod. Mel Gibson, by Randall Wallace, perf. Mel Gibson, Sophie Marceau, Patrick McGoohan (United States: Paramount Pictures, 1995), DVD; it is also quoted this way in the novel version of the film, see Randall Wallace, *Braveheart: A Novel* (New York: Pocket Books, 1995), 19.
[21] McArthur, Brigadoon, Braveheart *and the Scots*, 6.
[22] For more see Kowalski, "'Cry For Us, Argentina,'" 73.
[23] McArthur, "*Braveheart* and the Scottish Aesthetic Dementia," 182.

individuals in Stirling to attack a local police officer because of his English sounding accent. Rare instances such as this confirmed the fears of some journalists in England who seemed to regard *Braveheart* as an active and bigoted revolutionary leader, claiming that it had "done more than any other [film] to bring about the demise of Britain [and] has fired the natural Anglophobia of working class Scotland."[24] However, far from being treated as heroic patriots nobly defending their homeland, the two assailants were treated harshly by the law and ridiculed in the Scottish press.[25] Thus, it seems McArthur failed to give the Scots enough credit when he feared they would confuse cinematic representations of brutal medieval warfare with what was necessary to achieve contemporary Scottish political autonomy, or an acceptable way to treat non-Scots. Scotland has been almost completely void of violence, and there is no indication that this will change. Regardless, commentators like McArthur, caused the Scots to question the patriotic ideology of the film and of the nationalist movement in general, adding to the Scots' political and cultural confusion. Whether or not the Scots actually saw these messages matters little, as McArthur simply wanted to attach a negative stigma to the film, hindering its ability to transmit pro-Scottish ideology, and reducing its effect on the nation-(re)building project. Even if one's immediate reaction to the film was positive, subsequent negative reviews and allegations by critics like McArthur could retrospectively alter their original opinion. Still, as time passed, and the novelty of the film wore off, this stigma increased, which was good news for Unionists.

Yet, as outlandish, and at times misguided, as McArthur is in his pessimism, Lin Anderson is in her optimism. In the years following the film, Anderson, a novelist by trade, collected thousands of sentiments concerning *Braveheart* on her fansite. In 2005, she published a book that contained many of these opinionated postings, making a positive case

[24] L. Anderson, *Braveheart,* 48.
[25] Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth*, 153.

for *Braveheart*. Unfortunately, her book, *Braveheart: From Hollywood to Holyrood,* is not only a mangled assortment of random internet opinions, it is also a pathetic attempt at historical writing, which feebly connects the film to devolution. Her praise of the film is at times irrational and some argue that it is even dangerous in its apparent support of xenophobic patriotism, which actually made historian Fiona Watson briefly "ashamed" of being Scottish.[26] Likewise, the sloppiness and errors of Anderson's book indicate that it was produced in a hurry and is so bad in places it left McArthur "cringing with embarrassment."[27]

Anderson contends that *Braveheart* was "Culturally and politically the most significant film of the nineties." "*Braveheart* played its part in changing Scotland," she argues, as it "helped change Scotland's perception of itself and the world's perception of Scotland. For better or worse, Wallace was back."[28] Although void of revolutionary terminology, her analysis seems to indicate that the return of Wallace was the catalyst for the devolution revolution. Many Scots had similar optimistic readings of *Braveheart*, but Anderson's work is the most developed, and thus can be used as a surrogate for the rest of the ideological sentiments that saw the film as a positive political and cultural force.

McArthur may criticize Anderson's book by claiming that it does not have any interest in "interrogating the Wallace cult, simply in facilitating it," but it seems this was one of her goals; as for much of the twentieth-century, facilitation of this "cult" was virtually nonexistent.[29] Anderson has no interest in looking at the deep, subconscious elements that McArthur attacks; rather she examines the revival of the Wallace myth and how the average Scot reacted to it, and how this may have influenced their political opinions or national identity. She concludes that the film did not dictate the outcome of devolution, but it did have

---

[26] Watson, interview by author.
[27] Colin McArthur, "Bleeding Wallace," *Scottish Review of Books*, October 28, 2009, accessed March 7, 2011, http://www.scottishreviewofbooks.org/index.php/back-issues/volume-1/volume-one-issue-four/198-bleeding-wallace-colin-mcarthur.
[28] L. Anderson, *Braveheart,* 22-23.
[29] McArthur, "Bleeding Wallace."

a tremendous impact on Scotland. This aligns with what DeFronzo defines as elite formulated revolutionary ideology, which often combines "economic aims with powerful unifying goals." This unification, DeFronzo explains, can come from "nationalist resistance to foreign domination or reaffirmation of traditional moral or religious principles, capable of facilitating alliances among a society's major social classes."[30] In Scotland's nationalist resistance, Wallace was understood as the traditional moral guardian, Thatcherism's economic policies were seen as foreign domination, and the majority of the Scots voted to devolve. Pro-Scottish ideologies, like the one Anderson saw in *Braveheart*, helped this come to fruition.

Anderson discredits intellectual elites like McArthur, arguing that the masses in Scotland reacted so positively to the film because they were "free from the professional baggage of the academic," and thus were able to grasp "the truth of the story." Moreover, Anderson claims that *Braveheart* provided a "litmus test for political and cultural allegiance at a time of crucial change," and has thus "done more to stimulate interests in the culture, politics and history in Scotland than any film before."[31] And she explains that it was impossible to witness a Scottish audience's reaction to *Braveheart* without feeling the political resonance the film had in contemporary Scotland.[32] In a comprehensive summary of the revolution and the ideological dimensions discussed by Anderson, amateur historian Susanne Wallner writes:

> The majority of the Scottish audience was infected by the actors' enthusiasm. Unlike the critics, they seemed to understand the deeper message. The film reminded the Scots that there is something called community that is worth fighting for, and belonging to that community made them proud…. In a sort of spiritual experience, the Scots rediscovered a national identity; a national identity which was not based on historical, but on emotional authenticity, which is even more powerful…. The Scots knew that they were presented a fictional drama, a fictional type of 'Scottishness'. Nevertheless, *Braveheart* revived the memory of a seven hundred year old heritage, and the memory of an unfinished business – Scottish independence – which most of

[30] DeFronzo, "Social Movements and Revolutions," 15.
[31] L. Anderson, *Braveheart*, 67.
[32] Ibid., 99.

> them had suppress since the failure of the 1979 Referendum. Due to *Braveheart*, being a Scot meant something to themselves again, and suddenly also meant something to the whole world that took a lively interest in the story.[33]

Spirited beliefs such as these are at the base of the revolutionary ideology that was fundamental to the success of Scotland's "non-violent political coup" in the 1990s. But here Wallner omits political and economic context, while overly emphasizing an emotionally authenticated nationalism, thus somewhat denying the Scots rational political agency.

DeFronzo contends some elites developed revolutionary ideology because they "simply feel threatened by the economic and political power of a dictatorship and turn against it."[34] In the 1990s, the Scots felt powerless in the increasingly centralised UK headed by the hated Thatcher government, and Scotland became a demoralized nation.[35] "Into this time and place," writes Anderson, "the Wallace story re-emerged, creating increases self-confidence in Scotland and spotlighting the issue of self-determination."[36] This feeling became the ideological justification for the devolution revolution, and met what DeFronzo's defines as the "primary function of revolutionary ideology" – its ability "to provided as many people as possible with the same or at least compatible viewpoints on the need to change society so that they will be motivated to cooperate in the revolutionary struggle."[37]

The foremost ideological message Anderson, and other Scottish nationalists, drew from the film was that Wallace was a heroic patriot fighting for Scotland's moral and natural right to freedom. Yet, unsurprisingly, McArthur has a problem with this reading of the film, as do many other historians. While some historians argued that the "nationalist Wallace" of the film was anachronistic, McArthur went further, contending that the film omitted confirmed historical facts that would have detracted from this ideological construction. This

---

[33] Susanne Wallner, *The Myth of William Wallace: A Study of the National Hero's Impact on Scottish History, Literature and Modern Politics* (Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2003), 96-97.
[34] DeFronzo, "Social Movements and Revolutions,"16.
[35] L. Anderson, *Braveheart,* 22.
[36] Ibid., 67.
[37] DeFronzo, "Social Movements and Revolutions," 15.

repression of historical fact in favor of ideological themes, however, is a standard of historical filmmaking, as modern Hollywood productions are forced to define black and white stories that blatantly pit good versus evil.[38] Without this, historical films run the risk of losing the audience's interest. Thus by including the supposed negative aspects of Wallace's myth, the film would have lost the viewer's sympathy for the protagonist, in turn detracting from the narratives emotional appeal. Overall, the skill of *Braveheart*'s filmmakers is what enabled them to so convincingly construct the ideological universe that McArthur chastises and that Anderson highlights. This polarizing ideology would aid the revolutionary ideology, thus constituting the filmmakers as modern "cultural elites."

In many ways, *Braveheart*'s success as a revolutionary element was due to its use of classic cinematic techniques. In *Reel History: In Defense of Hollywood* – in which an image from *Braveheart* graces the cover – Robert Brent Toplin lays out ten "major components of cinematic history," all of which supply responses to McArthur's complaint that accuracy was sacrificed for ideology.[39] These components include simplifying the past, offering a morally uplifting partisan view of history that is driven by a few representative characters and includes romance, while seeming relevant to the present, and communicating a strong feeling for the past.[40] Every component of Toplin's analysis is perfectly displayed in *Braveheart*, yet this is not to say that Gibson's film was not innovative or original.

In fact, there were many pioneering techniques in *Braveheart*, including an air cannon that shot hundreds of rubber-tipped arrows at once, realistic life-sized mechanical horses, and the perfection of the "jump-cut," of which Stephen Spielberg soon adopted.[41] With the mastery of this powerful medium, coupled with an inspirational message, it is no

---

[38] McArthur, "*Braveheart* and the Scottish Aesthetic Dementia," 168.
[39] Toplin, *Reel History*, 17.
[40] Ibid., 17-57.
[41] See Mel Gibson's DVD Commentary, *Braveheart*, DVD (1995).

wonder that *Braveheart* was so influential; supplying the Scots with a "compatible viewpoint," motivating them to change society and support the revolution, just as Defronzo claims a revolutionary ideology should.[42] *Braveheart*'s balancing of proven cinematic conventions and innovative techniques was a major reason why the film was so well liked. DeFronzo defines "elites" as "groups that have access to wealth or power of various types or are highly educated and possess important technical or managerial skills."[43] Obviously, the filmmakers were educated in their craft and possessed a great deal of technical cinematic skill, thus generating wealth and fame, and therefore, fit within DeFronzo's definition of elites who formulate ideology and lead revolutions.

McArthur, however, points to one convention that Toplin fails to highlight. "One of the mechanisms whereby an epic or historical bio/pic is rendered ideologically congenial to a popular audience," explains McArthur, "is by linking the central protagonist to one single, oft-reiterated word that evokes a favorable response from the audience." In *Braveheart*, this word was obviously "freedom."[44] Edensor points out in "Reading Braveheart: Representing and Contesting Scottish Identity," that the American ideological motifs of freedom and the defeat of oppression are often vital to Hollywood narratives.[45] Moreover, this formula is encoded with popular fantasies about freedom, individualism, equality, overcoming hypocrisy and corruption, and achieving romantic fulfillment. The typical hero who "will not settle for the world as it is" suggests the nobility of those who attempt to end oppression.[46] This revolutionary message inspires people, as they feel they can apply it to their own world, and in the 1990s, many Scots had a "favorable" reaction to the word "freedom." But the power of this word was far from novel.

---

[42] DeFronzo, "Social Movements and Revolutions," 15.
[43] Ibid., 12.
[44] McArthur, "*Braveheart* and the Scottish Aesthetic Dementia," 171
[45] Edensor, "Reading Braveheart," 4.
[46] Ibid., 6.

In his book, *On the Trail of William Wallace*, David R. Ross points to an old photograph of a Wallace commemoration from the early-1900s. In the photo, a member of the crowd holds a large banner that simply reads: "freedom." Ross thinks that these spectators would have been surprised to know that nearly a hundred years later the word "Freedom," which was not used much prior to *Braveheart*, would become the revolution's rallying cry.[47] This word's popularity post-*Braveheart* was not universally accepted, and as usual, McArthur had something to say about it. The use of the term "freedom," McArthur complains, expresses yet another way in which the film was "historically adrift." He contends the word constructs Wallace as a nationalist leader centuries before nationalism was a recognizable concept.[48] McArthur's denial of Wallace as a nationalist is unsurprising as he seems to distrust the notion of nationalism altogether, claiming he has "always felt it peculiar to claim pride in something one has expended no effort in achieving."[49] This explains why he saw the response to *Braveheart* as another example of the Scots mistaking "shit for manna."[50]

Yet, the word "freedom" was not the most controversial or powerful word to emerge after the film. This honor goes to the title of the film itself, and Anderson even claims the "word *Braveheart* has become synonymous with Scotland."[51] Evidence of this is found when J.A. Mangan – writing about the late-nineteenth-century "process of cultural cloning" as it connected to the Games Ethic – asks: "Was Braveheart betrayed?"[52] Here, the term "Braveheart" could have several meanings, including Scotland as a nation, the Scots as a people, or Scottish nationalism as a whole. Yet, it seems this word has become so powerful that it can mean all these things simultaneously. Mangan is not the only one to do this, as

---

[47] D. Ross, *On the Trail of William Wallace*, 115.
[48] McArthur, "*Braveheart* and the Scottish Aesthetic Dementia," 171.
[49] McArthur, "Bleeding Wallace."
[50] McArthur, "*Braveheart* and the Scottish Aesthetic Dementia," 186.
[51] L. Anderson, *Braveheart*, 67.
[52] J.A. Mangan, "Braveheart Betrayed?: Cultural Cloning for Colonial Careers," in *Sporting Nationalisms: Identity, Ethnicity, Immigration, and Assimilation*, ed. Mike Cronin and David Mayall (London: F. Cass, 1998), 191.

many authors, politicians, and journalists – particular foreign ones – still use the term to refer to all things Scottish, and to symbolize the national-(re)building process.[53]

Overall, the conflicting opinions held by outspoken civil elites added to the confusion of the revolution, as people were unsure what to think. Was *Braveheart* inaccurate racist rubbish or was it inspirational historical filmmaking? Despite McArthur's pessimistic observations, it seems most Scots, at least in the immediate, were inspired. The film even managed to create some active revolutionaries who energetically spread the revolution's ideology, and who remain committed to the nation-(re)building efforts. DeFronzo explains that some elites "directly participate in a revolution by providing leadership or other resources to help transform popular discontent and uprisings into an organized and powerful revolutionary movement."[54] This is most effective in the top-down approaches by political elites, but civil elites, and their ability to communicate with the average citizen in a bottom-up fashion, also play an important role. One such leader was the enthusiastic David R. Ross.

Ross had always been interested in Scottish history, but after *Braveheart*, Ross became even more vigorous in his patriotism, and with his impressive "managerial skills," he revived the grassroots organization known as the Society of William Wallace. Under Ross, this group became more proactive, "dedicated to preserving the memory of Sir William Wallace the great Scottish patriot." The Society's Constitution explains that they are a non-profit organization "open to all regardless of faith, nationality, sex or age." Ross' activism has done much for Wallace's public memory and the sites, myths, and dates associated with his name, including the symbolic funeral in 2005, which saw elegies by historian Fiona Watson and Nationalist leader Alex Salmond, among others. Despite claiming to be

---

[53] For example see, James Mennie, "PQ's Marois in Scotland: 'Braveheart' It Wasn't," *The Montreal Gazette*, January 30, 2013, accessed February 14, 2013, http://blogs.montrealgazette.com/2013/01/30/pqs-marois-in-scotland-braveheart-it-wasnt/.

[54] DeFronzo, "Social Movements and Revolutions,"15.

uninfluenced "by any political parties whatsoever," they often work most closely with those, like the SNP, who share the ideology of Wallace as they understand it.[55] Indeed, using revolutionary-like rhetoric, the society declares:

> …we maintain the principles that Wallace himself held so dear – principals for which Wallace was willing to give up his life. Wallace put the freedom of his country and people above all else in life, and the members of the Society seek to emulate these ideals, Scotland's freedom being paramount in our aims. But…we welcome people of all creeds and nationalities, many of whom join as they can relate to the basic right of each nation to self-governance, and understand Wallace's love for his native soil.[56]

Since Ross' untimely passing in 2010, the Society has been lead by Duncan Fenton, who is unsurprisingly a staunch defender of Gibson's film, overlooking its inaccuracies by highlighting its ability to revive Wallace's history. In fact, a leading committee member for the Society, a lively postman in his fifties by the name of George Boyle, says that prior to *Braveheart* he knew very little about Wallace, claiming that the history of the hero was never taught to him in school. But the film inspired him to find out more, and soon he was infatuated with the figure. Now Boyle devotes much of his time educating others about Wallace, commemorating him, and maintaining sites and memorials thought to be connected to him.[57] Although the Society of William Wallace remains relatively small in numbers, the devotion of its members is a clear example of the power of film and of Scottish national pride. Moreover, in Boyle, *Braveheart* had created an active revolutionary who continues to relentlessly advocate for the legacy of Wallace and for the (re)building of the Scottish nation.

Yet for "civic elites" like McArthur, the revival of Wallace's public memory, and the bolstering of Scottish nationalism, did not outweigh the overwhelmingly negative aspects of the film. "It is as if an aesthetic dementia had gripped the Scots," says McArthur, "rendering

---

[55] David R. Ross, Duncan Fenton, and George Boyle, "The Society of William Wallace Constitution," The Society of William Wallace, November 30, 2009, accessed January 4, 2013, http://www.thesocietyofwilliamwallace.com/constitution.htm.
[56] "Aims of the Wallace Society," The Society of William Wallace, 2007, accessed January 4, 2013, http://www.thesocietyofwilliamwallace.com/society.htm.
[57] Duncan Fenton (Convenor) and George Boyle (Treasurer/ Webmaster), interview by author, August 4, 2012.

them blind to the empty populism, the slavering xenophobia, the sheer stylistic vulgarity of *Braveheart*."[58] Nevertheless, Anthony D. Smith explains that the "ideologies of nationalism require an immersion in the culture of the nation" including "the rediscovery of its history."[59] *Braveheart* allowed the Scots to rediscover their ancient pride, and the skill of the filmmakers, and the style and themes they infused in their project, was vital to the construction of a revolutionary ideology. Finally, Anderson contends, this ideology gave a voice to a voiceless nation, aiding the devolution revolution.[60] In the end, although the formulation, and contestation, of this revolutionary ideology by "civil elites" like McArthur and Anderson, and by "cultural elites" such as *Braveheart*'s filmmakers, is significant, what is most important is this ideology in the hands of "political elites." For it was within the political sphere that the revolution was fought and won, and where nationalism became a powerful "unifying motivation."

[58] McArthur, "*Braveheart* and the Scottish Aesthetic Dementia," 182.
[59] Smith, *Nationalism*, 7.
[60] L. Anderson, *Braveheart*, 11.

CHAPTER IV

HEAD AND HEART NATIONALISM: SCOTLAND'S UNIFYING MOTIVATION

The third "critical factor" necessary for revolutionary success is described by DeFronzo as the "existence of powerful motivations for revolution that cut across major classes and unify the majority of a society's population behind the goal of revolution."[1] He explains this widespread motivation is generally a "product of nationalism" which is activated when a national group perceives that it "has been victim of exploitation," and thus join together "to end their domination." "Nationalism as a motivating factor… is most likely to emerge," DeFronzo continues, "in reaction to direct colonial rule or indirect colonial domination through a local regime perceived to be operating on behalf of foreign rather than national interests."[2] In late-twentieth-century Scotland, *Braveheart* was a powerful unifying motivation for the devolution revolution. To comprehend this, one must have some understanding of how Scottish nationalism – historically, culturally and politically – relates to the Wallace myth and *Braveheart*. This will show that Gibson's film reflected themes of Scottish nationalism, in all its forms, and thus helped motivate discontent towards Scotland's perceived "colonization," in turn unifying the Scots across class lines. In these ways *Braveheart* meets the criteria of DeFronzo's third factor. In fact, Scotland is home to one of the oldest national identities in the world, but because of its relations with England, it is also home to one of the most complex.[3]

---

[1] DeFronzo, "Social Movements and Revolutions," 13.
[2] Ibid., 17.
[3] Smith explains that Scotland has a "sense of immemorial nationhood." Smith, *Nationalism*, 54.

Colin McArthur loathes nearly every aspect of *Braveheart*, claiming it is "historically adrift," because it constructs Wallace as nationalist a millennium before nationalism became a "concept under which disparate classes and interests might be mobilized within a nation state."[4] Leading scholar of nationalism, Anthony D. Smith, defines "nation-building" as the process of creating a national identity with immense vigor and zeal. He claims that this is "essentially a modern," emerging only during the French Revolution and thus finding "no real parallel before 1789." There had been a few similar instances, says Smith, but "there was no collective design to their work," and they were generally conducted in the name of, or on behalf of, an individual or ruling class. These movements had no "ideology of the sovereign people sharing a common history and culture, to whom supreme loyalty was owed and for whom great sacrifices must be made." Smith goes on to say that "nationalism and its ideals of national autonomy, unity and identity, are relatively modern phenomena," and it was something new, *not* an updated version of some ancient idea, claiming that "[n]othing like this existed before." Smith cites Eric Hobsbawm and Benedict Anderson while explaining the "Constructionist" theories, arguing "Nationalism, in short, is a product of *modernity*."[5]

Murray Pittock, however, uses Smith's own definitions to argue that "nationality" is not merely a modern concept, at least as far as Scotland is concerned. Pittock highlights Smith's five keys to nationality: historic territory, common history, public culture, legal jurisdiction, and economy. Pittock then explains that Scotland had obtained all of these by, or shortly after, Wallace's time in the latter Middle Ages.[6] Furthermore, historian Chris Brown (who obviously hoped to benefit from the name recognition of the film by entitling his text *William Wallace: The True Story of Braveheart*) seems to put Wallace's national cause

[4] McArthur, "*Braveheart* and the Scottish Aesthetic Dementia," 171.
[5] Smith, *Nationalism*, 49-51.
[6] Pittock, *The Road to Independence?*, 25.

directly into DeFronzo's framework. "A motivational factor that is sometimes belittled and often ignored in medieval history," writes Brown,

> is nationalism. A number of twentieth-century historians have seen European nationalism as a product of the wars of Napoleon, arguing that prior to the nineteenth-century the bulk of the populace in most countries were not concerned about national identity. In England and Scotland, at least, this is simply untenable. Thirteenth-century Scots were perfectly well aware of their nationality, as were their counterparts in England.[7]

Likewise, David R. Ross believes that the men who fought with Wallace "obviously believed in the entity of Scotland." He argues that the Scots were "there to fight, not for land or riches, but for freedom, and if their life was part of the cost, then so be it."[8] Here Ross mimics Scotland's most famous document, and a contemporary of Wallace's struggle, the Declaration of Arbroath. Written in 1320 and sent to the Pope as a statement of Scotland's independence from England, the document shows that the word "freedom" is not so anachronistic after all, and concludes by proclaiming:

> …as long as a hundred of us remain alive, never will we on any conditions be subjected to the lordship of the English. It is in truth not for glory, nor riches, nor honours that we are fighting, but for *freedom* alone, which no honest man gives up but with life itself.[9]

Thus, Scottish nationalism, or at least pride in a "free" Scottish nation, is as old as the Wallace myth itself. Yet this ancient Scottish pride was rarely proactive in post-Union national politics, and seemed to have only surfaced at sporting events and tourist attractions.

Apart from the "ninety minute patriots" at Scotland-versus-England football matches, many Scots since 1707 have expressed their nationality in schizophrenic or "duel terms," part British, part Scottish.[10] This "duel identity," writes Andrew Ross, has actually allowed for a

---

[7] Chris Brown, *William Wallace: The True Story of Braveheart* (Stroud: Tempus, 2005), 19.
[8] D. Ross, *On the Trail of William Wallace*, 72.
[9] "The Declaration of Arbroath," Scotland's History at Educationscotland.gov.uk, accessed April 4, 2012, http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/scotlandshistory/warsofindependence/declarationofarbroath/index.asp. (Emphasis added).
[10] Former SNP Leader Jim Sillars coined the phrase "ninety minute patriots" in a 1992 speech. For more on this, and on Scottish identity and sport, see Bairner, "'We Are the England Haters!,'" 69-70.

degree of autonomy in Scotland, while enjoying the "dividends of its junior partnership in imperial affairs directed by Westminster."[11] Alan Bairner explains this autonomy was culturally-based, and it is important to note that at no time did England ever seek to eradicate this cultural nationalism. On the one hand, this could express the congenial relationship between the two nations within the political union. On the other hand, this may represent a major reason why a revolution demanding self-rule never took place prior to the 1990s. As Bairner points out, the Union's tolerance of Scottish identity

> may well have represented a clever political strategy inasmuch as the resilience of a separate Scottish culture became a crucial factor in dissuading a majority of Scots from seeking that political independence which, according to nationalists at least, would be appropriate accompaniment to a distinctive national identity.[12]

For hundreds of years the Wallace myth had been an impetus for Scotland's distinctive national identity; that is until the twentieth-century, when Wallace was widely forgotten and suppressed. In 1995, *Braveheart* fused Scottish historical and cultural nationalism, inspiring a non-violent political coup, and in 1997, united in a single vision, the Scots finally put to rest "the spectre of a divided country."[13]

The exploitation of this resurgent cultural nationalism was clear in the political rhetoric leading up to devolution. A movies' ability to communicate historical information to a mass audience is unrivaled, and a single film can speak to all peoples, no matter their income, education, sex, age, origins, or personal beliefs. Despite indirectly criticizing wealthy elites, while promoting a populist message (a common theme in Hollywood pictures) *Braveheart* powerfully illustrated to the Scots that they had long been victims of exploitation brought on by England. In fulfilling DeFronzo's unifying motivation factor, the film's universal appeal helped spread this message across class boundaries, uniting the Scots, who

---

[11] A. Ross, "Wallace's Monument and the Resumption of Scotland," 87.
[12] Bairner "'We Are the England Haters!,'" 49.
[13] Denver, Mitchell, Pattie, Bochel, *Scotland Decides*, 142.

collectively ended, or at least lessened, their perceived domination. Yet, the film alone did not convince the Scots that devolution was necessary, because without the activism of Scottish nationalists, *Braveheart* would *not* have had the political impact it did. Aiding this was the circumstances surrounding *Braveheart* and Scotland in the 1990s. The film came at a time when the nation was dissatisfied with their place in the Union, and about the demise of the Empire. Moreover, this film about a "freedom fighter" emerged in a modernized European nation with a relatively small, politically conscious, and highly literate population with ample access to cinemas, the internet, and home video –all of which contributed to *Braveheart*'s impact. Therefore, the film was not enough to constitute a revolutionary motivation, rather *Braveheart*'s ideology needed to be moulded by nationalist authorities who transformed it into relevant stimuli.

DeFronzo points out that unifying motivations for revolutions often spur from opposition to "imperialistic" political actions by a perceived foreign power. Such "colonial" situations solidify as the dominant power gains control of the weaker nation's resources. After which the foreign power manipulates the weaker country's economy so that it will primarily serve the colonial ruler, and finally the colonizer will attempt to transform the cultural by imposing foreign values on the subjugated society. It is difficult to place Scotland's circumstances at the end of the twentieth-century into this type of colonial context. Indeed, after the protests over the 1707 Act of Union subsided, the majority of the Scots embraced the benefits that came along with being part of the world's foremost empire. But Scottish patriotism did not disappear. This is evident in the writings of Scotland's most renowned poet, Robert Burns, who lamented in 1791 that the Act of Union meant losing

Scotland's ancient glories, and even the Scottish name, as it simply made Scotland "England's province." "We're bought and sold for English gold," Burns bitterly wrote.[14]

Regardless of such complaints, Pittock claims that, since the eighteenth-century, only a "handful of extreme nationalists" ever saw the situation in Scotland as colonial.[15] But as Tom Nairn observes, this may be due to the tendency that in a union between a strong nation and a weaker one, the larger partner may dominate the merger, yet the lesser will continue to think of the relationship as an equal "partnership," distinctly different from colonization.[16] Nonetheless, by the end of the twentieth-century, Scottish pride in the Empire was waning, and after *Braveheart* reminded them of their *Scottish* past, the Scots distanced themselves even further from their *British* identity. Consequently placing Scotland in a direct colonial situation in the mid-1990s may be going too far.

However, DeFronzo also explains that a stronger country can indirectly dominate a weaker one. This is known as "neocolonialism," and occurs when a weaker country is kept politically and culturally dependent on a stronger nation, often by way of a local government which works on the behalf of foreign interests.[17] In Scotland during the eighties and nineties, highly unpopular Conservative rule was widely viewed as a "manifestation of English nationalism insensitive to Scottish interests," whose policies, including the "poll tax," wreaked havoc on the Scottish economy.[18] Furthermore, North Sea oil was a new found source of wealth that seemed to offer the Scots a way of freeing themselves from their dependency on the "new, lesser Britain."[19] But the British government controlled Scottish resources and sold the oil rights to multinational corporations, and they also dictated how the

---

[14] Robert Burns, "Such A Parcel Of Rogues In A Nation," Robert Burns Country, 1791, accessed September 18, 2011, http://www.robertburns.org/works/344.shtml.
[15] Pittock, *Road to Independence?*, 13; also see 84, 136.
[16] Nairn, *After Britain*, 13.
[17] Brian Wheeler, "Scottish Independence: The American Perspective," BBC News-Washington, January 24, 2012, accessed January 26, 2012, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-16537073.
[18] Ronnie Kowalski, "'Cry For Us, Argentina,'" 71.
[19] Lynch, *Scotland*, 446.

revenues from Scotland's tourist industry were distributed. These actions kept Scotland weak and dependent on the UK economy. Moreover, *Braveheart* brought to light the Scots ignorance of their own history, an apparent effort by the Union to impose a distinctly British national identity. Even in the years following devolution, SNP spokesman Andrew Wilson apparently opined that the Union Flag was "an offensive symbol," referring to nothing "other than colonialism."[20]

Collectively these elements place late-twentieth-century Scotland in a (neo)colonial situation. It may not have been violent, overt, or publicized, but many Scots nonetheless felt subjugated by Thatcherism, which Nairn says reinforced the British state's centralism.[21] By the late-1980s, the so called "Doomsday Scenario" had dawned as the popularity of Thatcherite Conservatism continued to be high in the rest of the UK, yet dismally low in Scotland. In 1987, of the seventy-two possible Scottish seats in the Westminster Parliament, the Conservatives won just ten, compared to Labour's fifty. But the Conservatives maintained their grip on the UK government. Therefore, the greatest fear of Scottish nationalists – the "Doomsday Scenario" – had come to fruition, a time in which Scotland was governed by an administration that the Scottish electorate had "manifestly rejected," and even "fair-minded unionists perceived the injustice."[22] In late-1991, Christopher Harvie explains, with the Westminster government again lacking a Scottish mandate, this "scenario" was "reactivated," and Scottish politics fell into a "manic-depressive phase."[23] Thus, in the years immediately prior to *Braveheart*, Anderson says the demoralized nation struggled with a "democratic deficit" in the overly centralised UK, and felt "powerless to exercise its

[20] Andrew Wilson quoted in "The Union Flag," The Scottish Unionist Party, accessed February 5, 2010, http://www.scottishunionistparty.co.uk/content/view/9/6/. The site claims Wilson said this in 1999.
[21] Nairn, *After Britain*, 109.
[22] Keay, Keay, eds., *Collins Encyclopaedia of Scotland*, "Scottish Parliament, The," 895.
[23] Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism*, 204.

political, social and cultural beliefs."[24] The "Doomsday Scenario" meant that the Scots perceived their situation as unjust, if not wholly (neo)colonial – rectifiable only by revolutionary means.

Nationalists often placed the Union government in an imperial position. In 1995, the SNP was quick to use the film that presented ancient Scots suffering under an oppressive English imperial occupation. After all, Nationalists knew that revolutions need something to revolt against, thus *Braveheart* helped facilitate the idea of Scotland's historically unjustified (neo)colonialism, and they were fully prepared to perpetuate this powerful imagery. It was in this rhetoric that *Braveheart* went from an emotional film about a forgotten historical figure, to a revolutionary factor. The film revived popular nationalism, but it was now time for politicians to unify the Scots by putting *Braveheart*'s messages into action, converting mass frustrations into revolutionary political activism.

Richard Finlay explains that by the late-twentieth-century, Scottish history, in a popular sense, had become more politicized than ever before.[25] No other party embraced this shift more than the Nationalists. Although the Party had enjoyed some moderate successes since Cunninghame-Graham and other Scottish patriots founded it in the 1930s, it was not until the 1970s that the SNP became politically viable. During the 1979 devolution campaigning the Nationalists used economic arguments, highlighting the North Sea oil controversy by asking Scottish voters whether they wanted to be a "Rich Scot or Poor Briton?"[26] Despite their efforts, Scotland's first devolution referendum failed, and the SNP reminded frustrated with Westminster's economic strangulation. Thus, when *Braveheart* emerged, they immediately identified with its representations of exploitation, and brazenly

[24] L. Anderson, *Braveheart,* 87. (Anderson's spelling)
[25] Finlay, "New Britain, New Scotland, New History?," 384.
[26] A. Ross, "Wallace's Monument and the Resumption of Scotland," 96.

utilized the film in their nationalist propaganda. This "smack of opportunism" for some, but for the SNP, it seemed natural.[27]

The SNP's overt appropriations of the film and the rhetoric it generated, may not have been the only reason the Scots voted to devolve in 1997, but its emotional messages helped focus Scottish minds, creating a more unified, self-confident nation, ready for more political responsibility. The fusion of national politics and Gibson's film began in early-September 1995 at the star-studded European premiere of *Braveheart*. Held in a small theater on the University of Stirling's campus, the site chosen for the premiere was only a few hundred yards from the location of Wallace's most important victory 698 years prior.[28] The premiere was an enormous occasion, complete with a grand fireworks-sound-and-light show centered on the Wallace Monument itself.[29] It also attracted thousands of people who eagerly lined the streets, clamoring to catch a glimpse of a real-life movie star. Even a Hollywood veteran like Mel Gibson was shocked by the response. "I couldn't believe there was so much fervor," Gibson said, "I became really aware of what a piece of art can do to change things."[30] But amongst the pageantry there was highly politicized propaganda war heating up, one that would eventually decide the fate of the United Kingdom.

As the leader of the SNP and a Member of Parliament, Alex Salmond was invited to the prestigious event, as were other high-ranking Scottish politicians. As the current leader of the SNP, the First Minister of Scotland, and the face of the independence movement, Salmond's words, spoken weeks ago or decades ago, carry great reverence, and from the very beginning it was clear that Salmond saw in the film the potential to inspire nationalistic sentiment. In fact, in an interview at the premiere, Salmond alludes to the unifying power of

---

[27] L. Anderson, *Braveheart,* 108.
[28] For more on the Premiere see McArthur, "*Braveheart* and the Scottish Aesthetic Dementia," 178.
[29] Edensor, "Reading Braveheart," 11.
[30] Mel Gibson quoted in Jim McBeth, "Braveheart the Monster: Wallace Was Just a Village-Burning Thug, Says Mel on Hit Movie's 15th Anniversary," *Daily Mail* (London), October 26, 2009, accessed March 12, 2011, http://www.questia.com/library/1G1-210512384/braveheart-the-monster-wallace-was-just-a-village-burning

the film, saying, "believe me if it could raise an audience, and rouse an audience like the one that was in there, it could rouse Scotland."[31] And rouse Scotland it did. All over the nation, audiences were stirred, and there were reports of loud cheering and even standing ovations in many Scottish cinemas at the conclusion of the film.[32] However, it was not only the audience's inside the theater that encouraged Salmond.

Eleven days after the premiere, Salmond was at the SNP's annual conference in Perth. While riding high on the wave of patriotism motivated by the film, Salmond began his "Winning with Wallace" speech by describing his experiences in Stirling:

> A funny thing happened to me on the way to the *Braveheart* Premiere. There was a hero draped in tartan waiting to be cheered by thousands lining the streets as he entered the cinema. And what happened? Well first, he got booed in. [Then] Three hours later, he was booed out. For this wasn't the Hollywood hero but the local hero – not Mel but Michael – the secretary of State Against Scotland.[33]

The "Michael" that Salmond takes such pleasure in mocking here is Michael Forsyth, who was at that time the Secretary of State for Scotland, as well as the Stirling area's Parliamentary representative. McArthur notes that that prior to Gibson's film, Forsyth had always been "decidedly cool about the ideological dimensions of being Scottish," leaving that sort of thing to the Nationalists.[34] But for the photo-op that was the *Braveheart* premiere, Forsyth donned a kilt and tried hard to highlight his Scottishness.

Despite his efforts, and praising Wallace as "a man who stood up for Scotland," the hostile crowd jeered Forsyth because he, and his Conservative-Unionist party – which seemed to represent an English based government – did not support an autonomous Scotland.[35] Consequently, Forsyth seemed at odds with the message of freedom so blatant in the film. Salmond pounced on this negative reaction to Forsyth, explaining that the revival of

---

[31] Salmond quoted in *The Three Lives of William Wallace*, dir. Ross Harper.
[32] See for example see L. Anderson, *Braveheart*, 1.
[33] Salmond, "Winning with Wallace," quoted in McArthur, Brigadoon, Braveheart, *and the Scots*, 126.
[34] Colin McArthur, Brigadoon, Braveheart, *and the Scots*, 127.
[35] David Gritten, "Scots Hear 'Braveheart' Battle Cry," *The Los Angeles Times*, September 24, 1995, accessed April 3, 2012, http://articles.latimes.com/1995-09-24/entertainment/ca-49331_1_scottish-independence.

the Wallace myth had put Forsyth, and his party, in an awkward position. Unionists did not want to promote the idea of freedom, yet they wanted to avoid criticizing a film about Scottish history that they knew many voting Scots enjoyed. In addition, Salmond put leading Labour Party member, George Robertson, in the same category as Forsyth. In his speech, he said that the two politicians "were certainly having trouble explaining away the message" of the film. Salmond said that, although Forsyth claimed Wallace was a fighter for Scottish "interests," and Robertson said he fought for Scottish "identity," the two politicians were having "difficulty with the 'i' word," arguing that they did not want to mention "INDEPENDENCE which is what Wallace was actually fighting for."[36] Significantly, this highlights a major debate about Wallace's "nationalist" intentions, and also shows that this myth was employed as late-twentieth-century political propaganda.

For obvious reasons, unionist parties were hesitant to align themselves with *Braveheart*, yet they could not simply ignore the unified nationalism it was generating, and they struggled to counteract the film's revolutionary ideology. Forsyth and Robertson "made halfhearted attempts to square their own parties' unionist politics with the clear independence message of the film," writes McArthur, "but everyone knew that there was no way they could construct the Wallace of the film as anything other than separatist."[37] Nevertheless, in an almost intentionally-ironic fashion, a BBC documentary shows footage of Forsyth in the mid-1990s defiantly stating: "most people would resent an attempt to hijack the story of William Wallace for any particular political party."[38] However, one is hard pressed to believe his words, as he speaks adorned in full Highland dress with the towering Wallace Monument predominantly placed over his shoulder in the background. Forsyth's actions, then, are exactly what Andrew Ross meant when he said that, in Scotland, medieval events can have

[36] Salmond, "Winning with Wallace," quoted in McArthur, "*Braveheart* and the Scottish Aesthetic Dementia," 180.
[37] McArthur, "*Braveheart* and the Scottish Aesthetic Dementia," 179.
[38] Michael Forsyth quoted in *The Three Lives of William Wallace*, dir. Ross Harper.

powerful resonance in modern politics, and the opportunity to exploit ancient stones is hard to pass up.[39] Although he wanted to downplay the importance of Wallace in contemporary politics, Forsyth still tried to use Wallace to his advantage, albeit less overtly than Salmond.

Forsyth, however, did not stop at simply wearing a kilt; he actually managed to right an ancient wrong. In 1296, a year prior to Wallace's major victory at Stirling Bridge, Edward I of England removed Scotland's ancient coronation seat known as the Stone of Scone, or the Stone of Destiny. Thereafter this mighty symbol of the Scottish kingdom-nation resided in London at Westminster Abby. Then, in 1996, the newly invigorated Michael Forsyth managed to bring the symbol of Scottish pride home after 700 years away. However, far from being met with universal praise and admiration, many in Scotland simply saw this as a political ploy by a desperate non-nationalist. Pittock described Forsyth's action as "empty gesture politics," explaining that the time had passed for "such political theater."[40] And Elspeth King says that Forsyth's gesture was nothing more than an attempt to save his parliamentary seat, but that this failed as people saw his actions as insincere politicking.[41] In the end, despite his best efforts, it seems Forsyth was a victim of the revolution's unifying motivation encouraged by *Braveheart*, and in 1997 he was voted out of office.

Salmond's mockery of Forsyth shows that he was quite comfortable "hijacking" the story of Wallace for political reasons. Instead of violent, xenophobic racism, however, Salmond translated the film's ideology into nothing more than pro-independence nationalistic pride. Indeed, in the years following the film – as Scotland moved towards the vote for devolution – the word "Braveheart" became a staple of Salmond's campaign rhetoric. For example, Salmond declared on UK national television that he looked forward to devolution

[39] A. Ross, "Wallace's Monument and the Resumption of Scotland," 98.
[40] Pittock, *The Road to Independence?*, 79.
[41] King, interview by author.

with a "Brave heart," which was met with loud cheers from the on-looking crowd.[42] And on another occasion, he strongly urged the Scots to be "Bravehearts, not Fainthearts."[43]

This sort of rhetoric was motivating for some, but deplorable to others. McArthur complained that the SNP "enthusiastically embraced *Braveheart*," but that this was unwise "given the film's xenophobia."[44] And he believed it to be "decidedly sinister" that a political party would align itself with such a "truly appalling film."[45] Other critics had similar opinions, and felt that Salmond should "be ashamed that his party has benefited from tawdry emotionalism and racism."[46] But in his 1995 conference speech, Salmond *did*, in fact, indicate that he was ashamed, but not of his Party's use of *Braveheart*. Rather he lamented that he, and his fellow countrymen, should be "ashamed that it has taken Hollywood to give so many Scots back our history and put the name and fame of Wallace on the lips of every schoolchild in our country."[47] Salmond thus hoped to turn this "shame" into a unifying motivation for a long overdue revolution.

Like Robert Burns before him, Salmond's "Winning with Wallace" speech, viewed the Act of Union as a mistake forced upon the people of Scotland. He then declared that anti-independence parties should "be worried because now, as anyone who knows the story and has seen the film will know, the villains are not the English but the establishment leadership of Scotland who bought and sold their country for personal advancement."[48] Here Salmond indicates that the film introduced many Scots to this idea, or at least reminded them of it, and

---

[42] Sally J. Morgan, "The Ghost in the Luggage: Wallace and Braveheart: Post-Colonial 'Pioneer' Identities," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 2, no. 3 (1999), 376.
[43] Finlay, "The Wallace Cult in the Twentieth Century," 177.
[44] McArthur, Brigadoon, Braveheart, *and the Scots*, 126.
[45] McArthur, "*Braveheart* and the Scottish Aesthetic Dementia," 182.
[46] Ewen MacAskill, "No Oscar for SNP over Braveheart," *The Scotsman* (Edinburgh), September 12, 1995, found in Edensor, "Reading Braveheart," 17.
[47] Salmond, "Winning with Wallace," quoted in Henderson, "Political Constructions of National Identity in Scotland and Quebec," 17.
[48] Salmond, "Winning with Wallace," quoted in McArthur, "*Braveheart* and the Scottish Aesthetic Dementia,"181.

he utilizes the emotions of the film to make his point, despite the fact that the Act of Union took place centuries after Wallace's death.

In 1995, shortly before the film's release, the SNP unleashed its "Head and Heart" campaign, which proved to be one of its most controversial, yet successful recruitment efforts ever. The most blatant appropriation of the film came as Scottish moviegoers made their way to and from theaters screening the epic. Here many potential voters encountered eager Nationalists distributing pro-independence leaflets. The promotional cards made it clear that the SNP was not afraid to connect this violent, inaccurate movie to their cause for Scottish autonomy. With Mel Gibson as Wallace centered on the card, and the words "BRAVE" and "HEART" flanking him, the leaflet, with clear anti-colonial, revolutionary rhetoric, read:

> Independence isn't just history. Most European nations have it. Scotland needs it again – and now almost 40 per cent of the Scottish people agree. Most of them vote SNP – for a real Scottish Parliament with a direct voice in Europe, for Scottish control of Scottish oil and Scottish resources, and for investment in Scottish education and health. Today, it's not just Bravehearts who choose Independence – it's also wise heads – and they use the ballot box! Independence – we need it more than ever![49]

On the reverse side appeared the slogan, "You've seen the movie… Now face the reality," along with spaces to fill in one's name and donation amount.[50] By discussing national liberation, control of recourses, education reform, and an urgent plea for change, this card appeals to nearly every facet of DeFronzo's "unifying motivations" factor. This recruitment strategy seems to have worked, as thousands of these reply-paid postcards were returned with people requesting information about joining the SNP.[51]

Moreover, at the end of Salmond's "Winning with Wallace" speech, he attempted to connect his party to the patriotic hero, and to the emotions of the film, saying:

---

[49] As seen in McArthur, "*Braveheart* and the Scottish Aesthetic Dementia," 175.
[50] Quoted in Edensor, "Reading Braveheart," 14.
[51] Robbie Dinwoodie, "Labour's Popularity Plummets. SNP Rides High on Back of Braveheart," *The Herald, Scotland* (Glasgow), October 2, 1995, accessed May 1, 2011, http://www.heraldscotland.com/sport/spl/aberdeen/labour-s-popularity-plummets-snp-rides-high-on-back-of-braveheart-1.658883.

> 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. To achieve it will require passion and commitment combined with pragmatism and iron self-discipline. So that we can say with Wallace – head and heart – the one word which encapsulates all our hopes – *Freedom, Freedom, Freedom*.[52]

It appears here that Salmond is describing Gibson's version of William Wallace, using terms like passion, commitment, self-discipline, and head and heart, all of which are major themes in *Braveheart*. Furthermore, this powerful conclusion mirrors the famous dialogue in the film in which Wallace speaks to his troops before they charge into battle – a speech Anderson claims "stirred a nation on the brink of self-determination."[53] Salmond also poignantly uses the word "freedom," which as mentioned was criticized by commentators, yet as evident by Salmond's speech, become a rallying cry in the run-up to the devolution referendum, and continues to be prevalent in the nation-(re)building process.[54]

This sort of rhetoric was a major boost for the Nationalists. In October of 1995, mere weeks after the Stirling premiere, the *Glasgow Herald* printed an article headlined, "Labour's Popularity Plummets. SNP Rides High on Back of Braveheart," in which journalist Robbie Dinwoodie highlighted the success of the "Head and Heart" initiative, which he dubbed the "Braveheart campaign."[55] In the article, Salmond discussed the recent success of his party, stating: "The last two months are of fundamental significance," calling the shifting political climate a "dramatic sea-change in opinion." He then credited three factors for this shift. First was the successful conference in which he gave his rousing "Winning with Wallace" speech. Second was an apparent backlash against an ugly Labour smear campaign. But finally, he said, the efficiency of the "Head and Heart" campaign was a major factor in the SNP's new found popularity. The campaign that had admittedly attempted to capitalize the on the

---

[52] Salmond, "Winning with Wallace," quoted in McArthur, Brigadoon, Braveheart, *and the Scots*, 126.
[53] L. Anderson, *Braveheart*, 105.
[54] McArthur, "*Braveheart* and the Scottish Aesthetic Dementia," 171.
[55] Dinwoodie, "Labour's Popularity Plummets. SNP Rides High on Back of Braveheart."

emotions of *Braveheart*, while connecting it to "the economics of independence," proved effective. Michael Russell, who is now the Secretary of Education and Lifelong Learning in the SNP government, said in 1995: "People really are responding to the film in an intelligent fashion. They're saying that it raises the whole question of Scottish independence, and that they're interested in it."[56]

But the Party's decision to use the film was apparently regrettable for some of its "senior figures," who, according to McArthur, confess, "off the record," that the relentless exploitation of the *Braveheart* was a tactical error.[57] Salmond, however, has never indicated he regrets utilizing the motion picture. Rather he said: "I am happier about our 'hearts and heads' campaign than about anything we have done in years. There is real power in the emotional appeal of *Braveheart* coupled to an economic case for independence which is coming through very strongly."[58] The effectiveness of the campaign convinced Salmond that the SNP was right to utilize *Braveheart* in the Party's recruitment drives, claiming that "William Wallace was a campaigner for Scottish independence."[59] At least in the short term, *Braveheart* excited interest in the "separatist-minded" National Party, as appropriations of the film helped foster a powerful unifying motivation.[60] The Nationalists saw an eight point rise in the opinion polls, and according to Salmond, applications for SNP membership were almost sixty a day, which in a small nation like Scotland, is quite a lot.[61] The political mood was shifting in Scotland, and weeks after the film, the *Herald* reported: "Since the Nationalists' heyday of the mid 1970s, this month's poll rating has been bettered only during the months following their Govan by-election victory in 1988."[62] Meaning, if it were not for a

[56] Salmond and Michael Russell quoted in, "Labour's Popularity Plummets. SNP Rides High on Back of Braveheart."
[57] McArthur, Brigadoon, Braveheart, *and the Scots*, 200. (sources unnamed).
[58] Dinwoodie, "Labour's Popularity Plummets. SNP Rides High on Back of Braveheart."
[59] Salmond quoted in Gritten, "Scots Hear 'Braveheart' Battle Cry."
[60] Toplin, *Reel History*, 181.
[61] Dinwoodie, "Labour's Popularity Plummets. SNP Rides High on Back of Braveheart."
[62] Dinwoodie, "Labour's Popularity Plummets. SNP Rides High on Back of Braveheart."

brief period in the late-1980s, the "Head and Heart" campaign would have granted the SNP their most positive poll ratings in over two decades. For Edensor, these numbers point to the powerful impact of the film on Scottish audiences, expressing its revolutionary influence.[63]

David R. Ross, who believed that the film had "been a huge catalyst for the people of Scotland to re-examine their past," explains that in the days following the devolution vote in 1997, he attended the Braveheart Convention in Stirling. At the event he describes as an "emotional affair," Ross had the opportunity to ask the film's writer, Randall Wallace, how it felt to be partially responsible for the "impending freedom of a nation." The filmmaker replied: "That's a bit heavy to give me responsibility for something so serious as that… but at least I can say that I did it with the pen – better the pen than the sword!"[64] These comments seem to be a far cry from the quotations found in a 2002 article in the *Sunday Mail*. Here the screenwriter expressed his hesitance regarding the film's political use. The article headlined, "I Can't Forgive SNP for Hijacking Braveheart," was written by John Miller, who in 1997 wrote that he thought Gibson's film "captured the essential Scottish spirit and lit the imagination of a nation."[65] Five years later Miller interviewed Randall Wallace. "I'd never presume to tell Scots how to vote," said the screenwriter,

> I love the fact that *Braveheart* has seemed to help stimulate or warm the hearts of Scots and helped them to be more proud of who they are…. But I don't have any sense in myself of what Scotland's political future should be. So I am uncomfortable with anybody identifying [the film] that way.

Randall also says that he was once asked to speak at an SNP convention, but that he would not think of it, as he does not concede the name "Braveheart" to any political entity.[66]

---

[63] Edensor, "Reading Braveheart," 14.
[64] Randall Wallace quoted in D. Ross, *On the Trail of William Wallace*, 75.
[65] John Miller, "Sean Heads List of Scots Movie Greats," *Daily Record* (Glasgow), September 11, 1997, accessed May 3, 2011, http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Sean+heads+list+of+Scots+movie+greats.-a060995508.
[66] John Miller, "I Can't Forgive SNP For Hijacking Braveheart," *Sunday Mail* (Glasgow), February 24, 2002, accessed May 1, 2011, http://www.thefreelibrary.com/I+cant+forgive+SNP+for+hijacking+braveheart%3B+Says+creator+of...-a083223127.

Despite such criticisms, Salmond's admiration of the film was unflinching, and the film undoubtedly worked in the SNP's favor. One of the most blatant examples of Salmond's endorsement of the film came when he, and other Scots, were asked to submit something that, for them, represented life in the twentieth-century for an exhibit at the new National Museum of Scotland – which opened a few years after *Braveheart*. While some displayed cars, and others computers, Salmond, in a bold move contributed a *Braveheart* movie-poster. This decision may have been made in part because he knew that this would be the only way such an item could receive serious treatment in the museum which had refused to even mention Wallace during its first few years of operation, claiming that because no physical evidence exists from Wallace's time, no display was necessary or desired.[67] Salmond's gesture also speaks to the respect he had for the film and for what it did for Scotland. Overall, the mere fact that the current First Minister of Scotland, and the leader of the independence movement, chose a *Braveheart* poster as the thing that summed up the century, is significant, and shows just how motivational the film was.

Fiona Watson explains that she had "no objections" to poster's inclusion. "*Braveheart* has been incredibly important for Scotland," Watson says, and "to ignore that phenomenon would be wrong." She claims it would be "daft" to conclude that *Braveheart* was *the* reason Scotland devolved, but the film was certainly "very much a part of that time, and a real growing sense of 'yeah, we can do it.'"[68] This ever increasing self-confidence, as a unifying motive, was bolstered by *Braveheart*, and will prove to be a factor in Scotland's ongoing nation-(re)building process and the potential movement towards full political independence. For it appears the memory of Wallace, and of use *Braveheart* is enduring. In his speech at the Wallace Commemoration in London ten years after the film, it seems

[67] Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth*, 114; and King, interview by author.
[68] Watson, interview by author.

Salmond's admiration for the film had wavered little. In perhaps the most telling example of Salmond's appreciation of the film, he told the assembled crowd:

> When the film *Braveheart* was produced, ten years ago, most of the establishment were horrified but the film went on to triumph to popular and international acclaim – and the story of Wallace was restored to a new generation of Scots….And so Wallace's historical victory has been all but complete…the story of Wallace – and the release of *Braveheart* - was certainly a factor in spurring Scotland on to the restoration of our national Parliament.[69]

Thus, even if concrete numbers are elusive, the mere fact that this influential Scottish nationalist believes that the film acted as a unifying motivation, thus helping to revive Scotland's national pride and parliament, is something to seriously consider, and squarely places *Braveheart* in DeFronzo's third critical factor for revolutionary success.

In the end, what some English called Anglophobia, most Scots called nationalism. This sentiment had long existed in Scotland, but it was in need of rejuvenation. *Braveheart* did just this, and acted as the Scots unifying motivation against a perceived, external (neo)colonial power which had exploited the Scots for nearly three centuries. This motivating factor spoke to all Scots, rich, poor, young and old, convincing them that Scotland should be ruled by the Scots alone. Nationalist propaganda adopted this ideology and the people of Scotland united and devolved. The renewed confidence *Braveheart* supplied, and the devolution that followed, clearly created a "severe state crisis" for the UK, and the Union looked to be on the verge of collapse, thus achieving the fourth revolutionary factor.

[69] Salmond, "Wallace Commemoration," (Speech).

CHAPTER V

UNVEILING FREEDOM, ENACTING DEVOLUTION: THE UNITED KINGDOM'S SEVERE STATE CRISIS

A "severe state crisis," according to DeFronzo, often originates from beyond the control of either the state government or the revolutionary forces, and occurs for several reasons including defeat in war or economic depression. In turn, these factors paralyze the administrative abilities of the state by depleting its loyal personnel and popular legitimacy. The depletion of support thus hinders the state's normal operations as it becomes incapable of coping with the revolutionary movement.[1] This formula for crisis is DeFronzo's fourth "critical factor" for revolutionary success, and once again *Braveheart*, and the devolution revolution, fit comfortably into its framework.

To understand this is to see that neither the state government in Westminster or the revolutionary forces – such as the SNP – had anything to do with *Braveheart*. The film depicts the English, or "Unionists," losing a war to Scottish patriots. This in turn revived a potent myth that had been a problem for the unified British state for hundreds of years. The renewed myth gave the Scots greater national self-confidence – which had been lacking in Scotland for centuries – at a time when the Scottish nation felt politically, culturally and economically depressed. Furthermore, the messages in *Braveheart* brought legitimacy to the Nationalists' cause in the form of historical continuity, while depleting the Union's legitimacy in the eyes of many Scots. The revival of Scottish self-confidence was in itself a state crisis, and was manifest in two events, both occurring on 11 September 1997: the unveiling of the "Braveheart statue" at the base of the Wallace Monument, and the most

[1] DeFronzo, "Social Movements and Revolutions," 13.

severe state crisis for the UK in three hundred years – the devolution of Scotland. For seven centuries the Scots have been utilizing the Wallace myth to inspire patriotism. What was impressive about *Braveheart* was the magnitude in which it was able to (re)invigorate Scottish national pride using this myth, creating a crisis in the UK. Still, in the end, *Braveheart* merely added to this tradition.

It is true that by the twentieth-century, after years of Union control and apparent suppression, this powerful myth was nearly forgotten. That is until fate intervened. Inspired after a 1983 vacation to Scotland, American screenwriter Randall Wallace went in search of information about Sir William Wallace. In doing so, the library at UCLA presented him with a text that was found buried deep in storage, a text no one had shown interest in for a long time, a text that was actually due to be incinerated. This neglected book turned out to be an eighteenth-century copy of Blind Hary's epic fifteenth-century poem, *Wallace*.[2] This mythical poem was one of the first books ever printed in Scotland in 1508, and tells the "history" of Wallace's revolution in bloody detail. Elspeth King says the poem is exciting, entertaining, inspirational, and "a great work of literature, geography, and history, drawing strongly on very specific traditions."[3] Hence, the *Wallace* was a perfect template for a Hollywood screenplay. After *Braveheart*, there was renewed interest in Hary's poem, its protagonist, *and* his patriotic cause. Understanding that Gibson's film was not the first time this poem, and the Wallace's myth, inspired nationalistic sentiment is vital in understanding why the film served as such an effective state crisis in the late-twentieth-century.[4]

Many academics discredit the poem on the basis that its history is erroneous and unverifiable. Yet distinguished historian Hugh Trevor-Roper once wrote: "I believe that the

---

[2] D. Ross, *On the Trail of William Wallace*, 141; and Elspeth King, "Introduction," *Blind Harry's Wallace*, By Blind Harry, Trans, William Hamilton of Gilbertfield, (Edinburgh: Luath, 1998), xxiii.
[3] Elspeth King, "The Material Culture of William Wallace," in *The Wallace Book*, ed. Edward J. Cowan (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2007), 121.
[4] There are multiple spellings of the supposed author's name. Here, the Scots spelling, "Hary," is utilized.

whole history of Scotland has been coloured by myth; and that myth, in Scotland, is never driven out by reality, or by reason, but lingers on until another myth has been discovered, or elaborated, to replace it."[5] Therefore, it matters little that Wallace's story, as told by Blind Hary, is predominantly mythological, it is still important as a consistently (re)invented nationalistic tradition.[6] Trevor-Roper's text, *The Invention of Scotland: Myth and History*, an extended version of his essay in *The Invention of Tradition*, opens by arguing that myth has played an important role in history, because what people *believe* is true a powerful force, and myth may be "the *soul* of history."[7] In Scotland people believed in the mythos of the Scottish hero and for many he has become the soul of Scotland, thus a perpetual crisis for the Union.

The myth's staying power derives from the fact that Scottish history has been defined by conflict with England. Therefore, a story about a legendary Scottish warrior continued to be attractive in the subjugated nation, and for centuries the poem influenced some of Scotland's greatest minds, such as writer and folklorist Hugh Miller, who in 1787wrote:

> I was intoxicated with the fiery narratives of the blind minstrel, with his fierce breathings of hot, intolerant patriotism, and his stories of astonishing prowess, and, glorying in being a Scot, and the countryman of Wallace, I longed for a war with the Southron, that the wrongs and sufferings of these noble heroes might be avenged.[8]

Fortunately, the crisis of full-scale "war with the Southron" never materialized, as Scottish nationalists generally employed diplomatic and propagandistic methods to raise awareness for their cause. But Miller was not alone in his stimulation. Scotland's national poet Robert Burns wrote extensively about his admiration of the *Wallace*. It was one of the first books he ever read, and Burns said he spent "many a solitary hour… after laborious vacations of the

---

[5] Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Invention of Scotland: Myth and History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), Back Cover.
[6] See Eric J. Hobsbawm and Terence O. Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition*, Reissue ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
[7] Trevor-Roper, *The Invention of Scotland*, xix.
[8] Riddy, "Unmapping the Territory," 112.

day, to shed a tear over their glorious but unfortunate Story."[9] Burns also famously wrote the *Wallace*, "poured a Scottish prejudice in my veins which will boil along there till the flood-gates of life shut in eternal rest."[10] There is little doubt then that Hary's work helped shape Burns' personal nationalism, which inspired him to create patriotic works of his own that have gone onto shape Scotland's collective nationalism, in turn creating a long, smoldering crisis for the UK.

In 1998, after *Braveheart* revived interest in Wallace, Elspeth King reissued a version of the mythical poem. King was driven to do so because she believes the *Wallace* "is the book which has done more than any other to frame the notion of Scotland's national identity."[11] In this opinion, King is not alone. Felicity Riddy writes that Hary's work, composed around 1477, was the most widely read Scottish poem for some four hundred years. This poem gave shape to the legend and fixed the myth within the nation's popular imagination, and Riddy believes it actually "taught the people of Scotland a way of conceptualising the nation that includes a virulent anti-Englishness."[12] In creating this "Scotland of the mind," the real William Wallace may *not* have done all the things attributed to him in the narrative, however, "the story of his doing them and the places he did them in could be said to have created the *idea of a nation*."[13]

Hary's mythical narrative provided generations of Scots with anti-English sentiments, and "a fierce sense of Scottish identity."[14] This identity became a crisis for the Union when politically activated, such as when the Jacobites of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries

---

[9] King, "Introduction," *Blind Harry's Wallace*, xvi.
[10] Robert Burns quoted in Sally Mapstone, "Scotland's Stories," in *Scotland: A History*, ed. Jenny Wormald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 315.
[11] King, *Blind Harry's Wallace*, Back Cover.
[12] Riddy, "Unmapping the Territory," 107.
[13] Ibid., 115. (Emphasis added).
[14] Ibid., 112.

perceived themselves as continuing Wallace's cause.[15] The "Scottishness" in Hary's poem, Riddy continues, "has to do with being part of Scotland as an imagined community," borrowing Benedict Anderson's influential phrase.[16] Helping to sustain this imagined community over hundreds of years was the poem's sheer popularity. In fact, through all its editions and translations, it is said that the *Wallace* was the second most commonly owned book in Scotland, behind only the Bible. This nation-wide consumption was vital to the construction of Scottish nationalism, as the reader of a printed book understands – if only subconsciously – that others are reading the same text. Thus, in Riddy's words:

> we know that the very act of reading constitutes us members of a reading community. So we can see all those readers of Hary's *Wallace*, over four hundred years, as connected through print, forming, as Benedict Anderson puts it, 'a secular, particular, visible invisibility, the embryo of the nationally imagined community', recognising their Scottishness in the pathos of his heroism and its tragically mythic geography.[17]

Likewise, Graeme Morton explains that because the *Wallace* was in vernacular Scots, and not Latin, it was more accessible, and thus it "fits the imagined community thesis for the transmission from the interior world of text to the exterior thought-world of a nation's identity, solidifying the single community."[18]

A few months after devolution, King wrote that Blind Hary's work offered "a landmark opportunity for mature reflection on and consideration of how our nation has been shaped."[19] In a similar context, *Braveheart* affords this same opportunity, as the idea of a sovereign nation, as transmitted by the Wallace myth, has long been a crisis for the unity of Great Britain. As the cinematic adaptation of Hary's tale, *Braveheart* constituted a "viewing community," imparting ideas about Scottish nationalism to a mass audience. "The

---

[15] Murray Pittock, *Scottish Nationality* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001), 69.
[16] Riddy, "Unmapping the Territory," 112. The ground breaking examination of nationalism referred to here is found in Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, which defines the nation as "an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign." Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (1991), 6.
[17] Riddy, "Unmapping the Territory," 116, quoting B. Anderson's *Imagined Communities*.
[18] Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth*, 35.
[19] King, "Introduction," *Blind Harry's Wallace*, xxix.

Braveheart effect," writes Morton, "coupled to the expansion of cheap and easy internet access and web publishing, has transformed the Wallace cult."[20] With this access (which is Benedict Anderson's notion of print capitalism on overdrive) and the aid of mass-media outlets, the connections between these internally-diasporic identities was less imaginary in the 1990s, and was promoted on a much more conscious level, lending vital support to the ongoing nation-(re)building process.

Nevertheless, despite its enormous influence, the poem struggled to survive in the Union. So few people knew Hary's poem that hardly anyone recognized it when it appeared on screen, and there is still a widespread belief that it is merely "Hollywood history."[21] Indeed, while critics like McArthur saw the film as a humiliating expression of stereotypical Scottishness, King saw it differently. The true "national embarrassment," she writes,

> is not that *Braveheart* is a Hollywood construct, but that it is firmly based on a 15th century Scottish epic, translated in 1722, about which the Scottish people know nothing, since it has been out of print for so long. While Randall Wallace has not followed the poem in detail, he as certainly captured the spirit of it, and has brought it to it to a 20th century audience.[22]

In all, there is so little known about Wallace that if a filmmaker or poet wished to compose a story *only* using the known and verifiable facts, the story would be short, boring and certainly unpopular. It is only because of this mythic poem and this inaccurate movie that the story of Wallace is prevalent in modern Scotland.

Braveheart managed to make Wallace "as relevant to Scottish life today as he was in his own time," and thus a serious crisis for the Union. This opinion, from a 2002 article ranking the "100 Greatest Scots," was widespread in the 1990s. This particular editorial, which appeared in Glasgow's *Sunday Mail*, begins by boldly claiming: "THE greatest Scot who ever lived, William Wallace, is revered not only for what he achieved in his own

---

[20] Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth*, 137.
[21] King, "The Material Culture of William Wallace," 121.
[22] King, "Introduction," *Blind Harry's Wallace*, xxiii.

lifetime but for what he has come to symbolise to the people of Scotland." The op-ed then puts forth the ignorant, but commonly believed, notion that Wallace "can be summed up in one word: *Braveheart*." This is simply not true. However, the author astutely observes that Wallace – during his life, in the film, and throughout history – has been more about the mythos surrounding him, then about his actual actions. "The myth of Wallace is just as important as the man himself," writes the author,

> for it has come to stand for issues which are just as relevant today as they were in the 13th century….Wallace's legacy to his nation was the belief that they were an independent and sovereign people who should not be overshadowed by their southern neighbours.[23]

Placing Wallace squarely in the modern nation-(re)building process, the author indicates that the myth's new found relevancy reminded the Scot of their national sovereignty, something that, if returned, would destroy the British state.

In 1997, on the day the Scots went to the polls to vote on devolution, Glaswegians read a similar opinion in the *Daily Record*. In an article discussing the greatest Scottish actors and movies, John Miller wrote that Gibson's epic was the "top Scots film" because it "captured the essential Scottish spirit and lit the imagination of a nation."[24] Later that day, the thoughts ignited by the renewed interest in the myth turned into a state crisis. Tim Edensor explains that some "nationalist responses to *Braveheart* recognise the efficacy of foundation myths, notions of historical continuity, and a set of shared symbols and myths in sustaining a sense of belonging."[25] *Braveheart* created national identity by creating a collective pride and common symbols, while stimulating interest in a shared past, and inspiring a political crisis for the Union. The film may not have been "accurate," but it was emotional, powerful and effective. Thus, Randall Wallace's discovery, adaptation, and revival of the Wallace myth

---

[23] "100 Greatest Scots," *Sunday Mail* (Glasgow), April 21, 2002, accessed December 17, 2009, http://www.thefreelibrary.com/100%20Greatest%20Scots.-a084974007.
[24] Miller, "Sean Heads List of Scots Movie Greats."
[25] Edensor, "Reading Braveheart," 22.

was without a doubt "beyond the control of either government or revolutionary forces." Furthermore the return of the myth certainly helped "destroy the capabilities of the state to function effectively," therefore fulfilling DeFronzo's state crisis factor.[26] But why was this myth so effective in the 1990s?

Until the "Braveheart crisis," political nationalism had continuously failed to free Scotland from the Union. This was in large part due to a constant theme which permeated Scottish national consciousness, which Tom Nairn describes as "none other than the Scots' most famous and unshakable drinking companion: [the] 'lack of self-confidence'." This, Nairn continues, is "only the natural condition of a social formation whose collective or historical 'self' has been partly lobotomized and partly placed in cold storage."[27] Scotland's national pride had thus been severely hindered within the Union, and throughout the twentieth-century, the Scots could not envision themselves as separate from England or the Empire. But *Braveheart* presented the Scots with an image of a free and defiant Scotland, and gave them confidence in their national heritage and myths. This new confidence not only created a crisis for the Union, it also gave birth to what some have called the "most controversial symbol of Scottish culture in recent times."[28]

On the eleventh day of September, 1997, exactly 700 years after Wallace's stunning victory at the Battle of Stirling Bridge, the Union's state crisis came to a head as the Scots overwhelmingly voted in favor of devolution. On this same day, a short distance from the site of Wallace's thirteenth-century triumph, a small crowd gathered near the Wallace Monument in Stirling to see a new statue of the hero unveiled. Tom Church, the sculptor of this latest Wallace image, had recently watched *Braveheart* while recovering from a heart by-pass

---

[26] DeFronzo, "Social Movements and Revolutions,"18.
[27] Nairn, *After Britain*, 101.
[28] "They May Take Our Lives But They Won't Take Our Freedom," *The Scotsman* (Edinburgh), September 19, 2004, accessed December 20, 2012, http://www.scotsman.com/news/scottish-news/top-stories/they-may-take-our-lives-but-they-won-t-take-freedom-1-1397766.

operation. So inspired by Wallace's never-say-never spirit in the film, Church set out to produce a statue that would capture the essence of Wallace as he understood it. Thus, when the cloth fell from the 13-foot, 12-ton, gold sandstone figure, the awaiting crowed was met with the screaming face of Mel Gibson. The sculpture depicts a kilted "Wallace," with long hair, sword draped over his shoulder, holding a large mace in one hand, and a rounded shield with the word "BRAVEHEAERT" carved into it in the other. And with a severed head at his feet, the figure stands tall upon a base embossed with the word "FREEDOM" in large lettering. The inspiration for this sculpture is clear, and although popularly known as the "Braveheart" or "Mel Gibson" statue, its official name was *Freedom*.

This Hollywood influenced "historical" carving was a source of controversy, and represents one of the most flagrant mixtures of nationalism, media, myth and politics in Scottish history. The biggest point of contention was its blatant likeness to the Australian-American actor. Many felt this was inaccurate, despite the fact that there is absolutely no trustworthy evidence indicating what Wallace actually looked like. Therefore, *all* visual representations of him are products of the individual artist's imagination, thus all are equally (in)accurate. Still, Edensor writes, "Fears about trivialization of Scottishness are articulated in the notion that a filmic image is not conceived as a fitting form for a heroic piece of sculpture," and many complained that *Freedom* was not a "proper" sculpture.[29]

Once such critic, "Wallace expert" James Boland, justified his support for the removal of the sculpture, proclaiming: "It serves no real purpose at the National Wallace Monument as it seems to commemorate Mel Gibson and his atrocious film more than Wallace."[30] But, Edensor argues this sort of opinion "echoes of an increasingly outdated

---

[29] Tim Edensor, "Representing the Nation: Scottishness and *Braveheart*," in *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002), 162.
[30] "Donald Trump to Be Given Controversial William Wallace Statue," *Daily Record* (Glasgow), April 24, 2008, accessed December 20, 2012, http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/donald-trump-to-be-given-controversial-william-975199.

nationalism… a nationalism which seeks to defy the increasing transmission of national identity via popular culture as being improper, unserious and undignified."[31] The "outdated nationalism" that rejects mass media representations as a source of patriotic sentiment is rampant in Scotland when *Braveheart* is the topic. Moreover, David Lowenthal explains:

> The past is always altered for motives that reflect present needs. We reshape our heritage to make it attractive in modern terms; we seek to make it part of ourselves, and ourselves part of it; we conform it to our self-images and aspirations. Rendered grand or homely, magnified or tarnished, history is continually altered in our private interests or on behalf of our community or country.[32]

This is precisely what Church did with *Freedom*. Indeed, Church is not some foreign artist, like *Braveheart*'s filmmakers, depicting a Scottish legend; rather he is a proud Scotsman.

In 1997, Church justified his creation by saying that when people think of Wallace they "see Gibson in full battlepaint crying out 'Freedom.'"[33] This was, and still is, especially true among the Monument's primary patrons: foreign visitors. "I know the purists didn't think too much of it," said Church, "but the tourists absolutely loved it." Ken Thomson of Stirling District Tourism, which oversaw the site, backed this up, noting: "For every letter we had criticising the statue, we had one saying how much people loved it."[34]

While it is true that it was often the focal point of tourist photos, it was also a target for "angry locals who detested the Hollywood image of the legendary Scots patriot." Some even took to vandalizing the statue, sometimes breaking off the figure's nose, other times throwing paint on it.[35] The defacement was so bad that for a short time a protective cage was erected around the figure. Therefore, although it is completely unknown what William Wallace looked like, it is clear many Scots simply did not want him to look like Mel Gibson.

---

[31] Edensor, "Representing the Nation: Scottishness and *Braveheart*," 162.
[32] David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 348.
[33] Tom Church quoted Jim Gilchirst, "The Curse of Mel's Hard to Shake Off," *The Scotsman* (Edinburgh), June 1, 2000, 16.
[34] "Wallace Statue Back with Sculptor," *News.bbc.co.uk*, October 16, 2009, accessed December 20, 2012 http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/tayside_and_central/8310614.stm.
[35] *The Scotsman*, "They May Take Our Lives But They Won't Take Our Freedom."

While most critics did not go as far as to physically attack the artwork, they most certainly did not approved of this new "historical" imagery of Wallace. Many were particularly upset with the location of *Freedom*, and it was not only Unionists who voiced their objections. A Stirling city councillor for the SNP worried that the statue would "detract from the *true*, very important history which the monument stands for."[36] This is again an outdated conception of national identity, and it also erroneously assumes that there is *one*, factual history of Wallace, but alas he is a shadowy figure, with very little verifiable history.

Still, a scathing *Scotsman* article published almost exactly seven years after *Freedom* was put into place and devolution was passed, explains that once the statue's lease was up, Church attempted to sell off his work. Yet, for over a year "the unloved Freedom statue" failed to find a buyer. The article claims that because it had "not attracted a single bid" in sixteen months, it was "firmly cementing its reputation as the most controversial symbol of Scottish culture in recent times."[37] What the article and other critics fail to mention, is that the statue was only newsworthy and controversial because *Braveheart* had made Wallace relevant again, giving rise to a national myth that had often been problematic for the British state, as well as a major factor to the ongoing nation-(re)building process in Scotland.

The fact that Church chose to depict Wallace in his most identifiable contemporary form was unsurprising. Heroes are frequently memorialized in garb reflecting retrospective ideals, writes Lowenthal, and Wallace is no different.[38] Although the kilt in *Freedom* (and in *Braveheart*) was inaccurate – being invented by an eighteenth-century English Quaker – critics chose to predominantly focus on the Gibson-like features.[39] Yet, according to the contemporary perceptions of the community in which a figure is created, artists frequently

---

[36]Quoted in the *Stirling Observer*, 10 September 1997 found in Edensor, "Representing the Nation: Scottishness and *Braveheart*," 162. (Edensor's italics)
[37] *The Scotsman*, "They May Take Our Lives But They Won't Take Our Freedom."
[38] Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, 321.
[39] Ibid., 333.

"alter perspectives on the past by adorning historical events with anachronistic symbols."[40] Moreover, producers of early Westerns found in creating their representations of the American frontier that sincere devotion to the creation of perceived authenticity and realism paradoxically demanded that they offer "only those versions of truth that conformed to the expectations generated by a 'false' but culturally proponent mythology."[41] Even McArthur thought it "optimistic" to expect many to care about the anachronistic kilts in *Braveheart*.[42] Therefore, the kilted warrior in *Braveheart*, and of Church's sculpture, is more about adhering to the viewer's preconceptions and desires, than it is about accurate history. It was powerful cultural and mythical imagery such as this that perpetuated nationalism in the 1990s, for Scots to witness a kilted Scottish hero defeat the English on screen, offered some sort of historical continuity to the kilted (or at least tartan wearing) Nationalists of the devolution revolution.

Church was certainly not the first to anachronistically represent Wallace. One of the most common depictions of the hero is as a neo-classical warrior draped in noble robes, such as the statue on the façade of the Wallace Monument itself. These anachronisms are as egregious as Church's representation, yet they are seldom criticized. "Stylistically and ideologically," explains Edensor, "these depictions epitomize the fluidity of Wallace as a meaningful character, using distinct metaphorical and allegorical ways to represent a range of causes and identities."[43] In a BBC documentary, Edensor explains that "sculpted Wallace's have always reflected the aesthetics and concerns of particular groups at particular times, and in many ways, I think this stone rendition of Mel Gibson is perfectly fitting for a

[40] Ibid., 307.
[41] Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Atheneum, 1992), 244.
[42] McArthur, Brigadoon, Braveheart *and the Scots*, 187.
[43] Edensor, "Representing the Nation: Scottishness and *Braveheart*," 161.

contemporary Wallace."[44] David R. Ross would agree with this summation, claiming: "No matter what, the film will stand for all time to show how Wallace was perceived in 1995."[45] Finally, speaking of the statue in 2005, Watson said: "I'm not overwhelmed with the idea that it's Mel Gibson who's up there, but, to be fair, I think *Braveheart* has done Scotland a lot of good."[46] By reviving a powerful nationalistic myth, this new image of Wallace was, and is, a key component to Scotland's nation-(re)building process, thus helping to create and sustain a state crisis for the UK. And despite the fact that most were noticeably uncomfortable with Mel Gibson as the movement's symbolic figurehead, this new imagery inspired potent Scottish patriotism.

When James Boland lamented that the statue commemorated "Gibson and his atrocious film more than Wallace," he may have been right.[47] But, perhaps Gibson's film deserves a monument for what it has done for the Scottish nation. DeFronzo writes that a severe state crisis is often the result of a loss in war, damaging the states authority and legitimacy. Indeed, at the conclusion of *Braveheart*, when Gibson's inspiring voiceover says, "They fought like warrior poets. They fought like Scotsmen. And won their freedom," the Scots symbolically won yet another war led by Wallace.[48] Thus, Church's statue stood as a fitting "war memorial" to the great Scottish patriot: Mel Gibson. Yet, for Unionists, the debate over Wallace's physical appearance was the least of their worries on the day *Freedom* was introduced to Scotland; instead, they were concerned about devolution.

As mentioned, the date chosen for *Freedom*'s unveiling was not only the anniversary of Stirling Bridge, it was also Devolution Day, a fact not lost on the sculptor or the journalists covering the event. Twenty-four hours after the Scots voted in favor of devolution, David

---

[44] Tim Edensor quoted in *Three Lives of William Wallace*, dir. Ross Harper.
[45] D. Ross, *On the Trail of William Wallace*, 142.
[46] Fiona Watson quoted in Jim Gilchirst, "Who Is the Real Wallace?," *The Scotsman* (Edinburgh), August 20, 2005, accessed December 19, 2012, http://ellymac.proboards.com/index.cgi?board=Freedom&action=print&thread=37.
[47] *Daily Record*, "Donald Trump to Be Given Controversial William Wallace Statue."
[48] *Braveheart*, dir. Mel Gibson.

Thompson's article in the *Daily Record* described the scene that had taken place the previous day. "As braveheart William Wallace looked down on them, you could feel the people of Stirling just waiting to claim their freedom," he wrote – even though it was only devolution, not independence, under consideration. After reminding the readers of the original state crisis created by Wallace on 11 September 1297, Thompson observed that on September 11, 1997 the Scots "chose the ballot box to express their desire to have control over their own affairs for the first time in centuries. But that desire was no less strong yesterday than it was 700 years ago," and thus the crisis of Wallace had once again proven devastating for the Union.[49]

Thompson goes on to explain that Church's sculpture was to be the "focal point" of the Monument's new £400,000 visitor centre; a necessary addition considering the sites enormous popularity after *Braveheart*. Church, however, thought of his work as more than a statue, framing it in a revolutionary context. "I am the proudest man in Scotland," he said at his sculpture's unveiling, "and if my statue helps Scotland deliver a Yes, Yes vote I will be prouder still."[50] Church himself even seems to have drawn political inspiration from his personal notion of Wallace, seeing him a sort of modern-day revolutionary leader, saying: "I think Wallace today is either shouting 'Freedom' or 'Yes, Yes' – and I am voting the same way as him."[51] Likewise, in a speech that was clearly part of the "Head and Heart" campaign, SNP member Anne Lorne Gillies said: "If you ask me, what William Wallace would say in 1997, I believe that he would shout 'YES-YES' from the bottom of his brave heart and the depths of his wise head."[52] Here Church and Gillies, like many others, conscripted Wallace's myth for the modern nationalist cause.

---

[49] David Thompson, "Bravehearts on the March," *Daily Record* (Glasgow), 12 September 1997, accessed May 1, 2011, http://www.thefreelibrary.com/bravehearts+on+the+march%3B+Wallace+looks+on+as+battle+is+fought+at+the...-a060995594.
[50] Tom Church quoted in Thompson, "Bravehearts on the March." By "Yes, Yes" Church is referring to the two questions presented to Scottish voters in the devolution referendum.
[51] Thompson, "Bravehearts on the March."
[52] Anne Lorne Gillies quoted in Wallner, *The Myth of William Wallace*, 101.

Removed from the Monument site in 2008, today the statue remains in the possession of its sculptor, as it seems no one was in the market for what the *Scotsman* begrudgingly described as an "unusual piece of movie memorabilia," thus depriving it of any historic or nationalistic significance.[53] Nevertheless, Stirling became a booming tourist destination, and more people from around the world knew about Wallace than ever before. Sure, most of what they knew about him was based on unsubstantiated myths, but they knew about him all the same. In the end, *Freedom* showed that some Scots were so inspired by the film that they went to great lengths to express their renewed pride. And despite the backlash caused by Church's statue and Gibson's film, this revitalized pride created a crisis for the UK, and fostered a revolutionary result the likes of which Scotland had not seen for centuries.

The Act of Union in 1707 upset many Scots, but soon Scottish nationalists became dispirited, and most reluctantly accepted, then embraced, Union control. Thus, in terms of revolutionary movements, Scotland remained relatively quiet within the UK. This was even true through the turbulent revolutionary period of the mid-1800s. Richard J. Finlay explains that "the big question of mid-nineteenth-century Scotland was why in an age of bourgeois nationalist revolutions in Europe should Scotland, which had at that time one of the most successful and entrenched bourgeoisies, escape?" This era of revolutionary crisis engulfed Europe and saw the fall of repressive state governments all over the continent as nationalism became an "extraordinarily problematic matter."[54] But, Jonathan Sperber simply explains that Britain lacked the "preconditions" that brought revolution to much of Europe.[55] Finlay says that the reason Scotland did not embark on a nationalist revolution is because of the success of the Scottish bourgeoisie and the British government's limited cultural interference.[56] Thus

---

[53] *The Scotsman*, "They May Take Our Lives But They Won't Take Our Freedom."
[54] Finlay, "New Britain, New Scotland, New History?," 390.
[55] Jonathan Sperber, *The European Revolutions: 1848-1851* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 260.
[56] Finlay, "New Britain, New Scotland, New History?," 390.

mimicking Bairner who says that the Union's tolerance of a Scottish identity "may well have represented a clever political strategy…dissuading a majority of Scots from seeking…political independence."[57] Finlay explains that the Scots did not create a state crisis within the UK because "they believed in minimal government, preferring instead in the virtues of local government, little state interference and voluntary agencies."[58] Moreover, the benefits of empire and the lack of national self-confidence allowed the Union to maintain its grip on Scotland through this dangerous period of revolutionary crisis.

There were several minor attempts to gain self-rule, and over the centuries the British state had certainly lost wars and suffered through economic depressions, but none of these crises convinced the majority of the Scots that they would be better off without the Union; if anything, some crises – like the World Wars – bolstered British unity. But in the 1970s, political nationalism began to grow. Fearing that the only alternative to the crisis of devolution was the crisis of full independence for Scotland, and thus the collapse of the Union, the Labour government agreed to a referendum on devolution.[59] The referendum, held in March 1979, represented the Scots best opportunity to reclaim their parliament. The SNP, which had recently enjoyed some electoral success, had long spoken out against the economic repression of Scotland within the Union, and in the 1970s, potential revenues from the North Sea oil fields became the SNP's "great economic hope." The SNP often highlighted that Westminster had decided to sell the oil to multinational companies, further bolstering the perception that the Union government had little concern for the particular needs of Scotland, and in their campaigning Nationalists proclaimed "It's Scotland's Oil!" [60]

---

[57] Bairner, "'We Are the England Haters!,'" 49.
[58] Finlay, "New Britain, New Scotland, New History?," 390.
[59] Kowalski, "'Cry For Us, Argentina,'" 70.
[60] Ibid.,; and A. Ross, "Wallace's Monument and the Resumption of Scotland," 96.

This was a major issue leading up to the 1979 vote but it was not enough, and the referendum failed, avoiding a potentially devastating state and political crisis for the United Kingdom.

Many factors played into the failure of the first referendum, including the difficult, and some say, unfair stipulation in which forty percent of the total Scottish electorate had to vote in favor of the new Scottish assembly. When the sun set on voting day, only 63.8% of the electorate had turned out, and just over half of them voted "Yes."[61] Therefore, had it not been for the forty-percent rule, devolution would have passed in 1979. As seemingly insurmountable as this rule was, it would appear the main factor for the failure of the referendum was once again "the Scots' most famous and unshakable drinking companion," the lack of self-confidence, and things only got worse from there.[62] The authors of *Scotland Decides: The Devolution Issue and the 1997 Referendum* explain that after the 1979 devolution failure, many nationalist were "dispirited, dejected, fragmented and pessimistic." Thereafter, for nearly two decades the "Doomsday Scenario" persisted as "the majority of Scots perceived themselves as suffering unduly under a series of governments which they had not elected and which showed no interest in constitutional reform."[63] Thus, whether actual or merely perceived, the Scots were stuck in a sort of (neo)colonial situation.

One of the first actions the "new Hammer of the Scots," Margret Thatcher, took when she was elected in1979 was to repeal the proposal for devolution. But the Conservatives' blatant hostility towards "any form of devolution proved decisively counterproductive." This backlash saw the popularity of the Conservatives plummet, as more and more Scots began to support home-rule initiatives. After John Major and the hated (in Scotland) Conservatives, Tony Blair and the Labour Party – with their message of hope – gained control of the British government. But the centralism experienced under the Conservatives – who won *zero*

[61] Kowalski, "'Cry For Us, Argentina,'" 70.
[62] Nairn, *After Britain*, 101.
[63] Denver, Mitchell, Pattie, Bochel, *Scotland Decide*, 48.

Scottish seats in 1997 – only rhetorically diminished under the new Labour administration. And Blair held out hope that Scottish devolution would simply strengthen the all-British realm.[64] After devolution was officially proposed, however, the SNP finally decide to support it, understanding the action as "an acceptable step towards eventual independence."[65] It was into this tense political climate that *Braveheart* emerged, putting the question of historic self-rule on a grand platform, and helping the Scots shake off their age old "drinking companion."

To commentators such as Lin Anderson, *Braveheart* – and its ability to remind the Scots "of what they once were, what they are now and what they yet might be" – was a major reason for the success of the Nationalists campaign eighteen years later when nearly seventy-five percent of the voters supported devolution.[66] Others are less enthusiastic, yet still acknowledge the film's importance. "Indeed, casual consumers of the buzz surrounding the film," writes Andrew Ross, "could hardly be faulted for believing that the country's nationalist revival has had something to do with the rediscovery of an ancient warrior tradition," brought on by *Braveheart*.[67] Nevertheless, as Finley explains, "the advent of devolution has politically legitimized Scottish national identity and nationhood and, although Scotland is still part of the United Kingdom, it is important to recognize that it is so under a *new* Union."[68] *Braveheart* was a big factor in the legitimization of national self-confidence and the new Union, adding zeal to the national (re)building efforts. When applied to DeFronzo's forth critical factor, that includes a crisis that depletes the state's loyalty legitimacy, it becomes clear that Scotland's nationalist revival *did* have "something to do with the rediscovery of an ancient warrior tradition" found in *Braveheart*.[69]

---

[64] Nairn, *After Britain*, 109.
[65] Keay, Keay, eds., "Scottish Parliament, The," 895.
[66] L. Anderson, *Braveheart*, 18.
[67] A. Ross, "Wallace's Monument and the Resumption of Scotland," 83.
[68] Finlay, "New Britain, New Scotland, History?," 385.
[69] DeFronzo, "Social Movements and Revolutions," 13.

The film aided the SNP and hurt the cause of the Conservatives, who were the foremost anti-devolutionary force.[70] Thus, the film weakened the ruling government and affected Westminster's ability to prevent the revolution. But can a motion picture really affect an electoral outcome? In discussing politically influential films such as *Braveheart*, Robert Brent Toplin admits that it is impossible to identify a film as the *main* determining factor in an election. "It seems reasonable to conclude, however," writes Toplin, "that the films affected the attitudes of at least some voters in these close campaigns. If the number of people influenced represents thousands…of those who went to the polls, the movies' impact may have been significant."[71] *Braveheart* was not the *only* determining factor in the vote for devolution, but it was *a* factor. It created a general mood which promoted Scotland as a more confident and optimistic place, complete with rich history and powerful national myths.

Today, opinions concerning the impact of the film on the outcome of the 1997 referendum tend to depend on one's political stance concerning the nation's contemporary (re)building process. For instance, Neil Benny, a Conservative-Unionist city councillor for Stirling says the referendum "probably wouldn't have been as much of a landslide victory if it hadn't been for [*Braveheart*]." "I don't really think it was that big a deal," he argues, "It might of swayed one or two people, but not significant numbers." He contends it was more due to the fall of the Conservatives and the "really weak…small, and unorganized" "No" campaign.[72] Indeed, the Conservatives were alone in their campaigning against devolution.[73] Likewise, Labour Party representative Malcolm Chisholm (who admits he has never seen *Braveheart*) says that the film "probably increased peoples sense of Scottishness, but I wouldn't have thought it was the main thing."[74] These are predictable opinions from anti-

[70] Denver, Mitchell, Pattie, Bochel, *Scotland Decide*, 51.
[71] Toplin, *Reel History*, 181-182.
[72] Neil Benny, interview by author, August 9, 2012.
[73] Keay, Keay, eds., "Scottish Parliament, The," 895.
[74] Malcolm Chisholm, interview by author, August 6, 2012.

independence politicians, who, like Forsyth before them, have had to counter the crisis of political nationalism aroused by *Braveheart*.

Historian Fiona Watson believes that Scots do not "think rashly" and do not do things purely out of emotion.[75] Thus, they did not vote for devolution emotionally, as indicated by those such as Susanne Wallner.[76] Instead, Watson argues, it was a revolt against centralization in the UK at the time, the "*Braveheart* element just gave a little extra… fillip to the whole thing."[77] Then there is outspoken supporter of independence Elspeth King, who says of *Braveheart*: "I think it had a huge impact. I think it was a whole self confidence thing…it was very positive."[78] Many Scots had similar opinions, like journalist David Thompson, who the day after the devolution vote claimed: "Yesterday as Scotland decided its destiny, the spirit of Wallace was in the air." [79] Edensor, who says the film had a "significant impact on the devolution debate," claims *Braveheart*,

> did focus people's minds on a kind of historical continuity, or a historical precedent where Scotland had once before gained independence. And in some ways then it made it more possible to envision the idea of a devolved or even an independent Scotland.[80]

On New Year's Eve 1994, nine months before *Braveheart*'s release, then UK Prime Minister, John Major called devolution "one of the most dangerous propositions ever put before the British nation."[81] He was right. Devolution was a crisis for the unity of the disintegrating *British* nation-state, but not for the (re)building of the Scottish nation. And while there is no doubt that Gibson's film was not the only reason the Scots supported devolution, evidence suggests that the messages in the film, and the campaigning of the

---

[75] Watson, interview by author.
[76] See Wallner, *The Myth of William Wallace*, 96-97.
[77] Watson, interview by author.
[78] King, interview by author.
[79] Thompson, "Bravehearts on the March."
[80] Edensor quoted in *Three Lives of William Wallace*, dir. Ross Harper.
[81] For date see Patricia Wynn Davies, "Major Hits at Devolution Danger," *The Independent* (London), December 31, 1994, 2; and for the full quotation see "The Perils of Forced Unity," *The Independent* (London), January 15, 1995, accessed May 3, 2011, http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/leading-article--the-perils-of-forced-unity-1568134.html.

Nationalist, certainly added fuel to the non-violent political crisis. An example of this impact came in 1999, at the official convening of the Scottish Parliament after more than 300 years of dormancy. As a national audience tuned in to watch the coverage of the momentous event, they were treated to triumphant music at the beginning and end of the telecast. Unsurprisingly, the producers could think of no better composition to commemorate the occasion than James Horner's score from *Braveheart*. Thus, Horner's unforgettable music was not only the theme for the film, but it also became a soundtrack for the "new" nation. Then, five years later, at the official opening of the parliamentary building, the Queen was presented the ceremonial Mace with the first words of the Scotland Act – "There shall be a Scottish Parliament" – inscribed on it. The member of the security staff with the distinguished honor of carrying the Mace proudly wore the "Braveheart Warrior Tartan."[82]

In all, *Braveheart* managed to revive the powerful myth of Wallace (as told by Blind Hary), which in turn inspired many Scots, including the sculptor of *Freedom*. But this confidence went further than carvings in sandstone, and actually helped the nationalists by adding legitimacy to the idea of a free Scotland. These elements make it clear that *Braveheart*, and the devolution it aided, were severe state crises for the United Kingdom. Yet, in the increasingly globalized world, the impact of outside countries was also significant.

[82] L. Anderson, *Braveheart*, 12.

CHAPTER VI

BRAVEHEART'S MONUMENTAL EFFECT: SCOTLAND'S PERMISSIVE WORLD CONTEXT

Braveheart, the "movie that took a nation by surprise and the world by storm," promoted the Scottish cause to a global audience, thus fulfilling DeFronzo's final critical factor, "permissive world context."[1] This factor explicates that, because "any society exists in a world populated by other societies," borders do not always confine revolutions.[2] Outside forces often affect revolutionary outcomes, either by supporting or suppressing the movement, but whether covert or direct, these operations are generally selfishly motivated.

DeFronzo also argues "nonexistent intervention by outside powers against revolutionary movements illustrate[s] the concept of permissive world context."[3] In the 1990s, the world certainly expressed tolerance for Scotland's peaceful, democratic revolution. Actually, the movement received more than ambivalent shoulder-shrugs from people around the world. While *Braveheart* may not have enticed foreign governments to interfere politically or militarily, its global popularity did manage to raise awareness of Scotland's situation. The film's popular influence was in part due to its American ideological themes, which in turn, inspired millions of Americans to identify with their real or imagined Scottish heritage. Many of these newly inspired diasporic Scotsman soon began flooding the Scottish economy with tourist pounds, thus decreasing the perceived financial dependence on the Union, supplying Scots with yet another reason to reject British control. This "film tourism" was most obvious in the resurgent success of the National Wallace Monument. The

---

[1] Ibid., 12.
[2] DeFronzo, "Social Movements and Revolutions," 20.
[3] Ibid.

"world" showed Scotland its moral as well as financial support, and revolutions with outside aid are often more successful than those without. *Braveheart* supplied the revolution with more than mere global permissiveness; it actually granted world *supportiveness*, which continues to give Scotland's nation-(re)building efforts significant support. It is essential to comprehend why so many tourists, specifically Americans, enjoyed the film to such an extent that they would travel to Scotland, thus acting as an economic stimuli for nationalist rhetoric. In all, to understand how the world affected Scotland is to first understand how *Braveheart* affected the "world."

Despite its international cast, crew, and filming locations, *Braveheart* was undoubtedly an American project, and much of the film's popularity stems from its ideological themes rooted in American individualism and freedom. Pittock believes the film associates heroic virtue with "anti-governmentalism," and Wallace in the film "is portrayed in American survivalist terms: living in the open, man of integrity and a foe of both English and Scottish 'big government,' which in their turn seek only to destroy him."[4] Likewise, Michael D. Sharp points to the political mindset of America in 1995, claiming the film benefited from rampant "frustration with the two-party system."[5] Wallace in *Braveheart*, Sharp argues, is a figure outside of the official government, thus offering "the medieval equivalent of a viable third-party candidate." Overall, "*Braveheart*'s popularity can be linked in part to the fact that it emerges during a time of political malaise, when a frustrated electorate yearns with false nostalgia for simple solutions to complex problems."[6] Although overreaching, this puts a politically conscious American audience in a hero seeking position.

---

[4] Pittock, *Celtic Identity and the British Image*, 5.
[5] Michael D. Sharp, "Remaking Medieval Heroism: Nationalism and Sexuality in *Braveheart*," *Florilegium* 15 (1998), 251.
[6] Sharp, "Remaking Medieval Heroism," 252.

Such hero search was most likely generated by the era's international politics. *Braveheart* emerged at a time when the US was suffering from a global enemy deficiency, a rare time in its history when there were no major hot or cold wars to be won. This was a time after the collapse of the USSR but before the terrorist attacks of September 11 2001. The 1990s, thus, lacked a major "global confrontation of pure good and evil" to attach one's allegiance.[7] This did not diminish American's desire to root for a hero. *Braveheart* showed America that freedom was still worth fighting for, and indeed obtainable in about three hours. In the end, many Americans enjoyed watching the annihilation of the oppressive medieval Englishmen. For, according to Fiona Watson, it seems the only "acceptable" on-screen racism is anti-Englishness.[8]

Moreover, Sally J. Morgan points out that the anachronistic red tunics the English wear in *Braveheart*, causing them to resemble British Red Coats, prompted Americans to identify the Scots' cinematic war of independence with their own. This motif worked so well that many misinformed American reviewers frequently referred to the English in the film as "British," despite the fact this term was unknown to Wallace and also includes the Scots.[9] But this American ignorance concerning Scotland's position within the UK is unsurprising. Indeed, one reason the world was permissive of the devolution revolution was simply because most lacked clear understanding of the situation. "In the minds of most Scottish Americans, Scotland is a country," says Bart Forbes of the Washington DC St. Andrew's Society, and this is as true to today as it was in the 1990s.[10] Thus, a bloodless, democratic movement for limited local autonomy and tax-varying powers for a place most assumed was already free, during a time when the world was preoccupied with "the military high drama of

[7] Gardels, Medavoy, *American Idol After Iraq*, 38.
[8] Watson, interview by author.
[9] Morgan, "The ghost in the luggage," 386.
[10] Bart Forbes quoted in Wheeler, "Scottish Independence: The American Perspective."

Kosovo, East Timor, Palestine and the Belgian Congo," received little American or international media coverage.[11] Yet, as Nairn suggests, long, tranquil revolutions can be as lasting and important as those with barricades and bombs.[12] In the rare instances that the situation was reported on in the US, the stories were often laced with references to *Braveheart*, and generally accompanied by violent or action-packed images from the film.[13]

The red-coated Englishmen in the film worked well with US audiences, who Morgan insists were recasting American myths onto someone else's history. She argues that what was touted as the reiteration of a Scottish national myth was in fact "another phase of America's envisaging of herself."[14] However, Morgan also explains that the Wallace myth was not new to the US, and the "conscription of Wallace into his new incarnation as *Braveheart*" is merely a logical development.[15] During the great colonial migrations of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries, she explains, Wallace was relocated, in myth form, to the US as "a ghost in the luggage."[16] Therefore, the myth of Wallace had permeated America long before *Braveheart*, Finlay writes that the myth was attractive in the US "where the tale of a fight for independence from a tyrannical English monarch by a man of the people had obvious resonance with the history of that republic."[17]

Indeed, seen as the new Wallace, George Washington was presented with a box fashioned out of the Wallace Oak in 1790.[18] Soon after, in the early-nineteenth-century, Jane Porter caused a "sensation" in America with *The Scottish Chiefs*, a novelized version of Blind Hary's poem.[19] Later that century, the city of Baltimore, Maryland, erected a large Wallace

---

[11] Nairn, *After Britain*, 194.
[12] Ibid., 16.
[13] For example, see Wheeler, "Scottish Independence: The American Perspective."
[14] Morgan, "The ghost in the luggage," 390.
[15] Ibid., 379.
[16] Ibid., 382.
[17] Finlay, "The Wallace Cult in the Twentieth Century," 178.
[18] King, "The Material Culture of William Wallace," 133.
[19] Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth*, 137.

statue.[20] Thanks to events like these, plus the vast numbers of Scottish immigrants to the US, Wallace's presence has been felt in America for centuries. Evidence even suggests that many black slaves in the American South "revelled in the vivacity of 'Scots Wha Hae Wi Wallace Bled', universalising its theme of emancipation as their own personal cry."[21] This admiration by the subjugated peoples of America's past is a sad irony in the wake of *Braveheart*, as the sympathy for Wallace's lost cause rekindled nostalgia for another "Lost Cause," supplying the Scottish revolution with international support that any tolerant, well-adjusted, Scot would whole heartedly reject, thus hindering the nation's (re)building process.[22]

Over the years, *Braveheart* has been unfortunately enjoyed, adopted and utilized by hate-groups around the world, but especially in the Southern US. Mark Potok, a civil rights advocate with the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), speculates that *Braveheart* "is on the shelf of every white supremacist in America."[23] Similarly, in an essay for SPLC, Euan Hague writes: "Popular films like *Braveheart* have been interpreted by neo-Confederates as mirror images of their own struggles and proponents of the Celtic South thesis simplistically conflate Confederate with Celtic."[24] One such group, The League of the South, "highly recommends" *Braveheart* because they say "Unreconstructed Southerners will find it difficult to miss the parallels between the Scots and our Confederate forebears."[25] In addition, the most infamous of all US-based hate-groups, the Ku Klux Klan, saw the film as an endorsement of their ideals, and a Texas Klan leader believed that *Braveheart* "may well become a movement piece de resistance for Christian Patriots."[26]

---

[20] For more on the grand ceremony at the unavailing of this statue see D. Ross, *On the Trail of William Wallace*, 137.
[21] Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth*, 4.
[22] Celeste Ray, "Scottish Heritage Southern Style," *Southern Cultures* 4, no. 2 (1998), 28.
[23] A. Ross, "Wallace's Monument and the Resumption of Scotland," 101.
[24] Euan Hague, "Essay: The Neo-Confederate Movement," Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed January 5, 2013, http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/intelligence-files/ideology/neo-confederate/the-neo-confederate-movement.
[25] Michael Hill quoted in McArthur, Brigadoon, Braveheart *and the Scots*, 205; for more see Hill quoted in Edensor, "Representing the Nation: Scottishness and *Braveheart*," 167.
[26] Kirsty Scott, "The Fatal Attraction," *The Herald, Scotland* (Glasgow), August 6, 1997, 12.

The most deplorable interpretation comes from the white-nationalist website, Yggdrasil's Library, which celebrates the film as "*A White Nationalist Classic.*" The author begins the lengthy article by calling *Braveheart* "THE white nationalist masterwork," that has a "remarkably explicit" message.[27] Then using language akin to that of Scottish nationalists at the time, the site claims that the film's relevance is stunning and "[r]ather than a dry history of Scotland 700 years ago, it seems to deal with very real issues of today with the historical backdrop a mere symbolic representation of today's reality." It goes on to say:

> it is hard to believe that such a movie could ever be produced and displayed in public in modern America…. You are not a fraction of the way through this two reeler of an epic and you are wondering how on earth such a politically incorrect movie could ever have been financed by Hollywood…. But the real wonder is the fact that *Braveheart* was released to critical acclaim, rather than massive protest…. For us that is wildly optimistic news, for it intimates that our movement can, if we are smart, propagate itself without much resistance.[28]

Over the years, these highly regrettable endorsements of the film made their way back to Scotland, tarnishing the reputation of the film and of Wallace himself. This also confused the nation-(re)building process, as many Scots wanted to express their Scottish pride, yet they did not want to seem as if they were supporting such appalling interpretations of this pride. Therefore, most Scottish nationalists began avoiding references to the stigmatized film, fearing it may stain the wider movement.[29] Yet how could one make a film about a thirteenth-century Scottish warrior and avoid Celtic influences, masculine identities, and showing only white characters? It seems anything less would be anachronistic. Nevertheless, the adoption of the film by hate-groups was unfortunate for the nationalists who had chosen to utilize the film.

---

[27] Yggdrasil, "Braveheart," Yggdrasil WN Library, 2000, accessed January 20, 2013, http://www.whitenationalism.com/cwar/brvhrt.htm. (italics in original)
[28] Yggdrasil, "Braveheart."
[29] For protests against the film's apparent homophobia, see Sharp, "Remaking Medieval Heroism," 252-253.

Some hate-groups have even been known to use the film as a recruitment tool, with leaders swaying new recruits using *Braveheart* as an entry point.[30] But the film has been employed for inspirational and recruitment purposes by many diverse groups the world-over, including the Chechens in their struggles with Russia,[31] a deadly Mexican drug cartel,[32] civilian soldiers in Syria,[33] and David R. Ross even claims he saw letters from tribes in the Amazon rainforest who managed to see *Braveheart* and say that Wallace gave them the will to unite against those who were "decimating their lands."[34] Even American politicians have been known to utilize the film. Phil Gingrey of Georgia, one of the so called "Braveheart Republicans," described the situation facing the party in 2011 as a "'Braveheart' moment," and told Republican House Speaker, John Boehner: "You, Mr. Speaker, are our William Wallace. Let's rush to the fight."[35] And former Democratic House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt dressed as Wallace and used *Braveheart* as a "metaphor" to inspire his party to keep their "faith in the process."[36] Or in 2012 when Mitt Romney's presidential campaign enacted its "Braveheart Strategy."[37]

On the whole, despite what some critics say, the vast majority of *Braveheart*'s fans in the US were not militant racists; rather, as Lin Anderson observes, the film acted as a "wakeup call" for millions of Americans with Scottish heritage who subsequently sought to

---

[30] Kirsty Scott, "The Fatal Attraction," 12.
[31] McArthur, Brigadoon, Braveheart *and the Scots*, 192.
[32] Ioan Grillo, *El Narco: Inside Mexico's Criminal Insurgency* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2011), 200.
[33] Ian Pannell, "The Syrian Civilians Who Became Rebel Fighters," BBC News Online, June 28, 2012, BBC News-Middle East, accessed November 14, 2012, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-18622600.
[34] D. Ross, *On The Trail of William Wallace*, 123.
[35] Phil Gingrey quoted in Dana Milbank, "Braveheart Republicans? Or False-Hearted?," editorial, *The Washington Post*, December 20, 2011, WP Opinions sec., accessed January 5, 2012, http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2011-12-20/opinions/35286502_1_tax-cut-extension-senate-republicans-house-republicans..
[36] James Clyburn quoted in John Brandt, "Dems Howl About Showing Affleck Movie Clip During GOP Conference," Fox News, July 27, 2011, Politics, accessed January 5, 2012, http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2011/07/27/dem-howls-about-showing-affleck-movie-clip-during-gop-conference/.
[37] Mike Flynn, "Romney Campaign Should Rethink Its 'Braveheart' Strategy," Breitbart News Network, July 18, 2012, accessed February 19, 2013, http://www.breitbart.com/Big-Government/2012/07/18/romney-campaign-should-rethink-its-braveheart-strategy.

reestablish their diasporic roots.[38] The film then helped usher in a sort of Celtic revival in the US, and in the decades that have followed there is nary an American renaissance festival or a Highland games that is not frequented by kilt-wearing, blue-face-painted men mimicking Gibson's cinematic persona. These instances show that the film retains its relevancy in the US, which may prove important in the (re)building of a free Scottish nation.

To complete the nation-(re)building process, or at least its political dimension, many Scottish nationalists believe Scotland must become fully independent, not merely devolved. The vote on independence will take place on 18 September 2014, and some argue that US support will be a key factor. Brian Wheeler of BBC News-Washington explains that the US is Scotland's primary export market, and the success of an independent Scotland "might depend, to some extent, on convincing American investors that there is more to the country than whisky tours and old castles." In 2012, during the annual "Scotland Week" (formerly Tartan Week), Scottish governmental officials, including Alex Salmond, visited the US to promote Scottish business interests and to forge connections with American legislators. Yet Wheeler believes that if Salmond really wanted to "mobilise the Scottish diaspora" before 2014, he may want "to dig out the *Braveheart* DVD."[39]

This advice may be tongue-in-cheek, yet it is closer to reality than one might think. In the 1990s, Gibson's film inspired many newly diasporic Scots from all across the US to travel to Scotland, and in turn had a direct influence on the nation's political-economy. Some of these proud Scottish-Americans even attended the first "Braveheart Convention," held in Stirling the day after the devolution vote in 1997. About two-hundred people attended the event, including the film's writer, Randall Wallace. Most of these diasporic patriots heard

[38] L. Anderson, *Braveheart,* 19.
[39] Wheeler, "Scottish Independence: The American Perspective."

about the event through Lin Anderson's MacBraveheart website.[40] Anderson herself argues that one of the reasons the film had such a global impact was because it represents "the first Internet film." "It is the first film to have a large body of evidence collected via the web," she contends, showing how the film affected individuals around the world.[41] It is true there were countless fansites and blogs dedicated to the film, and these effected how the "new" Wallace cult was transmitted.[42]

This global phenomenon truly began two years prior to this convention. As the sun came up on the third day of September 1995, the excitement around Stirling was palpable, for this was the day that Hollywood movie stars were coming to the MacRobert Arts Centre on the town's university campus. The star studded European premiere of *Braveheart* took place while high above the Centre's entrance an imposing tower looked on in silence, casting an omnipresent shadow over the Scottish nation and its people. The premiere was certainly a grand occasion, yet it was nothing compared to what happened over a hundred and thirty years prior, in 1861, when thousands converged on Stirling to witness the laying of the foundation stone for the National Wallace Monument.[43]

The movement to build the Wallace Monument began in the mid-nineteenth-century, when pride in Scotland's past was high. Yet, this pride did not foster much political activism, only cultural pride. In fact, most of the main contributors to the monument project were proud of their British identities. Far from revolutionaries, these patriots practiced what Graeme Morton calls "Unionist-Nationalism." This seemingly contradictory term means that pride in Scotland's past, and in Wallace, in no way interfered with the pride that came with belonging to the mighty British Empire. Many commentators at this time even managed to

---

[40] Morgan, "The Ghost in the Luggage," 377.
[41] L. Anderson, *Braveheart,* 45- 46.
[42] For more see "Wallace.com," in Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth*, 136-154.
[43] See J.S. Donaldson, "The Laying of the Foundation Stone of the Wallace Monument," editorial, *The RRA NEWS, The Masonic Magazine of Lodge Rutherglen Royal Arch No. 116.*, September 1986, accessed November 19, 2011, http://www.lodge76.wanadoo.co.uk/wallace_monument.htm.

present Wallace as a *Unionist* hero; claiming that without Wallace, Scotland would have ceased to exist, thus no "union" would have been necessary, or even possible. This mentality was a compromise for those who had pride in both the British Empire and in Scotland.[44]

Still, despite the overt presents of pro-Union symbolism, contemporaries of the Monument worried about its negative influence on the Union. [45] An 1860s editorial in the *Courant* warned people not to see the Monument as a "peg to hang 'patriotic' nonsense, Scotch provincialism, or worse 'seedy Radicalism.'" Moreover, the editorial claimed that monuments have the uncanny ability to "galvanize dead patriotisms, and stir up animosities which have been laid for centuries."[46] Yet, no such patriotic political revival occurred and the Monument stirred few animosities. The same cannot be said for *Braveheart*, which did manage to revive centuries-old animosities and galvanize non-violent political patriotism. Soon after the film, the Wallace Monument was recruited as a tool for promoting Scottish-only nationalism, something the Monument's builders would have protested.

After its opening in 1869, the Monument, according to Andrew Ross, was fairly popular up until the latter half of the twentieth-century. A hundred years after its completion however, the Monument was in inhospitable condition; draughty, poorly-lit, sparsely adorned with interesting features, and thus struggling to attract visitors.[47] Ross, a native of Stirling, says growing up he was indifferent to the historical sites around him, like the Monument. This was in large part due to what he calls the "strange death of Scottish history." Even in the shadow of the Monument in the 1960s, Ross claims he was never taught any Scottish history; rather nineteenth-century British state history was focused on.[48] Yet, as the new millennium

---

[44] Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth*, 115-118; also see James Coleman, "Unionist-Nationalism in Stone? The Wallace Monument and the Hazards of Commemoration in Victorian Scotland," in *The Wallace Book*, ed. Edward J. Cowan (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2007), 151-168.
[45] A. Ross, "Wallace's Monument and the Resumption of Scotland," 90.
[46] Quoted in A. Ross, "Wallace's Monument and the Resumption of Scotland," 91.
[47] A. Ross, "Wallace's Monument and the Resumption of Scotland," 93.
[48] Ibid., 86.

approached, Scottish nationalism began to slowly reemerge. In 1993, the site underwent a much needed million pound refurbishment. This eighteen-month restoration was timely, as just two years later *Braveheart* would dramatically impact the site, while supplying the devolution revolution with worldwide permissiveness.[49]

In showing Scottish national identity within a "generic framework designed to appeal to a global audience," *Braveheart* managed to substantially and undeniably augment the Wallace Monument.[50] Andrew Ross has "no doubt" that the renewed fortune of the Monument was due to the film's popularity and the site went from attracting around 50,000 visitors a year before the film, to over 128,000 the year after.[51] By decades end, it was attracted more than 200,000 visitors annually as the site's revenue reached the prestigious one-million pound mark.[52] Explaining this success in the year 2000, John Paterson, Chairman of Stirling District Tourism Ltd, said: "There is still a lot of interest in the monument with the *Braveheart* factor."[53] And as previously mentioned the popularity of the *Braveheart*-inspired *Freedom* statue placed in the Monument's car-park attests to the film's enormous physical and psychological impact on the site. Shortly after the film, it was estimated that more than fifty percent of the site's patrons credited *Braveheart* for inspiring them to visit.[54] But this was not a new phenomenon, and tourists have long traveled to places where the "deeds of fancy were fictionally recurring forever."[55] Today this is most powerful in what is known as

---

[49] Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth*, 81.
[50] Edensor, "Representing the Nation: Scottishness and *Braveheart*," 143.
[51] A. Ross, "Wallace's Monument and the Resumption of Scotland," 101.
[52] Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth*, 81,116.
[53] John Paterson quoted in Cameron Simpson, "Visitor Attraction Passes £1m Mark Braveheart Factor Boost for Wallace Monument," *The Herald, Scotland* (Glasgow), April 18, 2000, accessed May 4, 2011, http://www.heraldscotland.com/sport/spl/aberdeen/visitor-attraction-passes-1m-mark-braveheart-factor-boost-for-wallace-monument-1.239756.; also appearing in the *Daily Record* under the headline, "Wallace Is Our Million Pound Hero; On the Up: Braveheart Monument Pulls Them In," *Daily Record* (Glasgow), April 18, 2000.
[54] Rachel Hamada, "As Seen on Screen," *Holyrood Magazine*, June 14, 2006, 31.
[55] Christopher Mulvey quoted in Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, 231.

"film tourism."[56] The turnaround was so great that one Monument employee conceded: "Ultimately, we all owe Mel Gibson our wages." [57]

The Monument's new found attention was a product of what historians call the "*Braveheart* effect."[58] As mentioned, the film obviously "effected" the Conservative MP Michael Forsyth, who, in the wake of the film, tried to highlight his Scottishness and even managed to return the Stone of Destiny. Moreover, after viewing *Braveheart*, Forsyth allocated funds to attracting film productions to Scotland as a way of obtaining money directly and through additional film tourism. This then lead to the establishment of the new Scottish Screen Agency in 1996.[59] Before this, in anticipation of *Braveheart*'s economic potential, the state government – obviously not fearing a nationalist revolution – gifted the Loch Lomond, Trossachs and Stirling Tourist Board £100,000 to boost advertising in foreign markets. A year after the film, the director of the Tourist Board told *The Stirling Observer*, that "*Braveheart* has given us the ideal opportunity to relaunch Stirling as one of Britain's finest heritage towns"[60] The Tourist Board then designed an advertisement for international theaters to be seen before the film. This commercial combined scenes from the film with aerial shots of the Monument and Scottish scenery, and ended with the catchphrase, "experience the very heart of Scotland: Stirling is 'Braveheart Country'." The Board also produced an advertisement which reads: "Where the Highlands met the Lowlands, step into the echoes of Rob Roy, Robert the Bruce and William Wallace – Braveheart Country."[61]

These campaigns further promoted Scotland's history as a commodity on the global market. "In a country which cannot guarantee its visitors sunshine," writes Morton,

---

[56] See Stefan Roesch, "Film Tourism," Film Tourism, accessed March 7, 2012, http://www.film-tourism.com/.
[57] Quoted in A. Ross, "Wallace's Monument and the Resumption of Scotland," 104.
[58] Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth*, 81- 82.
[59] David Bruce, *Scotland the Movie* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996), 171.
[60] Quoted in Edensor, "Reading Braveheart," 11.
[61] Edensor, "Reading Braveheart," 11.

> there are rich pickings to be gained from marketing the Scottish past. In Scotland tourism and heritage have always been partners, working together to convert patriotism into pounds. The colorful chaos of Scotland's past is a powerful magnet which draws visitors from elsewhere in Britain and from all over the world.[62]

This powerful partnership was made much stronger after *Braveheart.* Morton explains that the film brought the story of Wallace to a worldwide audience, and has done much to cement Wallace as Scotland's greatest icon.[63] In summation, Edensor says:

> I think the important thing about *Braveheart* is that it really did sell Scotland to the world in a quite remarkable way. *Braveheart* conveys a very powerful, if simplistic, message about what Scotland is…. Now, in some ways, we can see that as quite a useful thing. If we look at the…global tourist industry, we can see that it's very important that nations have a very identifiable image that attracts tourist. *Braveheart* served those ends magnificently. And as we know the huge upsurge in Americans visiting Scotland – particularly the Stirling area – after the film came out, was enormous.[64]

The effectiveness of these advertising campaigns is uncertain, but tourism revenue certainly increased. The Scottish Tourist Board estimated that the media hype around *Braveheart* supplied Scotland with around £11million worth of free, global advertising.[65] Yet not all agreed with the decision to utilize the film in such campaigns, and many protested the connections between the media and the heritage industry. Some even feared that Scotland was becoming nothing more than a romantic stereotype. "Sadly, the tourist industry is about the only industry thriving in this wee country today," a *Scotsman* article opinioned, "as Scotland gradually moves towards becoming a theme park for wide-eyed romantics."[66] However, a "theme park" is better than a struggling economy, and nationalists argued that exploitation of the "tartan monster" was good for Scotland's economy, which helped legitimize notions of Scottish self-rule.[67]

---

[62] Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth*, 75.
[63] Morton quoted in *Three Lives of William Wallace*, dir. Ross Harper.
[64] Edensor quoted in *Three Lives of William Wallace*, dir. Ross Harper.
[65] Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth*, 114.
[66] E. Miller quoted in Edensor, "Reading Braveheart," 16.
[67] Tom Nairn, *The Break-Up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism*, 25th Anniversary ed. (London: NLB, 1977), 104.

In fact, following a period of decline, tourism in Scotland went up by seven percent in 1995.[68] The Scottish Tourist Board calculated that over a quarter of the visitors in 1996 had come because they had seen *Braveheart*,[69] and by 1997, tourism was the fastest growing sector of the Scottish economy.[70] In 2002, a total of nine percent of the Scottish work force was employed by the tourist industry,[71] and in 2009, 83 percent of Scotland's tourists visited one of the nation's historic sites, like the Monument. [72] And it was not only Americans visiting these sites. An online travel review of the Monument by an elderly man named Govindarajan Vaithialingam from Tamil Nadu, south India is exemplary of both the film's ability to directly inspire tourism and to rekindle nationalistic sentiments, no matter one's nationality. "After seeing the Film BRAVEHEART in 1995," Vaithialingam's review reads,

> I visited Stirling on my way back to India from New York. Really amazed to see the monuments at Stirling and to know the bravery of Willam Wallace in fighting for the freedom of Scotland. Just like Willam Wallace, in India Veera Pandia Katta Bomman, a similar worrier who fought for freedom of India from Britishers. Such Freedom Fighters will ever be remembered.[73]

But not only the Wallace Monument felt, and still feels, the "*Braveheart* effect." In the "post-*Braveheart* glow," Stirling Castle saw visitor numbers jump from 250,000 in 1991 to over 430,000 in 2000.[74] Today tourism is £11 billion industry in Scotland and, according to Salmond, one of the industries "bucking" the economic downturn.[75]

Elspeth King, the director of the Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum, believes *Braveheart* "was a really good, award winning film" that managed to do "endless good" for

---

[68] Edensor, "Reading Braveheart," 7.
[69] McArthur, Brigadoon, Braveheart *and the Scots*, 131. The actual estimated percentage was 26%.
[70] Edensor, "Representing the Nation: Scottishness and *Braveheart*," 157.
[71] Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth*, 79.
[72] Pittock, *Road to Independence?*, 133.
[73] Govindarajan Vaithialingam, "Wallace Monument - About - Google," About - Google, August 2012 (review posted), accessed March 5, 2013, https://plus.google.com/101683710105930869814/about?hl=en. (*All* spelling, grammar, and punctuation original.)
[74] Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth*, 75; for more on revenues of Scottish tourist sites, see VisitScotland.org.
[75] Alex Salmond quoted in "Alex Salmond to Attend Premiere of Disney Film *Brave* Tipped to Bring £140m Boost to Scottish Economy," *Daily Record* (Glasgow), June 18, 2012, accessed January 17, 2013, http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/alex-salmond-to-attend-premiere-of-disney-1129647.

the area of Stirling. She says "from house sales onwards, the economic impact was enormous. And it really gave a new life to the National Wallace Monument, which was a disgrace before *Braveheart*."[76] On the 699th anniversary of the Battle of Stirling Bridge – thus a year after the film was released and exactly one year prior to Devolution Day – the Stirling Smith opened a special exhibition entitled, "Brave Art." The exhibit consisted of depictions, literal and not, of Stirling Bridge and Wallace.[77] In early-September 1997 King observed,

> The positive impact of *Braveheart* is evident from the 30,000 visitors who have come to the exhibition so far. Visitor surveys show that eight out of 10 visitors have seen *Braveheart*, are interested in William Wallace, and have come to find out more. The heroic story of Wallace is one which inspires, unites, and motivates…. The mood of visitors to the exhibition has been celebratory, and devoid of the racist and violent tendencies with which its detractors would like to dismiss the cult of Wallace.[78]

Likewise, Watson contends that the film has done a lot of good for Scotland, and says that although the Scots "may resent any idea that the Americans rediscovered our hero for us, but certainly it highlighted Scottish history as a separate entity from British history for the rest of the world"[79] Yet, no matter how lucrative to the tourist industry the film was, or how much it helped Scottish history and pride, the detractors King describes could not get over "the atavistic, ethnic wrath depicted in *Braveheart*," which they saw as disturbing and shameful.[80] Thus, for quite some time after the film, the Tourist Board gave the Monument's staff strict orders to shy away from all "political discussions."[81] However, in the 1990s, any discussion of Wallace seemed inherently political.

Morton says Scottish heritage is there to be packaged and promoted, and "what is increasingly acute is the interplay between myth and history in the heritage industry and the

---

[76] King, interview by author.
[77] See Elspeth King and Charles Broadfoot, *Brave Art: An Exhibition of Contemporary Art Celebrating the 699th Anniversary of the Battle of Stirling Bridge* (Stirling: Smith Art Gallery and Museum, 1996).
[78] King, "The True Story of Braveheart."
[79] Watson quoted in Gilchirst, "Who Is the Real Wallace?."
[80] A. Ross, "Wallace's Monument and the Resumption of Scotland," 101.
[81] Ibid., 86.

effect on Scotland's political national identity."[82] Seen in the actions of the SNP following *Braveheart*, this interplay gave the Nationalist a tangible argument for the necessity of a revolution. The economic advantages of the "*Braveheart* effect" were clear and the SNP wanted to make sure that the money that was coming into Scotland, stayed in Scotland. The SNP made similar arguments in concerning North Sea oil revenues, but the major difference between the two economic stimuli was that *Braveheart* came with a clear patriotic message; it was emotional, not just economic. In 1967, Winnie Ewing brought the SNP to political prominence in Scotland, becoming the Party's second ever parliamentary representative. Upon winning, Ewing famously declared: "Stop the world, Scotland wants to get on!" From the 1970s to the late-1990s, she was a member of the European Parliament. She has since written:

> In the European Parliament, with opportunities to join international organisations, I met many distinguished international politicians who asked 'what is taking Scotland so long?' I found a great goodwill for Scotland internationally, yet we allow big decisions about Scotland to be made by London, often to our detriment.[83]

This influential politician knows that the world is an important component to Scotland's nation-(re)building.

Despite nationalist rhetoric, one cannot ignore the fact that the British government approved the devolution referendum in the first place. Thus, the state government in Westminster allotted some amount of permissiveness, even if it was only to appease the vocal Scots, and avoid an independence referendum. More than this however, many in England actually supported the revolution, believing that England would be better off without Scotland, and this remains true in the present nation-(re)building process. A 2012 poll showed that support for independence is *higher* among the English than it is for the Scots,

---

[82] Morton, *William Wallace: Man and Myth*, 79.
[83] Winnie Ewing quoted in "Voice of the People," National Museums Scotland, accessed March 5, 2013, http://www.nms.ac.uk/our_museums/national_museum/explore_the_galleries/scotland/scotland_a_changing_nation/voice_of_the_people.aspx.

meaning even within their own "state," the Scots have "inter*national*" permissiveness. Yet for Nationalists, this lack of Scottish support is pessimistic news.[84]

Thus, many in Scotland, like Alex Salmond, hope that Disney-Pixar's *Brave* (2012) – which is thought to be the highest grossing film ever made about Scotland[85] and has indeed already surpassed *Braveheart*'s gross by more than $324,000,000[86] – will act in the same way Gibson's film did. In fact, coinciding with *Brave*, VisitScotland spent more than £7 million on its largest global advertising campaign ever, and experts predict that the film will provide a £140 million boost to the Scottish economy.[87] Evidently learning from the "*Braveheart* effect," tourism officials prepared themselves for what has already been dubbed the "*Brave* effect."[88] These actions are not politically driven, but what is good for the Scottish economy is good for independence, validating Scotland's economic self-sufficiency.

But Elspeth King, a strong supporter of independence, is less enthusiastic, calling *Brave* "crap" and "a profound disappointment." "If that's selling Scotland, I'm sorry for Scotland," King laments, "And I'm sorry Alex Salmond has signed up for that."[89] This is contrary to her opinions of *Braveheart*. King agrees with Anderson, who argues that, despite what many believe, *Braveheart* did not make Scotland "look ridiculous on the world stage, but rather the 'heart' of *Braveheart* has been its strongest ambassador," and a major force behind its powerful nationalistic messages.[90] *Brave* shows Scotland in a grand way, and will

---

[84] "English Show Stronger Support Than Scots for Scottish Independence," *The Scotsman* (Edinburgh), January 16, 2012, accessed March 5, 2013, http://www.scotsman.com/news/politics/top-stories/english-show-stronger-support-than-scots-for-scottish-independence-1-2058675.
[85] Severin Carrell, "Scotland Rallies Behind *Brave* Animation on Hopes It Will Buoy Tourism," *The Guardian* (London), June 3, 2012, accessed March 7, 2013, http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2012/jun/03/scotland-brave-tourism-animation-disney.
[86] According to figures provided by "Box Office / Business Braveheart," IMDb, accessed March 5, 2013, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0112573/business?ref_=tt_dt_bus; and "Box Office / Business Brave," IMDb, accessed March 5, 2013, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1217209/business?ref_=tt_dt_bus.
[87] *Daily Record*, "Alex Salmond to Attend Premiere of Disney Film *Brave* Tipped to Bring £140m Boost to Scottish Economy."
[88] "Tourism Gears Up For 'Brave Effect'" The Scottish Government, July 24, 2012, accessed March 7, 2013, http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2012/07/Tourism-Brave24072012.
[89] King, interview by author.
[90] L. Anderson, *Braveheart*, 44.

attract some tourists. However, in more ways than one, *Brave* lacks the "heart" of *Braveheart*. As an animated children's film based on non-nationalistic fairytales, *Brave* does not produce, nor does it intend to produce, the same sort of patriotic pride as *Braveheart*, and it does not appear that the independence movement will have the same emotional boost that *Braveheart* supplied the devolution revolution.

More than the power of Hollywood, the devolution revolution had world permissiveness for one simple reason: the majority of the world did not care. The United States, the largest world power, clearly had no major objections to Scottish devolution. Even though the US and the UK have been economic, military and ideological allies for over a century, financial or political motivations for the American government to oppose devolution are difficult to imagine; and the same can be said for the pending independence movement. In the end, Scotland's movement did not have had the bombs or barricades of other contemporary revolutions, depriving it of international attention, yet the Scots were just fine with their low-profile success aided by a high-profile film.[91]

By promoting the Scottish cause to a global audience, *Braveheart* fulfilled, and surpassed, DeFronzo's final critical factor, "permissive world context."[92] While international governments expressed tolerance towards the movement, the "world," showed its moral and financial support, and actually created a supportive world context for the movement; despite the negative affiliations with hate-groups. With the world behind them the Scots voted "Yes" to devolution and "Yes" to Scotland, and thus the revolution was complete…. Or was it?

[91] Nairn, *After Britain*, 16.
[92] L. Anderson, *Braveheart,* 12.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION: BRAVEHEART ALE AND THE PERSISTENT REVOLUTION

In 2011, after a day of sightseeing in Anchorage Alaska, I wondered into a random microbrew. Once inside, as a student of Scottish history, I immediately noticed a large banner with an image of heavily-bearded bag-piper amongst a Highland setting with the word "BRAVEHEART" printed in bold lettering above him. It turns out this was an advertisement for the Sleeping Lady Brewing Company's take on a Scottish style ale. Obviously, when it came time to name their ale, the Alaskan brewers could think of no better word that would encapsulate the beer's origin, and inform the consumer of that origin, than "Braveheart." Naturally, as a responsible academic who never lets a chance for some hard-hitting historical research slip by, I took it upon myself to sample the ale and subsequently purchase the souvenir t-shirt. The shirt now serves as a reminder that films, and the myths they present, can go beyond the screen and impact the way a culture, a nation, and a history are imagined by people around the world. But the extraordinary impact of Gibson's film affected more than Alaskan beer. It actually fueled a peaceful revolution in late-twentieth-century Scotland.

However, as made clear by the film's writer Randall Wallace, *Braveheart* was not produced with the intention to alter Scottish history or affect its politics. The screenwriter even said that, while he was happy the film made the Scots proud, he does not claim to know what is right for Scotland.[1] Still, intended or not, *Braveheart* supplied the Scots with the confidence to devolve, and next year they will again be asked to make a critical decision regarding their nation's future. By all indications, the political rhetoric in the run-up to the

[1] Miller, "I Can't Forgive SNP For Hijacking Braveheart."

independence referendum in 2014 will *not* be as littered with references to Wallace and medieval glories as was the devolution campaigning, as most politicians want to focus on the progressive nature of Scotland and what it could, or could not, be if it left the Union.[2] Indeed, in an interview for the Spring 2013 edition of the SNP's quarterly newsletter, *Saltire*, Nicola Sturgeon, Deputy First Minister of Scotland, and the woman in charge of the SNP's "Yes" campaign, said that it remains the Nationalists' goal "to win the hearts and minds of Scots," but that the independence debate is not "about national identity or asking people to choose an identity or choose a flag." This seems at odds with the mid-1990s rhetoric of the "Head and Heart" campaign, but she argues that "Where we come from…is not what matters. It's where, as a country, we want to go." Yet, mimicking the party's decades old rhetoric, Sturgeon says that the "No" campaign simply wants to tell Scotland that it is "too small and too weak and too poor," and that the "job" of the SNP is "to grow people's confidence in Scotland's ability," something *Braveheart* managed to do in the years prior to the devolution vote.[3] Therefore, references to the film, and what it represents, have not completely slipped from the lips of major UK politicians. One example came last year in the debates over the finalization of the independence referendum. In a speech to Scottish Conservatives, incumbent UK Prime Minister David Cameron made a mocking reference to Alex Salmond's attempts to delay the independence vote, saying: "I thought we were meant to be watching *Braveheart*. [But] It turns out it's *Chicken Run*" – a slanted reference to another Gibson film.[4]

Since *Braveheart*, many newspaper headlines, particularly those from outside Scotland, have grown accustomed to referring to Salmond as a modern day William

[2] Information accrued in a series of interviews by the author, August 2012.
[3] Nicola Sturgeon quoted in ""I'll Give My All for a Yes Vote"" *Saltire* (Newsletter), Spring 2013, 2-3.
[4] David Cameron quoted in John F. Burns, "Pinning Scottish Independence on a Fervor for 1314," *The New York Times*, April 5, 2012, A4.

Wallace.[5] This nickname likely makes the SNP's leader uncomfortable, but only slightly, and only publicly. It seems Salmond would love to think of himself as a powerful and emotional revolutionary leader, uniting the Scots against the oppressive English and delivering them to freedom, just like Wallace centuries ago, and *The Economist* even said Salmond "came to power to effect a revolution, to sweep Scotland…to independence."[6] The only reason he may not openly promote this image is due to the political correctness that dictates the public actions and words of modern politicians. Moreover, in the nearly two decades since the film, *Braveheart* has become almost taboo in Scotland. This comes from the embarrassment some Scots feel when they imagine that their global image has been fashioned by a stereotypical Hollywood film, and many seek to reclaim their identity. This distancing is also in no small part due to the erratic and unfortunate behavior of the film's poster-boy, Mel Gibson, whose recent life and career has been a litany of bad decisions and negative press.

Some said that after the landslide victory of the "Yes" campaign in 1997, "politicians no longer needed *Braveheart*, [thus] Scottish Nationalists dropped their Wallace slogans."[7] Nevertheless, a 2010 SNP campaign video, entitled "Scotland Needs Champions," shows a man walking through a Scottish town, getting pats on the back by proud citizens smiling in appreciation. Then, reminiscent of the famous scene in *Braveheart*, the man heroically walks up the side of a mountain as triumphant music plays. Once he is at the summit, he proudly surveys the Scottish landscape, then screams a long, drawn out "Scoootlaaand!" as the camera circles around above, displaying the majesty of the Highlands. The scream is then heard all over Scotland, and even down to London, where the echo causes people to stop in their tracks, look up and ponder, after which Alex Salmond explains how the SNP has always

[5] Example, see "Scottish First Minister Alex Salmond Makes Independence Pitch," *The Australian* (New South Wales), January 26, 2012, accessed March 9, 2013, http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/world/scottish-first-minister-alex-salmond-makes-independence-pitch/story-e6frg6so-1226254075131.
[6] "Dismantling the Welfare State," *The Economist* (London), August 26, 2010, Scotland's Budget sec., accessed March 9, 2013, http://www.economist.com/node/16889694.
[7] Harper (Narrator), *The Three Lives of William Wallace*, dir. Ross Harper.

been "Scotland's national champion."[8] This moment is nearly identical to another famous instant in Gibson's film, in which Wallace, nearing his death by way of brutal execution, manages to cry out one final word: "Freeeedooom!" This causes key characters, some in Scotland, others in London, to stop, look up and think. This campaign video shows that even though direct use of the film by political parties, like the SNP, has subsided, *Braveheart*'s memory and images live on.

This, however, is about as blatant as Nationalists get when it comes to the film. But, although overt appropriations of the film may be a thing of the past, it would not be surprising if Salmond, or other politicians, utilized Wallace or *Braveheart* in their rhetoric in the run up to the September 2014 referendum. The film has forever stamped the political, social and cultural landscape of Scotland. Yet it was not only in the nation's political rhetoric that the film had an impact. It is also evident on Edinburgh's Royal Mile where street performers grow their hair long, don a kilt, and paint their faces blue in hopes that tourist will tip well after they get their photo with a real "brave heart." And its impact was clear on a sunny day in August 2012, when members of the Society of William Wallace stood outside the Scottish Parliament – now in its second decade of operation – to commemorate the opening of "The Wallace Letters" exhibition to be housed in the building's main entryway. This exhibit displayed two correspondences from Wallace's time, one which was likely in his possession at the time of his capture, and are thought to be the only authenticated physical relics directly connected to the hero. During the ceremony, Society members discussed the greatness of Wallace and made pro-independence appeals. Finally, the proceedings were capped off by a rousing musical performance in which bagpipes and drums belted out an upbeat version of the *Braveheart* score, while inside a silhouetted Wallace from *Braveheart*

[8] SNPforScotland, "Scotland Needs Champions SNP - Scottish National Party," YouTube, March 21, 2010, accessed May 18, 2011, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xV_9Un_UtiE.

was prominent on an informational panel mere feet from the famed letters, giving *Braveheart* a physical presence in the parliament it helped revive.[9]

Thanks to this influential film, Wallace lived on in the hearts and minds of many voting Scots in 1997, and thus Scotland may not be where it is today – politically, socially or culturally – had it not been for a Hollywood movie based on an old myth-historical poem. This was revolutionary. Tom Nairn says that although unionist hoped devolution would strengthen the British state, it now seems that "one inevitability" has replaced another. For instead of it being inevitable that the Union will stay intact, it now looks as if it will ultimately fracture.[10] Nairn says Scottish devolution was a "completely peaceful revolution" with "low-profile success, in a world preoccupied by…military high drama."[11] Yet "tranquil revolutions," like Scotland's devolution revolution, are "as lasting and important as those of barricades and bombs."[12] "After all," writes Nairn,

> National Liberation has more customarily meant the release of prisoners, guerrillas being welcomed from the hills, mass flag-raising and revenge upon collaborators. But because none of this took place here, it is erroneous to conclude that nothing happened. An earth-shift did occur, once and for all, and it will never be undone…. Scotland was – or at any rate had started to be – a nation again.[13]

But, in a way, the film gave Scotland's revolution all of these National Liberation features.

Colin McArthur was unhappy with this phenomenon, arguing that the image of Wallace in *Braveheart* was anachronistic, presenting him as a "modern, nationalist guerrilla leader in a period half a millennium before the appearance of nationalism on the historical stage as a concept under which disparate classes and interests might be mobilized within a nation state."[14] But this imagery is not new to the Wallace myth. Andrew Ross points out that Wallace has long been constructed as the "guerrilla warrior hero of the Wars of Independence

---

[9] Accrued from author's attendance at the "Wallace Letter's" opening ceremony in Edinburgh, August 11, 2012.
[10] Nairn, *After Britain*, 109.
[11] Ibid., 194.
[12] Ibid., 16.
[13] Ibid., 111.
[14] McArthur, "*Braveheart* and the Scottish Aesthetic Dementia," 171.

and […] the national, martyred symbol of patriotic derring-do."[15] Therefore, in the devolution revolution, thanks to *Braveheart*, the Wallace myth was released from a prison of neglect and welcomed from the hills of oblivion, as the "*Braveheart* tendency" stimulated populist sentiment "as only a good flag-waving fight can do," while revenge, in the form of Nationalist electoral success, was levied upon the anti-revolutionary collaborators.[16] Indeed, Marinell Ash contends that "wars of national liberation," such as the one seen, and in a way, "experienced" in *Braveheart*, "create – or heighten – a sense of national identity."[17] Two years removed from the film that stimulated more interest in Scotland's past than anything else in the twentieth-century, the Scots overwhelmingly supported devolution.[18]

The most important aspect of *Braveheart*'s impact on the revolution, and its most coincidental, was its impeccable timing. The film emerged at a decisive time in Scottish and UK politics, a time when historian Michael Lynch says, "confrontation [had] stretched the very fabric of the Union thinner than ever before."[19] And *Braveheart* enthusiast John Anderson contends, "*Braveheart* came along right at that critical time and brought the person who was arguably the founder Scottish nation, and put him...from a position of relative obscurity right at the center of things."[20] The nationalistic messages in the film added to these confrontations, helping to sustain the period of crisis in British politics, while encouraging Scotland's nation-(re)building process. For many, devolution was simply a phase in this enduring struggle, and the revolution is ongoing. In 2007, Alex Salmond became the first Nationalist First Minister of Scotland, and in 2011, his party became the first ever majority government in the devolved Scottish parliament, allotting them the political clout to

[15] A. Ross, "Wallace's Monument and the Resumption of Scotland," 99.
[16] Ibid., 104.
[17] Marinell Ash, "William Wallace and Robert the Bruce," 86.
[18] King, "Introduction," *Blind Harry's Wallace*, xvi.
[19] Lynch, *Scotland*, 449. Written three years prior to *Braveheart*.
[20] J. Anderson, *The True Story of Braveheart*, dir. Sueann Fincke.

formulate the upcoming independence referendum. And this was all preceded by the "dramatic sea-change in opinion" that Salmond described in the months after *Braveheart*.[21]

The late Scottish patriot David R. Ross, who oft said, "Sorry – can't stop, I have a country to free," did much for the Wallace myth and for Scotland.[22] Ross' understanding of the film's impact on the revolution may be a bit enthusiastic, but it is astute and worth quoting at length. "*Braveheart* received some scathing comments from the press regarding its inaccuracies, many of which were part and parcel of Harry's work," wrote Ross,

> But Harry wrote his work to be entertainment, and a spur to Scots to feel patriotism for their native soil. *Braveheart* is certainly entertainment, having won five Oscars, and it certainly stirred patriotic feelings in most Scots, but it was a catalyst for the huge increase in sales of Scottish history books. If people are taking a pride in their heritage, it cannot be a bad thing; after all, how do you know your destination if you don't know where you have travelled from? Nigel Tranter, the famous Scots author, once said that most Scots are like a man who has lost his memory, groping blindly on, with no idea as to his past. If *Braveheart* has gone even a small way towards rectifying this situation, then it has to be a good thing.[23]

Here, in discussing the revival of Scottish history education, scathing criticisms, renewed patriotic feelings, the recovery of lost memories, and inspiring pride in one's heritage, Ross alludes to aspects of all five of James DeFronzo's "critical factors" for achieving revolutionary success.

In the end, this study has attempted to uncover how "the story of Wallace – and the release of *Braveheart* – was certainly a factor in spurring Scotland on to the restoration of [its] national Parliament."[24] It showed that in the mid- to late-1990s, *Braveheart* revived the centuries old nationalistic myth of William Wallace, which helped fuel a non-violent political coup in Scotland, forever altering the cultural and political landscape of the nation. In the months ahead, Scotland will again be consumed with rampant politicking, as the nation

---

[21] Salmond quoted in Dinwoodie, "Labour's Popularity Plummets. SNP Rides High on Back of Braveheart."
[22] D. Ross, *On the Trail of William Wallace*, i.
[23] Ibid., 142.
[24] Salmond, "Wallace Commemoration," (Speech).

moves towards the vote on independence, a decisive moment in Scotland's nation-(re)building project. Yet, no matter the outcome of this vote, the devolution revolution in the 1990s – in large part thanks to *Braveheart* – was a tremendous success, and in the words of Nairn: "We are lucky enough to live in the moment of Scotland's return."[25]And just as Wallace's victory at Stirling Bridge in 1297 enabled the Scots to fight and win at Bannockburn seventeen years later in 1314, effectively securing Scotland's freedom, *Braveheart* enabled the Scots to devolve in September 1997, which, almost exactly seventeen years later, in 2014, may lead to the complete "return" of the Scottish nation. If the Scots do break from the Union, Wallace will be honored in the kingdom-nation in which he fought and died for so many years ago. Thus as the father of Scottish political nationalism, R.B. Cunninghame-Graham, once said: "So long as grass grows green, or water runs, or whilst the mist curls through the corries of the hills, the name Wallace will live."[26]

[25] Nairn, *After Britain*, 99.
[26] Cunninghame-Graham quoted in Eriksonas, *National Heroes and National Identities*, 162.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Secondary Works:

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1991.

Anderson, Lin. *Braveheart: From Hollywood to Holyrood*. Edinburgh: Luath Press, 2005.

Ash, Marinell. "William Wallace and Robert the Bruce: The Life and Death of a National Myth." In *The Myths We Live By*, edited by Raphael Samuel and Paul Richard Thompson, 83-94. London: Routledge, 1990.

Bairner, Alan. "'We Are the England Haters!': Sport and National Identity in Scotland." In *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization: European and North American Perspectives*, 45-68. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001.

Baycroft, Timothy. *Nationalism in Europe, 1789-1945*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Brinton, Crane. *The Anatomy of Revolution*. New York: Vintage Books, 1965.

Brown, Chris. *William Wallace: The True Story of Braveheart*. Stroud: Tempus, 2005.

Bruce, David. *Scotland the Movie*. Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996.

Cowan, Edward J., ed. *The Wallace Book*. Edinburgh: John Donald, 2007.

Coleman, James. "Unionist-Nationalism in Stone? The Wallace Monument and the Hazards of Commemoration in Victorian Scotland." In *The Wallace Book*, edited by Edward J. Cowan, 151-168. Edinburgh: John Donald, 2007.

DeFronzo, James. "Social Movements and Revolutions." In *Revolutions and Revolutionary Movements*, 9-37. 4th ed. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2011.

Denver, David T., James Mitchell, Charles Pattie, and Hugh Bochel. *Scotland Decides: The Devolution Issue and the 1997 Referendum*. London: Frank Cass, 2000.

Edensor, Tim. "Representing the Nation: Scottishness and *Braveheart*." In *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*, 139-170. Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002.

Eriksonas, Linas. *National Heroes and National Identities: Scotland, Norway, and Lithuania*. Brussels: P.I.E.-P. Lang, 2004.

Finlay, Richard J. "The Wallace Cult in the Twentieth Century: The Making of a Nationalist Icon." In *The Wallace Book*, edited by Edward J. Cowan, 176-192. Edinburgh: John Donald, 2007.

Gardels, Nathan, and Mike Medavoy. *American Idol After Iraq: Competing for Hearts and Minds in the Global Media Age*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

Grillo, Ioan. *El Narco: Inside Mexico's Criminal Insurgency*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2011.

Harvie, Christopher. *Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics, 1707-1994*. London: Routledge, 1995.

Hobsbawm, Eric J., and Terence O. Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition*. Reissue ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Keay, John, and Julia Keay, eds. *Collins Encyclopaedia of Scotland*. Newly Revised and Updated ed. London: Harper Collins, 2000.

King, Elspeth, and Charles Broadfoot. *Brave Art: An Exhibition of Contemporary Art Celebrating the 699th Anniversary of the Battle of Stirling Bridge*. Stirling, Scotland: Smith Art Gallery and Museum, 1996.

King, Elspeth. "Introduction." In *Blind Harry's Wallace*, by Blind Harry, translated by William Hamilton of Gilbertfield, Xi-Xxix. Edinburgh: Luath Press, 1998.

King, Elspeth. "The Material Culture of William Wallace." In *The Wallace Book*, edited by Edward J. Cowan, 117-35. Edinburgh: John Donald, 2007.

Kowalski, Ronald. "'Cry For Us, Argentina': Sport and National Identity in Late Twentieth-Century Scotland." In *Sport and National Identity in the Post-World War*, edited by Adrian Smith and Dilwyn Porter, 69-85. Abingdon: Routledge, 2004.

Lowenthal, David. *The Past Is a Foreign Country*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Lynch, Michael. *Scotland: A New History*. London: Pimlico, 1994.

Mangan, J.A. "Braveheart Betrayed?: Cultural Cloning for Colonial Careers." In *Sporting Nationalisms: Identity, Ethnicity, Immigration, and Assimilation*, edited by Mike Cronin and David Mayall, 189-208. London: F. Cass, 1998.

Mapstone, Sally. "Scotland's Stories." In *Scotland: A History*, edited by Jenny Wormald, 304-334. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

McArthur, Colin. "*Braveheart* and the Scottish Aesthetic Dementia." Edited by Tony Barta. In *Screening the Past: Film and the Representation of History*, 167-187. Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998.

McArthur, Colin. Brigadoon, Braveheart, *and the Scots: Distortions of Scotland in Hollywood Cinema*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2003.

Morton, Graeme. *William Wallace: Man and Myth*. Stroud: Sutton, 2004.

Nairn, Tom. *After Britain: New Labour and The Return of Scotland*. London: Granta, 2000.

Nairn, Tom. *The Break-Up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism*. 25th Anniversary ed. London: NLB, 1977.

Pittock, Murray. *The Road to Independence?: Scotland Since the Sixties*. London: Reaktion, 2008.

Pittock, Murray. *Scottish Nationality*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave, 2001.

Riddy, Felicity. "Unmapping the Territory: Blind Hary's Wallace." In *The Wallace Book*, edited by Edward J. Cowan, 107-116. Edinburgh: John Donald, 2007.

Ross, David R. *On the Trail of William Wallace*. Edinburgh: Luath Press, 1999.

Slotkin, Richard. *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America*. New York: Atheneum, 1992.

Smith, Anthony D. *Nationalism: Theory, Ideology, History*. 2nd ed. Key Concepts. Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2010.

Sperber, Jonathan. *The European Revolutions: 1848-1851*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Toplin, Robert Brent. *History by Hollywood: Screening the American Past*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010.

Toplin, Robert Brent. "In Defense of Filmmakers." In *Lights, Camera, History: Portraying the Past in Film*, edited by Richard V. Francaviglia and Jerome L. Rodnitzky, 113-135. College Station: Published for the University of Texas at Arlington by Texas A&M University Press, 2007.

Toplin, Robert Brent. *Reel History: In Defense of Hollywood*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002.

Trevor-Roper, Hugh. *The Invention of Scotland: Myth and History*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008.

Wallace, Randall. *Braveheart: A Novel*. New York: Pocket Books, 1995.

Wallner, Susanne. *The Myth of William Wallace: A Study of the National Hero's Impact on Scottish History, Literature and Modern Politics*. Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag, 2003.

Watson, Fiona. *Scotland: A History, 8,000 B.C.-A.D. 2000.* Stroud, Gloucestershire: Tempus, 2002.

Watson, Fiona. "Sir William Wallace: What We Do – and Don't – Know." In *The Wallace Book*, edited by Edward J. Cowan, 26-41. Edinburgh: John Donald, 2007.

Scholarly Journal Articles:

Edensor, Tim. "Reading Braveheart: Representing and Contesting Scottish Identity." *Scottish Affairs* 21 (February 1997). http://www.scottishaffairs.org/backiss/pdfs/sa21/sa21_Edensor.pdf.

Ewan, Elizabeth. "Europe: Braveheart, Rob Roy." *The American Historical Review* 100, no. 4 (October 1995): 1219-1221.

Finlay, Richard J. "New Britain, New Scotland, New History? The Impact of Devolution on the Development of Scottish Historiography." *Journal of Contemporary History* 36, no. 2 (April 1, 2001): 383-393.

Henderson, Ailsa. "Political Constructions of National Identity in Scotland and Quebec." *Scottish Affairs* 29 (May 1999). http://www.scottishaffairs.org/backiss/pdfs/sa29/SA29_Henderson.pdf.

Morgan, Sally J. "The Ghost in the Luggage: Wallace and Braveheart: Post-Colonial 'Pioneer' Identities." *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 2, no. 3 (1999): 375-392.

O'Connor, John E. "History in Images/Images in History: Reflections on the Importance of Film and Television Study for an Understanding of the Past." *The American Historical Review* 93, no. 5 (1988): 1200-1209.

Ray, Celeste. "Scottish Heritage Southern Style." *Southern Cultures* 4, no. 2 (1998): 28-45

Ross, Andrew. "Wallace's Monument and the Resumption of Scotland." *Social Text* 18, no. 4 65 (2000): 83-107.

Sharp, Michael D. "Remaking Medieval Heroism: Nationalism and Sexuality in *Braveheart*." *Florilegium* 15 (1998): 251-266

Weinstein, Paul B. "Movies as the Gateway to History: The History and Film Project." *The History Teacher* 35, no. 1 (November 2001): 27-48.

Periodicals:

"Dismantling the Welfare State." *The Economist* (London). August 26, 2010, Scotland's Budget sec. Accessed March 9, 2013. http://www.economist.com/node/16889694.

Donaldson, J.S. "The Laying of the Foundation Stone of the Wallace Monument." Editorial. *The RRA NEWS, The Masonic Magazine of Lodge Rutherglen Royal Arch No. 116.*, September 1986. Accessed November 19, 2011. http://www.lodge76.wanadoo.co.uk/wallace_monument.htm.

Hamada, Rachel. "As Seen on Screen." *Holyrood Magazine*, June 14, 2006, 31-33.

MaClean, Diane. "Looking Back at The SNP's 78 Years of Independent Thinking." The Caledonian Mercury. April 18, 2012. Accessed March 12, 2011. http://caledonianmercury.com/2012/04/18/looking-back-at-the-snps-78-years-of-independent-thinking/0032310.

Mayer, Catherine. "The New Braveheart? Scotland's Salmond Eyes Independence from the U.K." *World.time.com*, January 11, 2011. Accessed March 9, 2013. http://world.time.com/2012/01/11/the-new-braveheart-scotlands-salmond-eyes-independence-from-the-u-k/.

McArthur, Colin. "Bleeding Wallace." Review of *Braveheart: From Hollywood to Holyrood, by Lin Anderson*. *Scottish Review of Books*, October 28, 2009. Accessed March 7, 2011. http://www.scottishreviewofbooks.org/index.php/back-issues/volume-1/volume-one-issue-four/198-bleeding-wallace-colin-mcarthur.

Pannell, Ian. "The Syrian Civilians Who Became Rebel Fighters." BBC News. June 28, 2012. Accessed November 14, 2012. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-18622600.

"Tourism Gears Up For 'Brave Effect'" The Scottish Government. July 24, 2012. Accessed March 7, 2013. http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2012/07/Tourism-Brave24072012.

"Wallace Statue Back with Sculptor." *News.bbc.co.uk*. October 16, 2009. Accessed December 20, 2012. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/tayside_and_central/8310614.stm.

Wheeler, Brian. "Scottish Independence: The American Perspective." BBC News-Washington. January 24, 2012. Accessed January 26, 2012. http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-16537073.

On-line Sources:

"Aims of the Wallace Society." The Society of William Wallace. 2007. Accessed January 4, 2013. http://www.thesocietyofwilliamwallace.com/society.htm.

"Box Office / Business Brave." IMDb. Accessed March 5, 2013. http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1217209/business?ref_=tt_dt_bus.

"Box Office / Business Braveheart." IMDb. Accessed March 5, 2013. http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0112573/business?ref_=tt_dt_bus.

Brandt, John. "Dems Howl About Showing Affleck Movie Clip During GOP Conference." Fox News. July 27, 2011. Accessed January 5, 2012. http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2011/07/27/dem-howls-about-showing-affleck-movie-clip-during-gop-conference/.

Burns, Robert. "Such A Parcel Of Rogues In A Nation." Robert Burns Country. 1791. Accessed September 18, 2011. http://www.robertburns.org/works/344.shtml.

"The Declaration of Arbroath." Scotland's History at Educationscotland.gov.uk. Accessed April 4, 2012. http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/scotlandshistory/warsofindependence/declarationofarbroath/index.asp.

Flynn, Mike. "Romney Campaign Should Rethink Its 'Braveheart' Strategy." Breitbart News Network. July 18, 2012. Accessed February 19, 2013. http://www.breitbart.com/Big-Government/2012/07/18/romney-campaign-should-rethink-its-braveheart-strategy.

Hague, Euan. "Essay: The Neo-Confederate Movement." Southern Poverty Law Center. Accessed January 5, 2013. http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/intelligence-files/ideology/neo-confederate/the-neo-confederate-movement.

"Latest News: Scottish Independence Poll." TNS BMRB. January 14, 2013. Accessed February 4, 2013. http://www.tns-bmrb.co.uk/news-events/latest-news-scottish-independence-poll.
Official Poll pdf. found at http://www.tns-bmrb.co.uk/assets-uploaded/documents/independence-poll-14th-jan-2013_1359047388.pdf

Roesch, Stefan. "Film Tourism." Film Tourism - Research, Marketing, Products and Promotions. Accessed March 7, 2012. http://www.film-tourism.com/.

Ross, David R., Duncan Fenton, and George Boyle. "The Society of William Wallace Constitution." The Society of William Wallace. November 30, 2009. Accessed January 4, 2013. http://www.thesocietyofwilliamwallace.com/constitution.htm.

Salmond, Alex. "Wallace Commemoration." SNP.org. August 24, 2005. Accessed March 9, 2011, http://www.snp.org/media-centre/news/2005/aug/wallace-commemoration.

"The Union Flag." The Scottish Unionist Party. Accessed February 5, 2010. http://www.scottishunionistparty.co.uk/content/view/9/6/.

Vaithialingam, Govindarajan. "Wallace Monument - About - Google." About - Google. August 2012. Accessed March 5, 2013, https://plus.google.com/101683710105930869814/about?hl=en.

"Voice of the People." National Museums Scotland. Accessed March 5, 2011. http://www.nms.ac.uk/our_museums/national_museum/explore_the_galleries/scotland/scotland_a_changing_nation/voice_of_the_people.aspx.

Yggdrasil. “Braveheart.” Yggdrasil WN Library. 2000. Accessed January 20, 2013. http://www.whitenationalism.com/cwar/brvhrt.htm.

Newspapers:

The Australian (New South Wales), 2012.

The Daily Record (Glasgow) 1997 - 2012.

The Guardian (London), 2012.

The Herald, Scotland (Glasgow), 1995 - 2005.

The Independent (London), 1994 - 1995.

The Los Angeles Times, 1995.

The Montreal Gazette, 2013.

The New York Times, 2012.

The Scotsman (Edinburgh), 1995 - 2012.

The Sunday Mail (Glasgow), 2002.

Interviews:

Benny, Neil. Interview by author. August 9, 2012. Interview conducted Stirling Council Head Quarters – Viewforth, Stirling, Scotland.

Chisholm, Malcolm. Interview by author. August 6, 2012. Interview conducted in the Scottish Parliament Building, Edinburgh, Scotland.

Fenton (Convenor), Duncan, and George Boyle (Treasurer & Webmaster) of the Society of William Wallace. Interview by author. August 4, 2012. Interview conducted in Robroysoton, Scotland, near of Glasgow.

King, Elspeth. Interview by author. August 9, 2012. Interview conducted in Stirling Smith Art Gallery and Museum, Stirling, Scotland.

Morton, Graeme. E-mail correspondence with author. January 24, 2013.

Watson, Fiona. Interview by author. August 8, 2012. Interview conducted near the MacRobert Arts Centre on the University of Stirling campus, Stirling, Scotland.

Filmography/ Online Videos:

Braveheart. Directed by Mel Gibson. Produced by Mel Gibson. By Randall Wallace. Performed by Mel Gibson, Sophie Marceau, Patrick McGoohan. United States: Paramount Pictures, 1995. DVD.

Braveheart: A Look Back. From *Braveheart (Sapphire Series) Special Features*. Performed by Mel Gibson, David O'Hara. Paramount, 2009. Blu-ray Disc.

Highlander. Directed by Russell Mulcahy. By Gregory Widen. Performed by Christopher Lambert, Roxanne Hart, Sean Connery. United States: 20th Century Fox, 1986. DVD.

History's Mysteries: The True Story of Braveheart. Directed by Sueann Fincke. Produced by Sueann Fincke. By Adam Hyman. Performed by David Ackroyd (Narrator), Randall Wallace, Andrew Fischer, Fiona Watson (Interviewee and "Historical Consultant"). MPH Entertainment, Inc. for The History Channel/ A&E Home Video-New Video, 2005. DVD.

Lost Worlds: Braveheart's Scotland. Directed by Bill Markham. By Bill Markham. Performed by Corey Johnson (Narrator), Fiona Watson, Amanda Beam, David R. Ross. Atlantic Productions for The History Channel/ A&E Television Networks, 2006. DVD.

Rob Roy. Directed by Michael Caton-Jones. By Alan Sharp. Performed by Liam Neeson, Jessica Lange. United States: MGM/United Artists, 1995. DVD.

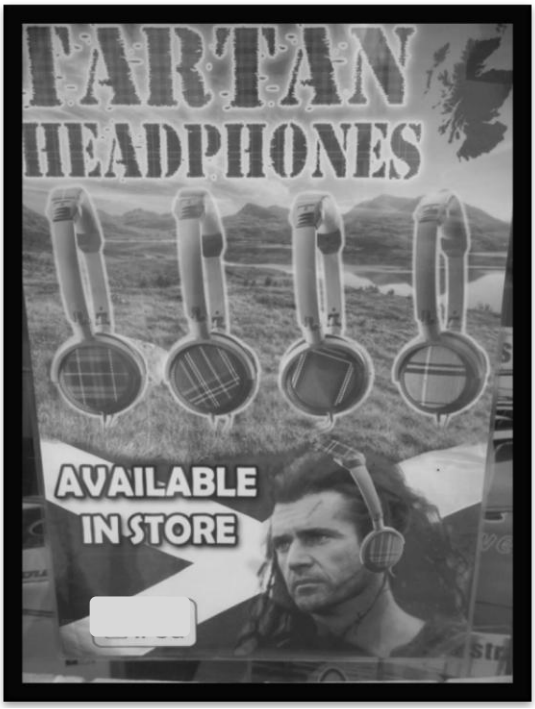
SNPforScotland. "Scotland Needs Champions SNP - Scottish National Party." YouTube. March 21, 2010. Accessed May 18, 2011. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xV_9Un_UtiE.

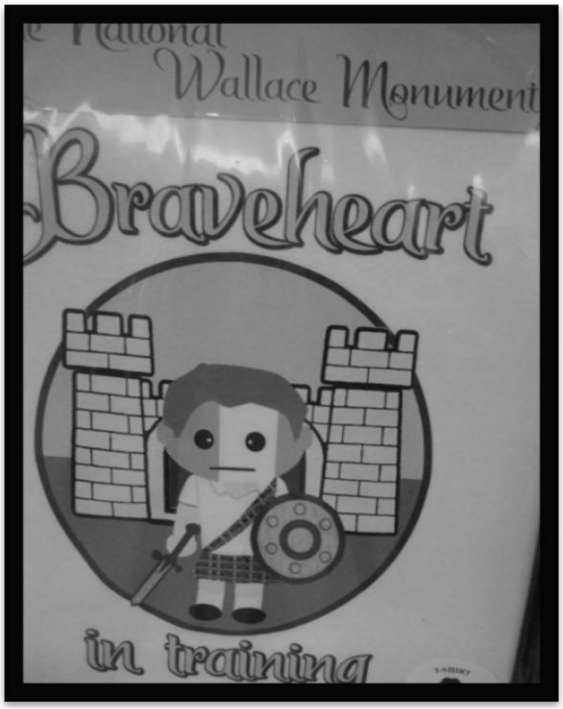
The Three Lives of William Wallace. Directed by Ross Harper. Produced by Ross Harper. Performed by Ross Harper (Narrator), Ted Cowen, Tim Edensor, Graeme Morton. Saltire Television for BBC Scotland, 2007. Television. Accessed September 18, 2012. http://www.mercurymedia.org/programmes/william-wallace/.

APPENDIX A

IMAGES

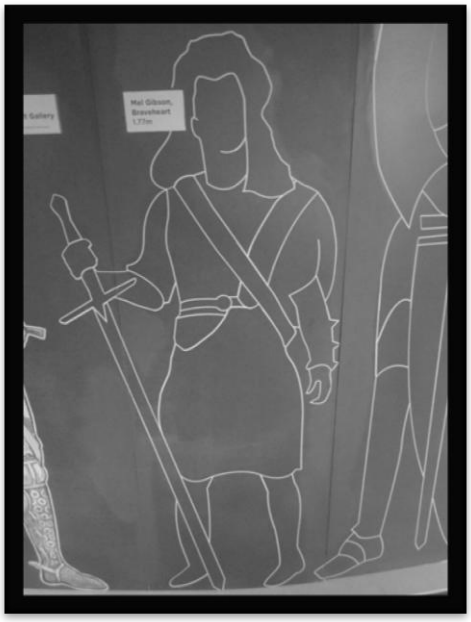
Figure 1: Tom Church's *Freedom* statue in front of the National Wallace Monument.
It has since been removed.
Stirling, Scotland (2008).
Author's photo.





Figures 2, 3, & 4: Examples of the continual exploitation of *Braveheart* imagery for Scottish tourism.
Headphones and magnets found in gift shop on Edinburgh's Royal Mile.
"Braveheart in training" children's t-shirt found in the Wallace Monument's gift shop in Stirling.
Scotland (2012).
Author's photo.

Figure 5: A school teacher on the weekdays, this street performer on Edinburgh's Royal Mile stands near a donation box which reads: "The True Bravehearts are Leukemia Victims."
Edinburgh, Scotland (2012).
Author's photo.



Figures 6: Silhouette of Wallace from *Braveheart* in the "Wallace Letters" exhibit in the entry of the Scottish Parliament building.
Edinburgh, Scotland (2012).
Author's photo.

Figure 7: Convenor of The Society of William Wallace, Duncan Fenton, speaking at a commemoration for Wallace at the Robroyston Wallace Memorial, near Glasgow, Scotland. Note the large *Braveheart*-like sword stuck in the ground in front of him. Robroyston, Scotland (2012).
Author's photo.

APPENDIX B

I.R.B. APPROVAL AND PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY of
NORTHERN COLORADO

Institutional Review Board

July 10, 2012

TO: Maria Lahman
Applied Statistics and Research Methods

FROM: The Office of Sponsored Programs

RE: Exempt Review of *Brave Hearts, Brave Minds,* submitted by Cody Neidert
(Research Advisor: Joan Clinefelter)

The above proposal is being submitted to you for exemption review. When approved, return the proposal to Sherry May in the Office of Sponsored Programs.

I recommend approval.

Maria Lahman 7/13/12
Signature of Co-Chair Date

The above referenced prospectus has been reviewed for compliance with HHS guidelines for ethical principles in human subjects research. The decision of the Institutional Review Board is that the project is exempt from further review.

IT IS THE ADVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITY TO NOTIFY THE STUDENT OF THIS STATUS.

Comments:

25 Kepner Hall ~ Campus Box #143
Greeley, Colorado 80639
Ph: 970.351.1910 ~ Fax: 970.351.1934

UNIVERSITY of
NORTHERN COLORADO

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Consent Form for Human Participants in Research:
Oral History Interview

Project Title: "Brave Hearts, Brave Minds"
Lead Interrogator: Cody Neidert (303) 842-9918 cody.neidert@unco.edu
Faculty Advisor: Fritz Fischer (970) 351-226 fritz.fischer@unco.edu
History Department, MA Program

During this meeting you will be asked to answer a series of questions concerning issues related to my master's thesis, "Brave Hearts, Brave Minds." My hope is this interview will offer insights into the state of political and cultural nationalism in Scotland from the late 1980s to the present. I am particularly curious about how you think the memory of Sir William Wallace and popular culture have influenced Scottish nationalism and shaped contemporary Scotland. As a leading politician, scholar, or enthusiast, your insights will bolster my understanding of the role these two powerful elements have played and continue to play in Scotland. This interview will take place in Scotland between late-July and late-August 2012, at an agreed upon place and time. During the course of the interview, the selected questions attached to this sheet will be asked.
With your permission, I will be tape recording your responses, as well as taking notes.

Confidentiality Statement:
I will maintain your confidentiality in a way that you approve. If you are willing, I would like to be able to identify you, as well as your testimony from this interview, quoting you directly, in my writings. You do not need to agree to this, however. Please indicate the level of confidentiality you wish me to maintain, and I will comply. If you desire a copy of my complete thesis, inform me and I will provide one. Please mark below indicating the level of your compliance.

_____ You may identify me by *full name*, and *any* occupational, location, or other personal information I reveal to you, and use any part of our conversation in your completed thesis.
_____ You may identify me by *first name and last initial*, any occupational, location, or other personal information I reveal to you, and use any part of our conversation in your completed thesis.
_____ You may identify me by *first and last initial only*. I *do not* permit the identification of any other personal information, including occupation or location. You may use only the parts of my interview I approve of.
_____ You may *not* identify me in any way and you may *not* use any of my interview verbatim in your writings. You may *only* use the information from my interview for as a way to locate other sources of information, dates, or other facts for further study.

Participation in this oral history project offers both benefits and risks to you. The benefits may be include remembering events and people you have not thought of for quite some time. Also, by providing new source material for the interviewer, you will be contributing to the historical record in a most meaningful and helpful way. There are also minimal risks involved in your participation. These may include, but are not limited to, feelings of discomfort, embarrassment requiring some of the sensitive questions or perhaps the recalling of unpleasant memories. If at any time you feel uncomfortable, you may choose not to answer a question or request a break in the interview. Additionally, you have the right to terminate the interview process at any time. Please read the below statement concerning your voluntary participation:

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please complete the questionnaire if you would like to participate in this research. By completing the questionnaire, you will give us permission for your participation. You may keep this form for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact. The Office of Sponsored Programs, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-2161.

Please sign below indicating you have read and understand the contents of this form.

_____

Participant's Signature **Date**

_____

Interviewer's Signature **Date**