

Synnøve Stoum Kyrkjeeide

Representations of Competing Identities within Great Britain in Popular Culture

Master's thesis in Language Studies with Teacher Education

Supervisor: Astrid Rasch

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Abstract

Great Britain is rich in its history and culture, and the heritage industry is flourishing. This indicates that people are curious about their past. England has long been the most prominent face of Britain in the 'heritage genre' of cinema in the last four decades. However, the interesting portrayals of the 'Celtic fringe', are indeed equally profound in their representation of heritage and culture, as well as being wrapped in nostalgia, just like the well-known English heritage cinema. In the heritage genre, the past is idealised, containing implicit and explicit messages of heritage and identity. Constructions of 'us', the Highlanders, are found in the series *Outlander* (2014), and constructions of 'us', the Cornish workers, are found in *Poldark* (2015). These promotions of Scottish and Cornish heritage appeared a few months following the Scottish independence referendum and the Cornish being granted minority status. An examination of Celtic representation in popular culture in such a political context is thus fascinating, especially as both series portray those *not* in touch with their Celtic heritage as 'the villains'. By investigating the territorial identities of Scottishness and Cornishness, alongside their relationship with Englishness, in popular culture and television series, one may shed light on how these, seemingly innocent media, can be read in different ways and offer much more than mere entertainment.

Key terms: regional identity, nostalgia, heritage series and the 'Celtic fringe'.

Sammendrag

Storbritannia er rik på historie og kultur, og interessen for kulturarven blomstrer. Dette indikerer at folk er nysgjerrige på fortida. England har i de siste fire tiår vært Storbritannias mest framtreddende ansikt i 'heritage'-sjangeren på lerretet. Men de interessante portrettene av de keltiske områdene er minst like gjennomgående i sin representasjon av kulturarv og sin nostalgiske karakter, på samme måte som engelske representasjoner. I denne sjangeren er fortida idealisert, med både implisitte og eksplisitte budskap om kulturarv og identitet. I *Outlander* (2014), kan man se konstruksjoner av 'oss', høylenderne, og i *Poldark* (2015) kan man se konstruksjoner av 'oss', arbeiderne fra Cornwall. Promoteringen av kulturarven og områdenes identiteter dukket opp noen måneder etter den skotske avstemningen for uavhengighet og etableringen av Cornwall som minoritet. En undersøkelse av slike keltiske representasjoner i populærkultur i denne politiske konteksten er spennende, spesielt når begge seriene portretterer de som ikke er i kontakt med den keltiske arven som 'skurker'. Ved å undersøke de territorielle identitetene som omhandler Skottland og Cornwall i populærkulturens TV-serier, og se på deres forhold til England, kan belyse hvordan tilsynelatende uskyldige medier kan tolkes på mange måter og tilby mye mer enn bare underholdning.

Preface

I would first and foremost like to thank my supervisor, Astrid Rasch, for her wonderful support and allowing me to write about a topic so close to my heart. I would also like to thank my collective master students being also my friends in need for motivational conversations over cups of coffee. The library at Dragvoll, has also been most helpful in providing me a wholesome database of literature. Lastly, I thank my family, Gunn, Ola and Isak (and Bamse), for the never-ending support and putting up with my little rascal of a puppy, Lewis.

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1 Introduction

The Scottish historian, Tom Nairn, predicted the 'break-up of Britain' in 1969.¹ 45 years later, the Scottish independence referendum of 2014 proved Nairn to be wrong in his prophesy. However, in May 2021, the First Minister of Scotland, Nicola Sturgeon, proclaimed yet another independence referendum to be held in the near future. The Scottish are not the only part of the 'Celtic fringe' where there is a pressure for change: in 2014, the Cornish people were granted minority status on the same grounds as the other Celtic peoples. Such changes in political context indicates an on-going process territorial identity re-construction within Britain as well. Examining these changes need not be reserved for the political sciences only, it can also be studied from a cultural perspective. Visual depictions and representations of territorial identities are for example to be found in everyday, popular culture as the television series. Through such a medium, the audience may be offered a representation of their territorial identity and past. The heritage genre is an example of this. In this genre the past is romanticised, depicted through rose-tinted lenses offering an escape to a fictional, yet realistic-looking world. Such images of 'our' heritage on screen may awake nostalgic emotions, with the past looking preferable. Perceptions of the past in contemporary television series, allows an extensive amount of time to establish a convincing context and culture, create well-rounded characters, inviting the audience to escape into a fictional world of wonder.

Within the field of identity and culture, this thesis focuses on identities related to the 'Celtic fringe' and heritage presented on screen. Thus, the research question is: how do contemporary heritage series of the 'Celtic fringe' represent different regional identities within Great Britain?

To explore contemporary heritage series of the 'Celtic fringe', I have chosen the recent productions of *Outlander* (2014) and *Poldark* (2015), dealing with the heritage and culture of the Highlands and Cornwall. By watching these series with an analytical eye, it was obvious that these fictional works set in the 18th century provided some interesting contemporary representations of the 'Celtic fringe' and the respective regions' relationship with the English neighbours.

This thesis will first explore different theoretical concepts related to identity, popular culture, and nostalgia. Then, I will provide a historical context with an overview of identities within the 'Celtic fringe', focusing on Cornishness and Scottishness and their relationship with the dominating neighbour, England. Additionally, I will explore how these identities are represented on the screen. Lastly, I will analyse and discuss representations of the respective regional identities and how different frameworks are used to reinforce Cornish and Scottish heritage in *Poldark* and *Outlander*. I will argue that both series reinforce regional representations of Cornishness and Highlandism through subtle visual identity markers, illustrated through the Celtic landscape and regional traditions and symbols. Then, the attention turns to the explicit identity markers we find in the storyline and dialogue: I argue that the construction of 'us', the Celts, with whom the audience is invited to sympathise, is at odds with the 'other' and the 'enemy' – the portrayal of a villain associated with England.

¹ Quoted in Devine, 2012: 619

2 Theory

This theoretical section will study different academic perspectives and research on territorial identity and popular culture, as we need to understand how such identities are constructed and their relationship with the cultural arena. First, we will examine the framework for a national identity, as well as how this framework may apply to regional identities. Then we will turn to explore how the territorial identity relates to popular culture, how the past is depicted on screen and might be blurred by nostalgia.

2.1 A National Identity

The Cobuild Dictionary defines 'identity' as "who you are" and the "characteristics they have that distinguish them from others."² It is a broad definition, but we see how there is an implicit comment upon how distinctiveness in comparison with others helps define yourself. As sociologist Janelle Wilson explains, the social factor is important in the construction of the individual identity. No man is an isolated island, and values and meanings are negotiated through contact with other people.³ The construction of identity is an ongoing process, combined of the self and the interconnection with other people and places.⁴ Identity formation is a continuous process of construction and re-construction, as identity relies on our past and the collective image on origin and belonging, as well as the present state of being and thoughts of the future according to Wilson.⁵ Guibernau defines 'identity' by similar criteria: "continuity over time and differentiations from others."⁶ She stresses that a link to the concept of *national* identity can clearly be traced, and such regional bound identities will be the focus of this exploration of identity theories.

A national identity is arguably one of the most influential identities on a collective level. There are different understandings of what constitutes a 'nation' within the academic field. Anderson's view of the concept has been influential, explaining how a community is 'imagined' because the fellow members of the same sovereign state will never know each other, yet they still look upon themselves as a collective unit - no matter how unequal a society they might live in. Its imagined limitations are elastic boundaries, where on the outside, one finds other, different nations.⁷ Many are ready for great sacrifices in favour of preserving these inventions of community, proving how nationality creates strong bonds between people and nation, according to Anderson.⁸ We can see how Anderson's proposal is closely tied to the feeling of belonging to a nation, rather than adjusting to organisational rules as citizenship. The more recent research on national identity and memory of Laura Rorato and Anna Saunders also emphasise that the nation is a cultural construct, reliant on symbols and images bringing people together - these collective agreements are crucial in the construction of a national identity.⁹ In constructing a national identity one needs 'a historical frame of reference', meaning collective memories of an 'imagined' national past. Rorato and Saunders further write that: "the longer such a tradition has existed, the stronger the sense of identity is likely to be."¹⁰

² Sinclair, 2014: 782

³ Wilson, 2005: 59

⁴ Wilson, 2005: 60

⁵ Wilson, 2005: 59

⁶ Guibernau, 1996: 10

⁷ Anderson, 1991: 6-7

⁸ Anderson, 1991: 4

⁹ Rorato & Saunders, 2009: 10

¹⁰ Rorato & Saunders, 2009: 12

Guibernau describes a 'national identity' as "the collective sentiment of belonging to the nation – understood primarily as a cultural community – and citizenship."¹¹ She proposes that a national identity is reinforced through five dimensions consisting of collective attributes: 1) The psychological dimension: based on the feeling of belonging to a nation, particularly prone to surface when posed to confront an 'outsider', 2) The cultural dimension: based on shared language, values and beliefs, traditions, ethnical origin and how long they have existed, 3) The historical dimension: based on roots and collective memory as in shared experiences of the past, originality, and, in many cases, superiority, 4) The territorial dimension: based on links with a homeland and bonds to a certain landscape, additionally imaginary boundaries, 5) The political dimension: based on the nation-state unifying its citizens through institutions, rights, and sense of community.¹² These dimensions works to promote emotional bonds within a nation and provide distinctiveness from other nations.¹³

Guibernau further notes that 'national identity' is not to be confused with 'national stereotyping', meaning a selection of character traits believed to be shared by the people belonging to that nation. While such stereotypes may have their plausible origin, it is usually an exaggeration of some distinctive traits or identity markers, such as the association of England and tea, which Guibernau exemplifies.¹⁴

The psychological dimension of Guibernau's organisational map of a national identity is particularly important for analysing the two chosen series. This dimension describes how the emotional ties and feeling of belonging is effective in uniting a people, especially in confrontation with an 'other', sometimes stretched to be viewed as an 'enemy'.¹⁵ Several historians stress this aspect of identity formation, and one can see how it aligns with Anderson's illustration of imagined communities, by stressing boundaries and collective bonds. Rorato and Saunders note how to construct one's identity, one looks to rule out where one does *not* belong, and that "we all need a definite 'other' in order to consolidate our own identity."¹⁶ This is in unison with historian Linda Colley's earlier work on the Anglo-Scottish union: an invention of an imagined community can be (and have been in many cases) forged by outside threats, the 'other'.¹⁷ There need not be any political or cultural unity within the 'Us', an outside threat is much more effective in binding people together and encouraging collective unity, according to Colley.¹⁸

2.1.1 A Regional Identity: Making Boundaries

This thesis argues that Guibernau's dimensions, along with Rorato and Saunders illustration of 'collective agreements' and 'historical frame of reference', are also applicable when it comes to the creation and preservation of a *regional* identity. We know that minor territories within a nation may once have been an independent, then annexed for various reasons. Yet many of the dimensions above might still be relevant for that annexed region, as their distinctive traditions, symbols and history still prevails and binds the region together. Geographer Anssi Paasi has analysed the mechanics of regional identities and we see the similarity to Guibernau's, as well as Rorato and Saunders', explanation of national identity. Paasi understands the regional development to be reliant on the 'territorial shape' which includes its ritualised symbols and practices, these

¹¹ Guibernau, 2007:7

¹² Guibernau, 2007: 11-25

¹³ Guibernau, 2007: 11

¹⁴ Guibernau, 2007: 11

¹⁵ Guibernau: 2007: 12

¹⁶ Rorato & Saunders, 2009: 11

¹⁷ Colley, 1996: 5

¹⁸ Colley, 1996: 6

providing a framework those belonging to the group.¹⁹ A regional identity also holds significant elements of the construction of a 'we', in contrast to 'them'.²⁰

Paasi's more recent work also notes how strong senses of regional identity may spark conflict with their overarching state.²¹ A people's attachment to the region or nation has always been evolving, and Guibernau stress that trans-national or regional attachments can be particularly strong. She points to the process of devolution the Labour government of 1997 implemented in Britain: meaning a higher level of local self-governance as in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.²² Devolution has strengthened regional identity in many cases, but it is also favourable for democracy as people might find the political actions and changes to have relevance to their lives.²³ However, regions within a nation's territory can and do usually experience the upholding of two separate identities at the same time. Colley notes that dual identities are not to be denied: one person can be loyal to several: "Identities are not like hats", Colley argues; "Human beings can and do put on several at a time."²⁴ It is possible to feel like a Scot *and* a Briton. Anderson's stress collective belonging in creating an 'imagined community' is therefore also relevant in a regional context, as one can find minor imagined communities within a major imagined community.

2.2 Popular Culture, the Past, and Nostalgia

In exploring the relationship between national identity and the popular culture in everyday life, Tim Edensor questions the lack of critical academic analysis regarding the construction of a nation as a 'natural entity', "rather than a social and cultural construct."²⁵ When studying culture and identity, the focus tends to be on the high, 'official' culture, influencing people from a top-down position, and phenomena of 'popular' culture is ignored.²⁶ In fact, popular culture has had "enormous influence on the way that the past is imagined, pictured, conceptualised and understood,"²⁷ according to English professor Jerome de Groot. The experience of the past through a visual drama meant to entertain might be much more impactful and reach more people than the objective history is able to, even though its purpose originally was merely entertainment.²⁸ Within the field of memory studies, Astrid Erll stresses that fictional films potentially can "generate and mold images of the past which will be retained by whole generations."²⁹ Thus as time passes, and these 'collective memories' are distorted. As Erll illustrates, the collective memories of 'shared versions of the past' are a result of images of the past filtered "through interaction, communication, media, and institutions."³⁰

The past has been depicted on screen for a long time, and with today's streaming services, visual and vivid historical reconstructions are more easily accessible than ever. Film theorist Pam Cook has researched historical fictions on the screen's relationship with nostalgia. She explains the despair of critics proclaiming that history mixed with fiction in

¹⁹ Paasi, 1996: 34

²⁰ Paasi, 1996: 36

²¹ Paasi, 2011: 9

²² Guibernau, 2007: 49

²³ Guibernau, 2007: 57

²⁴ Colley, 1996: 6

²⁵ Edensor, 2002: 1

²⁶ Edensor, 2002: 10-11

²⁷ De Groot, 2016: 220

²⁸ De Groot, 2016: 220

²⁹ Erll, 2008: 389

³⁰ Erll, 2011: 15

popular culture makes history lose its authority and root in reality, and audiences are “duped into accepting inauthentic versions and forgetting the ‘truth’.”³¹ While history represent the past on the grounds of objectivity and suppresses possible elements of subjectivity, emotions, or fantasy – just such elements of the past which nostalgia embraces.³² The relationship between nostalgia and commercial interests reconstructing the past is fruitful both ways, according to Wilson, making nostalgia “both a cultural phenomenon and a personally subjective experience”.³³ Nostalgia operates both on the collective and individual levels of society, and as it “oozes out of popular culture”, it can construct a national identity through selective remembering and symbols of the past.³⁴

Understanding what is historically accurate and what is a nostalgic celebration of the past in popular culture is not easy for the ‘untrained’ historical eye to see. Nostalgic films still hold value for the historian, Cook argues, as it tells something of today’s relationship to whatever past it celebrates. The productions which succeed and reaches as far as being considered of popular culture, indicating that it is consumed by large amounts of people, indicates something of that collective’s interest, and possibly, its values and aspirations.³⁵ Wilson agrees in this, arguing that the importance in studying nostalgia, is not whether the past is remembered in an accurate way, but why that particular bit of the past is recollected – what meaning is constructed and what purpose does it serve.³⁶ Instead of reducing nostalgia as to ‘de-historize the past’,³⁷ Cook illustrates how one can see the concepts as a continuum: “with history at one end, nostalgia at the other and memory as a bridge or transition between them.”³⁸

Why is nostalgia such a persuasive phenomenon? By being an element in the portrayal of culture and landscape in *Poldark* and *Outlander*, we will need to examine the concept closer. Many researchers have presented their definition of it, as for example historian David Lowenthal; he writes that “nostalgia is memory with the pain removed.”³⁹ The ‘pain’ is of the present and a reason for why the experience evolves in the first place – an experience that can affect anyone.⁴⁰ Wilson explains that nostalgia is a complex concept because depends on a personal creation of meaning.⁴¹ She further illustrates how nostalgia relates to the act of *recollecting* as ‘reminiscing’ does, and *emotion* as ‘sentimentality’ does, but nostalgia is still more complex as it involves subconscious decision-making of what to remember and forget, making the nostalgic process an “active re-construction of the past.”⁴² On a collective level this might result in a form of myth-making, and what is also interesting is how this recollection of the past involves a form of comparison to the present resulting in a way of favouring of the past and thinking that it *was* better before.⁴³

Lowenthal illustrates how nostalgia may ‘trick’ people into mistrusting the present times by finding it uneventful or wrong compared to the past, working as an alienating force

³¹ Cook, 2005: 2

³² Cook, 2005: 3

³³ Wilson, 2005: 30

³⁴ Wilson, 2005: 31

³⁵ Cook, 2005: 14

³⁶ Wilson, 2005: 8

³⁷ Cook, 2005: 14

³⁸ Cook, 2005: 3

³⁹ Lowenthal, 1985: 8

⁴⁰ Lowenthal, 1985: 11

⁴¹ Wilson, 2005: 19

⁴² Wilson, 2005: 25

⁴³ Wilson, 2005: 25

drawing people from the realities of life.⁴⁴ When life is uncertain at present, Andreea D. Ritivoi describes how the past is stable where one can find solace. In that way, nostalgia works as a 'safety net', providing continuity in a person's life.⁴⁵ Lowenthal also understood the past and our heritage as alterable for the reasons of the present needs: "Rendered grand or homely, [...] history is continually altered in our private interests or on behalf of our community or country."⁴⁶

We have seen how representations of the past in popular culture may influence a regional or national identity. Vivid depictions of the past can entertain and provide a nostalgic escape for the audience, whether rooted in reality or not. While culture influences territorial identities, interconnection with people is also an essential aspect of identity construction. Wilson and Guibernau describe identity as being reliant on continuity and differentiation from others, which is also relevant for territorial identities. Anderson, Rorato and Saunders view a national identity as a cultural construct of collective agreements and traditions, working as an imagined community. Paasi's illustration of a regional identity showed the similarities in constructing local variations of identities, but it is also important to remember Colley's point: people can and do belong to several identities. Guibernau's dimensions of national identity are particularly useful for exploring territorial identity markers in the investigation of regional identities in *Poldark* and *Outlander*. As those series deal with Cornishness, Scottishness and Englishness, we shall see next what such identities entail within a historical context.

⁴⁴ Lowenthal, 1985: 13

⁴⁵ Ritivoi, 2002: 9

⁴⁶ Lowenthal, 1985: 348

3 Historical Context

In this chapter, I will explore how territorial identities unfolds in the context of Great Britain. First, we will familiarize ourselves with recent political changes within Britain, as this is important context to the releasing dates of my two chosen series. We will then explore different identities within the Anglo-Scottish union, namely Cornishness and Scottishness, and see how they relate to Englishness and Britishness. These different identities will also be investigated within the framework of heritage on screen.

3.1 Different British Identities

Identities within Britain are continuously constructed and reconstructed. Historian Paul Ward claims that "since the 1970s there has been a sense of crisis about what it has meant to be British."⁴⁷ It would be plausible to say that it peaked in the 2010s as several actions were taken to change or reinforce their identity, such as in Cornwall. The Cornish people were granted national minority status by the UK government on the 24th of April 2014. The purpose was to recognise the 'unique' Cornish identity on the same grounds as the other Celtic peoples, namely the Scots, the Welsh and the Irish.⁴⁸ The same year, the Scottish Parliament held their Independence Referendum, resulting in 55% of the Scottish people voting 'no', because of their wish for close relationship with its neighbouring nations, including those overseas.⁴⁹ Another memorable referendum was the 'Brexit'-vote of the 24th of June 2016. British voters saw the small majority of 51.9% wishing to 'leave' the European Union. The resignation of Prime Minister David Cameron followed, and the Scottish government warned this could lead to the break-up of the UK.⁵⁰ The 'Brexit' referendum fell in Scotland's disfavour as 62% voted 'remain'. In Cornwall and England as a whole, the majority voted 'leave': Cornwall with 56.5% and England 53.4%.⁵¹ As the Scottish Parliament election of 6th of May 2021 resulted in yet another win for the Scottish National Party (SNP), Nicola Sturgeon holds her position as First Minister of Scotland and intends to hold a second Scottish independence referendum.⁵²

The British thus seem to be at unease with their relationship with others both internally and externally of their borders. Devine notes that several Scots have predicted the 'break-up of Britain' throughout the 20th century. Former SNP leader Andrew Dewar Gibb stated already in 1937 that with the British Empire declining, the most important thread binding the union together would be gone.⁵³ Similarly, other Scottish historians such as Tom Nairn, have also predicted the end of Britain: they have argued that a revolution of the non-English in the union is inevitable.⁵⁴ Devine concludes the other Scottish observers had a reasonable case, as with the disappearance of the economic anchor, the Empire, the Anglo-Scottish union would easily be cut and drift apart.⁵⁵ Researchers on the Cornish identity also note the fragility of the union. Anthropologist Amy Hale claimed in 2001 that "many people in Cornwall do not consider themselves to be English, nor do they consider Cornwall to be a part of England."⁵⁶ Kerry Husk and Malcom Williams

⁴⁷ Ward, 2004: 1

⁴⁸ Cornwall Council, 2021

⁴⁹ The City of Edinburgh Council, no date

⁵⁰ Hobolt, 2016: 1

⁵¹ BBC, no date

⁵² BBC, 2021

⁵³ Devine, 2012: 619

⁵⁴ Devine, 2012: 619

⁵⁵ Devine, 2012: 620

⁵⁶ Hale, 2001: 186

more recently noted that "A so-called British identity might increasingly split into Welsh, Scottish, and English."⁵⁷ The reinforcement of these minor regions against majority of the English might also fuel a 're-ignition' of the Cornish identity, as it did do in 2014. They note that young people situated in Cornwall tended to describe themselves as 'Cornish', while the older generation leaned towards the dual identity of Cornish/British.⁵⁸ This aligns with Colley's explanations in chapter 2.1, that dual identities are still eminent in the UK. Ward also argues that strong regional identities, have not "necessarily disrupted a wider British identity."⁵⁹ Identities are continuously changing and reconstructing, and we continue the next passage with exploring what forces and moments that has been active when constructing Cornishness, Scottishness and Englishness.

3.2 The 'Celtic Fringe': Identities within Cornwall and Scotland

To explain regional identities of the 'Celtic fringe' in Scotland and the West of England, a brief historical outline is useful. The Anglo-Scottish Union of 1707 is crucial, but first we will need to understand the term 'Celtic fringe' and what it entails.

The term 'Celtic fringe' is used to describe where the borders of England to Scotland, Wales and Cornwall, as well as the Irish Isle. It originates in the Anglo-Saxon settlement pushing the Celtic areas to the edges of the British isle.⁶⁰ It is based on the ancient geographers of the first century BCE that divided the 'barbarians' north for the Roman Empire into Celts to the west and Germans to the east of Northern Europe. For linguistic reasons, these labels have stuck, and as Blockmans and Hoppenbrouwers write, also been confused into 'cultures' as we do not know if they could be considered 'peoples' in the way we think of it today.⁶¹ What we do know, however, is that the areas of Cornwall, Wales and parts of Scotland were not reached by the Anglo-Saxon settlement, resulting in the Celtic languages prevailing there.⁶² Ellis notes that the term 'Celtic *fringe*' does carry negative connotations today as it implies this area being secondary as a 'periphery' to the primary 'core' of England.⁶³

3.2.1 Cornishness

From 1337 onwards, Cornwall has been a duchy of England.⁶⁴ While emphasis has been made on the Celtic heritage of the Cornish people, through language, folklore and myths, many scholars argue that this is a result of tourist industry romanticising the pre-industrial and less authentic heritage and character of Cornwall. There is agreement amongst scholars that the Cornish distinctiveness lies within the mining industry. D. B. Barton, researcher of Cornish mining, claims that by the 19th century, the Cornish had knowledge and experience with mining and pumping "than the rest of the world put together."⁶⁵ The identity of the Cornish has heavily relied on industrial progress and being working class since its peak in the 1850 and remained so despite the following collapse a decade later. Historian Bernard Deacon notes the creation of two perceptions of Cornishness: 'the industrial' was the self-perception, while 'the Celt' in the exotic, romantic tourist destination would be the image created by the 'outside'- the

⁵⁷ Husk & Williams, 2012

⁵⁸ Husk & Williams, 2012

⁵⁹ Ward, 2004: 55

⁶⁰ Ellis, 2003: 222

⁶¹ Blockmans & Hoppenbrouwers, 2017: 25-26

⁶² Blockmans & Hoppenbrouwers, 2017: 39

⁶³ Ellis, 2003: 222

⁶⁴ Aldridge, 2015

⁶⁵ Quoted in Payton, 2019: 283

metropolitan centre.⁶⁶ Hale discusses this duality in her work, noting that the lack of emphasis on the more historical accurate heritage of mining and fishing has resulted in a negative response to the tourist industry. She refers to anthropologist Jeremy Boissevain whom she sees that tourism in the rural areas of Europe has tended to force tighter local communities to strengthen their identity in reaction to the 'invasion of 'outsiders'.'⁶⁷

Husk and Williams write that the further industrial decline of the 'Thatcher years' left certain Cornish towns with an identity crisis, and pride in the industrial past would be unbeneficial in comparison to the Celtic image promoting Cornish tourism. The authors explain that: "The somewhat grim industrial landscape of inland mid and west Cornwall – the heartland of Cornish culture – would have had little appeal to the tourist."⁶⁸ Following the renewed interest in Celtic heritage in search of a distinct identity, the Cornish language were also experiencing a revival.⁶⁹ In the section of 'Scottishness' we will see that this Celtic 'revival' was also apparent in within Scotland.

Researcher of Celticism in literature, Shelley Trower, explains these two images of Cornishness as contradictory as 'the Celt' was deemed primitive, while 'the miner' was modern.⁷⁰ These representations we also find in *Poldark*. She compares it with the situation in Scotland, with the dual Scottish identity also prevailing there: Scotland consisted of the 'backward' Celtic Highlands, and the modern Lowlands. Similarly, Cornwall has historically been viewed as "both archaic and modern, in this case its modernity taking shape through its mining industry."⁷¹ Towards the 2000s, Hale, as well as Husk and Williams, sees the emergence of a modern Cornish identity involving a 'fusion' of industry and Celticism – Hale calls it the 'industrial Celt', but warns that it is still heavily romanticised and a problematic representation of the Cornish identity in many ways.⁷²

The Cornish rocks has thus done much for the region's identity and economy, both in mining and for tourism. The hostile rocks and cliffs are in stark contrast to the lush, green, rolling hills of England – more like the grey, inhospitable mountains of Scotland. Trower describes how the cliffs embody a symbol of "being both part of, yet different and separable from, England."⁷³ The comparison between the White Cliffs of Dover, tall, white, and smooth, running steep into the sea, is different to the more 'primitive', grey, rugged and rocky cliffs of Cornwall.⁷⁴ The visual distinctiveness of geology and landscape emphasise their difference from the rest of England, as well as the importance of the landscape and mining industry itself. In addition, what Cornishness entails illustrates well how Guibernau's framework for a national identity also works for researching regional identities. Portrayals of Cornishness, emphasising the landscape and industry, are relevant for the for the investigation of *Poldark*.

3.2.2 Scottishness

To examine *Outlander*, however, we will need to grasp what the Scottish identity entails. It is necessary to understand the making of the Anglo-Scottish union of 1707, because its cruciality for the development of Scottishness. After the Act of Union between England

⁶⁶ Quoted in Trower, 2015: 91

⁶⁷ Hale, 2001: 187

⁶⁸ Husk & Williams, 2012

⁶⁹ Husk & Williams, 2012

⁷⁰ Trower, 2015: 84

⁷¹ Trower, 2015: 60

⁷² Hale, 2001: 194 and Husk & Williams, 2012

⁷³ Trower, 2015: 100

⁷⁴ Trower, 2015: 35

and Wales in 1536, Scotland was the next to be linked in the political unity. Historians have different opinions when it comes to what was the catalyst of deciding that unification was the way forth. While Colley points to the religious aspect and by that the construction of 'us, the Protestants' versus 'them, the Catholics,'⁷⁵ Devine on the other hand, stresses the importance of continuous export to England and access to trade within the growing Empire. The Lowland Scots eventually did have great success as 'Empire builders', so Devine argues that despite a weak *political* nationalism – the Scottish national identity was far from emasculated.⁷⁶

As Colley emphasises, however, being protestants in an age where religion was an important identity marker was also crucial as a unifying force. According to Colley: "Protestantism was the foundation that made the invention of Great Britain possible."⁷⁷ The Act of Settlement in 1701 ensured and confirmed that no Catholic would ever again acquire the crown, and since the exile of the catholic King James Stuart II in 1688, the Stuarts holding the crown had been Protestant. Stirrings of unrest began soon after 1707 amongst the Jacobites supporting the Stuart dynasty, as the English parliament settled on the House of Hanover, German, and Protestant, instead of the exiled House of Stuart and the 'true heir' – James III.⁷⁸ The result of union with the English was a series of conflicts in the first half of the 1700's, the two most notable rebellions were in 1715 when James III claimed the British throne, and in 1745 when his son, Charles Edward Stuart, unsuccessfully tried the same.⁷⁹ *Outlander* is set in Scottish Highlands of 1743, and the build up to this second rebellion is portrayed in the show, which will be discussed in chapter 5.

What is important to remember is the division of regional identity within Scotland. Scottish 'Lowlanders', as Colley states; "had far more in common with the inhabitants of Northern England than they did with their own Highland countrymen."⁸⁰ In fact, the southern Scots viewed the northerners as a completely different and savage people.⁸¹ It was the Highland culture that suffered of the 'forces of Anglicisation'; the Celtic Gaelic language was thoroughly suppressed because of its links to Catholicism.⁸² It is then interesting to read reports of the Celtic language 'revival' as in Cornwall - Gaelic has experienced somewhat a 'renaissance' today, including its presence in *Outlander*, according to the 'Scotland is Now'-campaign of several Scottish institutions.⁸³

'Inventing' the Scottish Tradition

What was considered as 'typically Scottish' in the 19th century (and still is to this day, alongside much more), was the Highlands. Inventing a rural Highland identity Devine notes as 'ironic', as the Lowlands was highly urban and would continue to be so for the next centuries, yet the character of the underdeveloped Highlands prevailed as the 'face' of Scotland.⁸⁴ Devine notes that this is strange to construct such an identity at the time of the 'Highland clearances': landlords and market pressures were in fact clearing the old social order of clanship and farming. The Highlands was a poor, under-developed region

⁷⁵ Colley, 1996: 58

⁷⁶ Devine, 2012: 289

⁷⁷ Colley, 1996: 58

⁷⁸ Devine, 2012: 7

⁷⁹ Colley, 1996: 77

⁸⁰ Colley, 1996: 14

⁸¹ Colley, 1996: 15

⁸² Devine, 2012: 113

⁸³ Scotland.org, 2021

⁸⁴ Devine, 2012: 244

compared to the Lowlands which at that time was an industrial pioneer and of the world's most urbanized places.⁸⁵ Identity markers of Scotland thus became synonymous with 'glens', 'bens', and 'lochs', tartan, kilts, clans, and bagpipes, and, of course, Jacobitism: representing the Scottish glorious, independent past.⁸⁶ Devine argues that these identity markers would not have been romanticised in the same way had it not been viewed as a threat after the Jacobite rising of 1745.⁸⁷ The reason of such a romanticisation was because of the Lowlands, increasingly Anglified, searched for a distinctive Scottish identity. The 19th century was a period of romantic nationalism, and in Scotland, Devine illustrates how the Scottish landscape was highlighted: having previously had been viewed as repellent and inhospitable land, now the mountains of the Highlands were inspiring, beautiful, and emphasised the difference from England's rolling hills.⁸⁸

The struggle for establishing a distinct Scottish national heritage is a prime example of the 'invention of tradition', according to the historian Eric Hobsbawm. He describes the concept as a phenomenon appearing to be old, but by closer inspection is a recent construct or even invented. The 'invented tradition' seeks to promote a certain belief and behaviour, and through its repetition bears a symbolic function in "continuity with the past."⁸⁹ Hobsbawm refers to historian Hugh Trevor-Roper who claims that the Scottish heritage of 'Highlandism' was not the heritage of an ancient Scotland, but a modern construct in protest of the Anglo-Scottish Union. The Highlanders were barbarous and undistinctive; simply a Celtic 'overflow of Ireland' as Trevor-Roper illustrates.⁹⁰ The work of 'reinvention' happened in the 18th and 19th centuries: the cultural dependency on Ireland had to be cut and the Celtic Scotland was declared 'mother-nation' of cultural origin. The Celtic heritage was presented as Highland traditions, which in turn was adopted by the Lowlands.⁹¹ Trevor-Roper further explain the kilt by no means a 'traditional Highland dress' as it was invented by an Englishman, Thomas Rawlinson, in the 1730s.⁹²

Trevor-Roper's discussion of the kilt has been criticised as a unionist's lack of knowledge of Scottish and Gaelic history by some scholars,⁹³ and described as 'historical mythmaking' by others.⁹⁴ In his research on tartanry, Ian Brown argues that the kilt was 'evolving', and not 'invented': "Even if an English worker in Scotland 'invented' the kilt, that would scarcely mean it was 'English', rather than an evolution of the Scottish belted plaid."⁹⁵ Others points to evidences of the shorter kilt traced back to the 1690's.⁹⁶ Historian Matthew P. Dziennik agrees with Brown, the English did not seek to "establish cultural symbols which would later be interpreted as traditional."⁹⁷ Furthermore, it is worth noting Dziennik's point of the kilt's relationship with masculinity of the wearer. It was essential dress of the Highlanders, and a powerful image of masculinity which in turn

⁸⁵ Devine, 2012: 231-233

⁸⁶ Devine, 2012: 245

⁸⁷ Devine, 2012: 236 Just after the '45 Jacobite Rebellion, Highlandism was seen as a threat – in the Disarming Act of 1746, wearing plaid, tartan, weapon-belts and such were banned.

⁸⁸ Devine, 2012: 244

⁸⁹ Hobsbawm, 2012:1

⁹⁰ Trevor-Roper, 2012: 15

⁹¹ Trevor-Roper, 2012: 16

⁹² Trevor-Roper, 2012: 21

⁹³ Pittock, 2010: 32

⁹⁴ Brown, 2010: 99

⁹⁵ Brown, 2010: 99

⁹⁶ Pittock, 2010: 33

⁹⁷ Dziennik, 2012: 147

threatened the English men.⁹⁸ Trevor-Roper refuses Highlanders in creating their own imagery, reducing them as victims of the English, Dziennik concludes.⁹⁹

3.2.3 Englishness

While the Cornish and Scottish identities promote certain distinctive identity markers and images, the English identity is 'fuzzier' to define, especially in comparison to the British identity. The English people themselves have difficulties in separating their collective character from the rest on the isle, according to sociologist Krishan Kumar.¹⁰⁰ While there was an attachment to the institutions of the Church, Parliament and Crown, the most prominent identity marker was of British identity relates to its imperial character.¹⁰¹ The peculiarity of the English national identity was that it relied on *not* being stressed, as a strong English identity would not be productive for neither the internal nor external 'imperial rule', especially considering the Scots. A distinct English identity would alienate the non-English, both internal and external empire, in moments of threats from the outside, on occasions in need of a mass collective response – in facing problems on the European continent or American colonies overseas.¹⁰² The 'fuzziness' of Englishness and Britishness is therefore no accident: sociologist David McCrone argues that this was by design and has served the state well in moments of need.¹⁰³ To preserve such a wide variety of peoples and cultures, 'Britishness' had to be loose and remains so today.¹⁰⁴

Kumar explains there was still a moment of Englishness towards the end of the 1800s, as the old enemies were less threatening and secularisation increased.¹⁰⁵ The 19th century was the age of nationalism and England could find 'herself' on secular terms.

Romanticism was highly appreciated: the English preferences of feeling, poetry, literature and history over intellect, philosophy, social and political thought, according to Kumar. The literary canon was established and "provided one of the most influential and long-lasting definitions of Englishness."¹⁰⁶ The national 'imagination' was anti-urban, anti-industrial and looked to southern England, which entailed the countryside being the "very heart and soul of the good society,"¹⁰⁷ according to those of literary status.

Besides the English-British identity's relation to the rural, another stereotypical view of this identity is its reliance on class structures – a phenomenon which makes its presence in *Poldark*. Recent research shows a phenomenon of misidentifying as working-class, when in reality being middle-class. Sociologists Sam Friedman, Dave O'Brien and Ian McDonald explain this 'downplaying' of social background: relatively privileged people, typically middle class, wish to appear ordinary and working-class – emphasising their ancestors of workers. The sociologists write that "claiming working-classness can be read as an assertion of 'ordinariness' that wards off possible suspicions of snobbishness, smugness and elitism", which blurs and hides the reality of an 'unfair privilege'. What is key is the class *origin*, not where one is at present.¹⁰⁸ The authors refer to Loveday's work of 2014, illustrating the nostalgia related to the worthy and heroic workers of the past, as a reason to why this phenomenon occurs. As generations pass, images of a

⁹⁸ Dziennik, 2012: 140

⁹⁹ Dziennik, 2012: 146

¹⁰⁰ Kumar, 2001: 41

¹⁰¹ Kumar, 2001: 45

¹⁰² Kumar, 2001: 46

¹⁰³ McCrone, 2001: 97

¹⁰⁴ McCrone, 2001: 104

¹⁰⁵ Kumar, 2001: 47

¹⁰⁶ Kumar, 2001: 48-49

¹⁰⁷ Kumar, 2001: 50

¹⁰⁸ Friedman, O'Brien & McDonald, 2021

working-class origin take hold as a 'family folklore', which is the preferable way to portray oneself.¹⁰⁹

We see a great variation within the realm of British identities, and as I will demonstrate in the analysis, representations of Cornishness, Scottishness and Englishness are certainly present in contemporary popular culture. Whereas the Cornish identity originates in the mining heritage, the conflicting romanticisation of Celtic origin has been emphasised by the 'outside' tourist gaze. The Scottish identity, on the other hand, found their search for distinctiveness in 'Highlandism', however, its historical accuracy has been questioned by Trevor-Roper, claiming it an 'invention of tradition', an analysis which again was questioned by other researchers. The difference between British or English is hard to define, yet the researchers highlight the imperial character of Britishness, the rural character of Englishness, and a general British foregrounding of working-classness within the middle class. The latter is a particularly interesting aspect because when researching the heritage film, one finds that these have generally tended to portray the elite of British society – and is hugely popular amongst the middle class.

3.3 British Identities and Heritage on Screen

Narratives of various British identities set in the past can captivate a global audience. This phenomena of British heritage on screen will be the main point of exploration in this section. The 'past' became increasingly available on the British market from the 1980s: professor of film and television, Andrew Higson, describes that the 'heritage cinema' is a part of the 'heritage industry', functioning as "a potent marketing of the past as part of the new enterprise culture."¹¹⁰ Compared to the discipline of history, the heritage industry dealt with pastness as something to be enjoyed, rather than understood, Higson illustrates.¹¹¹ He further notes how this was criticised as to reduce the past to a product of consumerism in the form of 'institutionalized nostalgia', meaning heritage in the form of images, artefacts or experiences sold to consumers or tourists.¹¹²

3.3.1 Defining the 'Heritage Film'

Researchers hold different views of what constitutes as a 'heritage film'. Professor of film and film culture Claire Monk describes how heritage films usually were adapted from literary canons with a female narrative, and usually "set in a 'national past' which was English, southern, bourgeoisie or upper-class, 'essentially pastoral', and relatively recent past."¹¹³ When analysing English heritage in cinema, Higson found that these films, sold on international markets, were portraying the English past in a particular way, and that these heritage films would act as a 'cultural ambassador' for England.¹¹⁴ In contrast to Monk, Higson will not restrict the heritage cinema to only be dealing with the *English* national past.¹¹⁵

While Monk's definition is indeed the typical heritage film of the 1980s and 1990s, Higson proposes a more suitable definition for this thesis: heritage films "involve an element of historical reconstruction."¹¹⁶ This 'reconstruction' is of a national past that often has had

¹⁰⁹ Friedman, O'Brien & McDonald, 2021

¹¹⁰ Higson, 2003: 1

¹¹¹ Higson, 2003: 53

¹¹² Higson, 2003: 51

¹¹³ Monk, 2011: 14

¹¹⁴ Higson, 2003: 5

¹¹⁵ Higson, 2003: 13

¹¹⁶ Higson, 2003: 34

impact on determining how the heritage and identity of that nation has been understood.¹¹⁷

The heritage-genre is therefore equally applicable for cinematic representations of the 'Celtic fringe', which is the primary focus here. Films such as *Rob Roy* (1995) and *Braveheart* (1995), are two examples of popular Scottish myths reinforcing a certain image of Scottishness. Edensor refers to MacArthur, who illustrates how *Braveheart*, being an American production and designed for a global audience, still "provides the framework within which Scots continue to construct themselves."¹¹⁸ This framework being tartanry and Kailyard. *Braveheart* creates the image of the wild Scotsmen nurtured by the beautiful land that he must fight and risk his life for.¹¹⁹ The appeal to emotions through such films, Edensor believes show the "dynamic relationship between culture and national identity."¹²⁰

The heritage genre often involve familiar stories that the viewer might have encountered before, being one reason to why such films dealing with a national past is so popular amongst 'ordinary' people, according to Monk.¹²¹ Higson claims that the audience are usually categorized as middle class, and older than the audience of more 'mainstream' films.¹²² In Monk's survey of why Britons watch heritage films, many interviewees rate 'nostalgia' and some also mention 'escapism' as important factors. One interviewee comments that the feeling of time-travelling to a world of 'civilisation and elegance' is the advantage of heritage films.¹²³ As we see, the 'feel-good factor' of a visual, nostalgic escape to a past that no longer exists is one of the reasons as to why these films are so popular.

Higson investigates the allure of this exclusive culture on screen; how the taste, values, and pastoral idyll of the privileged could be transformed into the heritage of the *entire nation*.¹²⁴ The nostalgically wrapped past in these films tend to gloss a various array of issues of the time portrayed, as for example class exploitation, Higson notes.¹²⁵ He further argues that the heritage is not concerned with preserving the past but reconstructing the past in a relevant way for today's society: the national past presented is "not the 'real thing', but a pot-pourri of imitations, homages and gestures. Yet claims are still made in the name of authenticity,"¹²⁶ according to Higson. Eckart Voigts-Virchow in his analysis of heritage films also point out that 'heritage' do not equal 'history': elements of yesterday is used for the purpose of today. An imaginary identity is created through restrictive representations of cultural memories: the desirable past is preserved, which is the 'feel-good utopia' of the gentry's life.¹²⁷

3.3.2 Criticism of the Heritage Genre

Critics warn that these films are not, however, merely entertainment. Monk explains how these films were criticised by academics as a part of the Thatcherite conservatism by the left and liberal opposition.¹²⁸ She refers to Tana Wollen, who argues that the purpose was

¹¹⁷ Higson, 2003: 1

¹¹⁸ Edensor, 2002: 147

¹¹⁹ Edensor, 2002: 148

¹²⁰ Edensor, 2002: 169

¹²¹ Monk, 2011: 63

¹²² Higson, 2003: 5

¹²³ Monk, 2011: 137

¹²⁴ Higson, 2003: 27

¹²⁵ Higson, 2003: 80

¹²⁶ Higson, 2003: 63

¹²⁷ Voigts-Virchow, 2007: 124

¹²⁸ Monk, 2011: 10

to form a national unity during an uncertain time.¹²⁹ As Britain in the early 1980s was tainted by the Falkland war and the miners' strike, Wollen suggests that it was difficult making films portraying the present, and therefore portrayed the 'national' heritage instead.¹³⁰ While the term 'heritage' implies a form of 'inheritance,' this is exactly what is missing in these 'national' heritage films, according to Higson.¹³¹ The white and privileged are portrayed, hardly representative of the multicultural Britain. When other groups are portrayed in such films, it is labelled 'alternative heritage': confirming that the *true* heritage of Britain is that of the elite.¹³²

The heritage film has evolved since the 1980s. As Monk states, heritage films need to fit their contemporary context and "stress resonances with the present."¹³³ While the conservative ideals were stressed in the Thatcherite era, later heritage films stress different ideals. Thus, we see as a general trend of heritage films is its adjustments for fitting present times – and this might surely be at the expense of authenticity of the era portrayed in the film. Other important aspects are naturally economical restrictions and wish for originality, factors that also might be on the expense of authenticity, according to Higson. The boundaries soon become blurry in what is authentic when filmmakers attempt to 'capture' the past and reconstruct a historically 'correct' setting in the form of setting and costume, in addition to producing a faithful adaption if the story is based on a literary work.¹³⁴

I have thus examined how territorial heritage and identity is depicted on screen. We can see how the phenomena of the heritage genre was first and foremost related to England and portraying Englishness, promoting conservative ideals. However, as Higson argued, the genre need not be restricted to one portraying the English national past. Films such as *Braveheart* embodies the same heritage and promotes certain ideals, such as the independence trope, and convey these ideals through a supposedly authentic, yet fictional, storyline and setting in a Scottish context.

¹²⁹ Monk, 2011: 20

¹³⁰ Monk, 2011: 17

¹³¹ Higson, 2003: 28

¹³² Higson, 2003: 35

¹³³ Monk, 2011: 23

¹³⁴ Higson, 2003: 42

4 Methods and Sources

4.1 Choosing Heritage Series of the 'Celtic Fringe'

In my research question, I have set some limitations such as choosing *contemporary* material representing the 'Celtic fringe'. Therefore, I have chosen the first seasons of two different series as primary sources for my investigation: *Outlander* (2014), set in the Scottish Highlands, and *Poldark* (2015), set in Cornwall. These fictional works are both set in the mid-to-late-18th century, providing some interesting representations of the 'Celtic fringe' and the relationship with the neighbouring English. The first season of *Poldark* consists of 8 episodes, and *Outlander* of 16 episodes, each episode of both series lasting approximately an hour. The advantage of favouring series over films is the much-extended amount of time at hand for reconstructing a regional culture. However, the amounts of material available made it necessary to focus on specific aspects. Therefore, my decision was to choose a limited number of characters and some elements of the series, and not the literary works. My investigation is divided into two methods of analysis: first, the visual and implicit identity markers, then, the explicit identity markers of the storylines and dialogue of the characters.

Both series are based on literary works; *Outlander* (1991) by the American Diana Gabaldon and *Ross Poldark* (1945) by the English Winston Graham. While *Poldark* is a British production,¹³⁵ *Outlander* is a joint production of companies from both the United States and the United Kingdom.¹³⁶ These ties to the United States will be considered throughout the analysis. Despite being fictional series, these series provide the audience with an 'unofficial access' to the 18th century in the form of reconstructed historical settings of the Celtic periphery. The process of choosing such series offering these reconstructions of the chosen regions' heritage was not straightforward, as the pool of relevant material was relatively small. Also, it is debatable whether the heritage genre is applicable in *contemporary* regional representations on screen at all. However, in Higson's terms, these series work as contemporary 'heritage series'. Both series involve historical reconstructions offering a version of regional pasts and cultural heritages, in addition to act as 'cultural ambassadors' of Scotland and Cornwall. They are not, however, heavily infused with conservative ideals as one often saw in the heritage cinema of the 1980s and -90s, as one will see in the following summary of the two series. However, it is essential to acknowledge that these series do not fit merely one genre. *Poldark* also easily fit the label of a 'romance' or 'historical fiction'. The same goes for *Outlander*, which also can be described as 'fantasy', because of certain elements in the storyline.

4.1.1 Summaries of the Series

Poldark begins with the protagonist, Ross Poldark, returning home to Cornwall after serving as a soldier in the American War of Independence in 1781. While he was away, his father has died, and the woman he loves, Elizabeth, has married his cousin, Francis Poldark, the heir of the main Poldark estate. The social conditions of Cornwall are tainted with pressing hunger and lack of work. Ross turns to his inherited estate comprising a farm and closed mines – soon, his attention turns to the possibility of resurrecting the mine, 'Wheal Leisure'. Ross is equally as involved with the workers and poor of Cornwall as the gentry, and he is soon married to his kitchen-maid, Demelza, from then on

¹³⁵ Imdb, 2021

¹³⁶ Imdb, 2021

portrayed as the heroine of the show. The couple is met with disapproval, but Demelza proves herself to be much more than just a maid. Throughout the season, Ross finds himself in trouble with the law and in conflict with the gentry. These issues are presented as the primary source of grievance for the protagonists.

In *Outlander*, viewers follow the protagonist, Claire, visiting the Highlands on a second honeymoon after the end of the Second World War, as she accidentally travels back in time through a stone circle and finds herself in the Highlands of 1743. Scottish Highlanders and the English Redcoats are in continuous conflict, and Claire is taken to Clan Mackenzie's for safety. Circumstances lead to Claire being forced to marry the Highlander and outlaw Jamie Fraser, becoming the show's hero alongside Claire. He is hunted by the villain, Captain Jack Randall of the British Army. Claire's feelings for the Highlander grow, and she decides to stay with him and not return to her own time. Incidents occur, and Jamie soon finds himself in prison. There he is violently assaulted by Randall before Claire and the clansmen save him.

4.1.2 Context of Release

For this investigation of Celtic representations in my chosen series and British identities at present, it is necessary to point out the current political climate of when the series were released. The current situation in Scotland and Cornwall is relevant because, as Monk argued, the heritage cinema tends to "stress resonances with the present."¹³⁷ That might also have been the case for the creators of *Outlander* and *Poldark* in the mid-2010s. *Outlander* was adapted for the screen and released in the United States in August 2014, but because of 'distribution problems', it was not released to be streamed online in Britain until March 2015. There was much speculation around this release date because, in September 2014, the Scottish people cast their vote in the independence referendum of Scotland. Phil Miller, a reporter of The Herald Scotland, claimed that the Prime Minister, David Cameron, intervened because of the political climate, resulting in postponing the release. Miller points to speculation of the *Outlander's* "depiction of heroic, Gaelic-speaking Highlanders fighting red-jacketed British soldiers would lead to a boost of the Yes vote at the referendum."¹³⁸

Poldark was released on the BBC, also in March 2015. The series was adapted for the screen for the third time by British production companies, as *Poldark* was also adapted for a TV-film in 1996 and BBC-series in 1975.¹³⁹ As we know, this was only a year after Cornwall was granted minority status on the same grounds as the rest of the 'Celtic fringe' for preserving and developing a "distinct culture and identity."¹⁴⁰ The surge of an increasing consciousness of the Cornish identity, might well be a factor in yet again adapting *Poldark* and making the series relevant for the present generation of Cornwall.

This thesis will not speculate whether there is a direct link between the adaptation and release of these two shows and the new surge and focus on the respective identities presented. Still, an observant audience might see that there are many elements in play when releasing a fictional television series, seemingly harmless at first glance. While the political agenda and ambitions of these series would deserve a closer look, I will restrain myself to investigate only what these series implicitly or explicitly invites the audience to interpret.

¹³⁷ Monk, 2011: 23

¹³⁸ Miller, 2015

¹³⁹ Imdb, 2021

¹⁴⁰ Cornwall Council, 2021

5 Analysis and Discussion: Representations and Reinforcement of Competing British Identities in Popular Culture

The analysis and discussion of how the 'Celtic fringe' is represented in contemporary heritage series is divided into two parts: the visual markers of identity and the content related markers of identity one finds in the series. This thesis will first investigate the visual aspects of *Poldark* and *Outlander*, and explore what the series invites the audience to take from the show through the depiction of the Celtic landscape and symbolism through the characters. Then the following exploration will deal with the explicit identity markers based on the content of the show, by studying several examples from the storyline and dialogue of the characters.

5.1 The Visual: Implicit Identity Markers

The visual aspect of heritage cinema has been, and still is, an essential element of the series harbouring various ideals and meanings. *Poldark* and *Outlander* offer a particular image of Cornishness and Scottishness through their reconstruction of the past and "operate as cultural ambassadors," in Higson's words.¹⁴¹ There is often an attempt of historic accuracy through portraying authentic characters and realistic-looking setting, to be somewhat convincing and create meaning to appeal an audience, even though they are works of fiction. In the case of *Poldark* and *Outlander*, the visual embody 'silent' meanings through implicit identity markers, and as we shall see, the landscape of Cornwall and the Highlands hold significant value, evoking sentiments of nostalgia, belonging and distinctiveness, perhaps even a source of pride.

5.1.1 The Celtic Landscape

The two series under investigation are heavily centred around the outdoors space. This thesis argues that there is indeed a connection between the landscape and the Celtic identity, which also illustrates Guibernau's territorial dimension well. In earlier heritage films, one can see the importance of the visual elements of grand country houses surrounded by rolling countryside, such as Darlington Hall in *The Remains of the Day* (1993) and *Howards End* (1992), and the more recent *Downton Abbey* (2010). While this man-made landscape is important implicit identity-marker of Englishness in the 'classic' heritage cinema, the Celtic landscape has a profound role in *Poldark* and *Outlander*, though in different ways.

As explained in chapter 3.2, the romanticisation of the pre-industrial and the less authentic character of Cornwall and the Highlands prevail in the series to a certain degree, but luckily, they are more complex than that. As Higson notes, films and series are read in different ways by different audiences.¹⁴² Viewers might worry the spectacular surroundings stealing the attention at the expense of other factors such as cultural or historical aspects, and the region being reduced to merely a spectacular scene. In another way, the emphasis on landscape can also be viewed as a celebration of the regions' distinctiveness. As these image constructions set the scene for a nostalgic escape, Duncan Petrie notes in a different context, that series like these work "as a vehicle for the dreams and fantasies of the metropolitan culture."¹⁴³ Both series are

¹⁴¹ Higson, 2003: 5

¹⁴² Higson, 2003: 147-148

¹⁴³ Petrie, 2010: 11

centred around the outdoors space in a 18th century idealised 'way of life', including frequent sequences of travelling on horseback and a simpler life without the technologies of today. This provides the audience of *present* times with a different time and a different life that their own, working as a nostalgic haven, providing a feeling of continuity with the past generations.

In her review of *Poldark*, Jane Reynolds claims that the show's 'real star' is the Cornish landscape.¹⁴⁴ The central role of landscape is indeed a good example of Guibernau's territorial dimension of a national identity, as *Poldark* borrows from the Romantic trope of spectacular landscape in depicting the Cornish seascape. The viewers can see the grey, rugged, rocky cliffs, and the sea beating towards them below certainly gives the show a distinctiveness compared to other heritage series situated in England. The dramatic atmosphere harboured within the camera shots when the weather is stormy provides an effective, gothic atmosphere. The stark contrast to the gentry's country houses is noteworthy – but as the show portrays both, one could interpret the two as reinforcing opposite forces: the soft and civilised against the rough and primitive provides the image of competing forces. While the country house surrounded by the formal garden embody Englishness, the dramatic cliffs embody Cornishness. Referring to Guibernau's territorial dimension of national identity, the use of the Cornish landscape invites the stirring of sentiments as belonging and distinctiveness to be felt amongst the audience. It is a claim to territory on Cornish terms, creating a collective bonding of the 'us'.¹⁴⁵

Throughout the first season of *Poldark*, the territorial dimension is further emphasised as the coastline and cliffs are actively used as 'landscape allegory'. David Melbye describes this term as a manipulation of the series "setting in order to reflect inner subjective states of the principal character".¹⁴⁶ In their analysis of the male body in *Poldark* and *Outlander*, Rachel Moseley and Gemma Goodman suggest the character of Ross as an embodiment of his property. I would further argue that the Cornish landscape works as an implicit extension of Ross through emphasising his moods and 'mental universe'.¹⁴⁷ While Demelza also has close ties to the Cornish landscape, which we will see shortly, Ross has an even closer connection to the coastline of his own land. We can see the main character continuously drawn to the cliffs, which is where the most emotional scenes are situated. That is where Ross and Elizabeth begin and end their engagement. The setting of Ross and Demelza's growing love is the cliffs. As they lose their first child, the cliffs are dark, grey, and weather-beaten; however, they provide Ross solace in his grief. While there is nostalgia harboured in the perfect Cornish summer days of the past fictional world, the drama of the stormy Cornish seascape is equally effective in creating a spectacular scene. As discussed above, the series provides a cinematic parallel to the sublime landscape frequently portrayed in the Romantic era. With the Cornish landscape heavily tied up in Ross' identity, one could also argue that the spectacular images of Cornwall reinforces the 'tourist gaze'. However, it is more complex than the series being 'reduced', alternatively 'celebrated', to merely a scenic show. The complexity is due to the mining heritage represented in *Poldark*, which we will return to explore in chapter 5.2.

In *Outlander*, the Highland landscape works differently: it is not an active player or an extension of any character as in *Poldark*. While camera shots of the spectacular

¹⁴⁴ Reynolds, 2015

¹⁴⁵ Guibernau, 2007: 23

¹⁴⁶ Melbye, 2010: 1

¹⁴⁷ Melbye, 2010: 1

Highlands are frequently served, the landscape works more as a passive backdrop to the audible narration of Claire, or it provides the viewer with a pause in between scenes of action. The reason for the passivity of the Highlands compared to the Cornish landscape is arguably because of the perspective of the main female character and narrator, Claire. She is an 'outsider' to Scotland because of her nationality and time travel. She was initially visiting the Highlands as a tourist, and it is with a tourist gaze that she views the landscape – she describes it simply as 'beautiful'. Bearing in mind that *Outlander* is an American representation of Scotland, the tourist gaze of Claire does provide the viewer an escape in the Highlands' 'glens, bens, and lochs', the same elements reinforced as the 'face' of entire Scotland in the 18th century.¹⁴⁸ As the show deals more with the Highland culture, than the landscape, it would be wrong to reduce the portrayal of the Highlands as 'merely' a spectacular scene.

5.1.2 'Celtic' Characters

Some characters in the two series are more connected to the untamed Celtic landscape than others. This visual focus on the Cornish coast and the Scottish Highlands is for example reflected in the costume design where natural tones dominate. In Moseley and Goodman's analysis of *Poldark* and *Outlander*, Ross Poldark and Jamie Fraser are viewed as representations of political instability and how they work as "literal embodiment of contested Celtic territory."¹⁴⁹ They note how Ross, in the first episode of *Poldark*, quickly discards his redcoat as he returns home from war, favouring the earthy tones of the old ragged clothing in tune with the sea, rocks and rural region.¹⁵⁰ The Celtic landscapes are embedded in the characters' appearances in both series and is in stark contrast with the 'other': the English 'redcoats' – shining bright red as an element of disturbance in the landscape whenever they enter the image in both series. This 'otherness' of the English is an aspect I will return to throughout the analysis.

In addition to Ross' ties to the Cornish landscape, I argue that Demelza Poldark also is presented as a character embodying a Celtic distinctiveness and relationship to the landscape. And this is done in a subtly, implicit way similar to the representation of Jamie in *Outlander*. Their appearances with wild, ginger hair and earthy tones in dress and kilt – a colour scheme making them fit their landscape perfectly – they are practically camouflaged when outdoors. Most important is Jamie and Demelza's closeness with nature: they are frequently set in natural environments. Demelza wanders the fields, singing to herself, the camera close to her bare feet carefully placed in the grass, avoiding stepping on any flowers.¹⁵¹ Viewers see her practising her dancing skills in the field: the camera is first up close, then pointed at her from a distance, and due to the natural, green tones in dress, her body is camouflaged in the Cornish surroundings, except her ginger hair.¹⁵² In *Outlander*, as Jamie narrates episode 9 and not Claire, the landscape becomes more active in the storytelling than it usually is. As in another Celtic heritage film, *Rob Roy*, the man is in tune with his landscape, always dwelling in the mountains. The audience see Jamie skipping stones from the riverbank, his 'safe space' from when he was a child; it is where he finds his peace. If we remember Blockmans and Hoppenbrouwers explanation of Celticism being confused into a culture which could not be called a people or a stereotype as we know those concepts today, it would be wrong

¹⁴⁸ Devine, 2012: 245

¹⁴⁹ Moseley and Goodman, 2015

¹⁵⁰ Moseley and Goodman, 2015

¹⁵¹ Horsfield, 2015: (episode 4) 1:27

¹⁵² Horsfield, 2015: (episode 6) 15:55

to assume the characters we are dealing with as an example of 'Celts'.¹⁵³ Nevertheless, the characters of Demelza and Jamie do represent a form of Celtic distinctiveness to contrast and subtly defy the forces of Anglicisation, creating an 'us', the Celts, different from the 'others', illustrating Guibernau's psychological dimension. They represent one 'branch' each of the Celtic heritage, the Scottish Gaelic and Cornish. Both are presented as grounded, empathetic, and moderate characters. In Trower's words, we could label them 'primitive Celts'.¹⁵⁴ There is a notion of belonging in the outdoors space and a reinforcement of the differentiation to the 'other' and indoors-oriented English.

The opposite 'force' of the two series is seldom linked to nature or the outdoors, but more so to interior spheres of the respective regions. For example, the villain of *Outlander*, Randall, the audience usually encounters within the walls of various prisons. These scenes are dimly lit by candlelight or a fire, emphasising the darkness related to this character. The gentry of *Poldark* is also much more tied to the interior space, also relatively dark atmospheres due the lack of natural light. The typical visual representation is by a shot of the country house from the outside, the scene then taking place from the inside. An example of the opposite element of Demelza's exterior-orientation is the interior-oriented Elizabeth, Ross' former love of the genteel class. While Demelza is a free spirit, bound to the natural elements, the character of Elizabeth bound to the interiors and the rules of the genteel class. She is like the typical Austen figures of the 1990s heritage cinema: a character favouring the English preferences as noted by Kumar, embodying the 'perfect' lady, an English 'rose' at the heart of 'good society'. These contrasting characters belonging in their different spheres reinforce the idea of the natural and primitive Celticism through Cornishness and Scottishness, and the stuffy, yet civilised Englishness, as two opposite forces.

Referring to Guibernau's dimensions of national identity, it is clear that the Highland landscape evoke sentiments and embodies certain emotions triggering a sense of belonging and distinctiveness, perhaps even a source of pride. Nevertheless, a reinforcement of the territorial dimension of Cornishness and Scottishness through the portrayal of tight bonds to homeland and the Celtic landscape.¹⁵⁵ The characters themselves also embody silent traits of distinctiveness: one can categorise Jamie in *Outlander* and Demelza in *Poldark* as a favourable representative of the 'primitive celts' within their respective regions, reinforcing the cultural dimension of Scottishness and Cornishness in the shows by portraying imagined communities of an 'us' based on sharing the old, ethnical origin.¹⁵⁶ Having studied the visual representations of the 'Celtic fringe' and interpreted what meanings they embody, we shall move on to examine more explicit representations of identities at odds with each other.

5.2 The Content: the 'Good' vs. the 'Bad'

What is interesting to see, and what was initially the most striking parallel of *Outlander* and *Poldark*, was the construction of what I interpret as representations of the 'bad' side as those unconnected with Celticism and more so with Englishness. These characters cause issues for the protagonists being the 'good' side. The construction of Scottish and Cornish identity becomes much more effective when it is compared and put in contrast to the English. These series' storylines revolve around Scottish and Cornish culture and history, repackaging new versions of the traditions and symbols for today's

¹⁵³ Blockmans & Hoppenbrouwers, 2017: 25-26

¹⁵⁴ Trower, 2015: 84

¹⁵⁵ Guibernau, 2007: 23

¹⁵⁶ Guibernau, 2007: 15

generations. However, it is important to note that these depictions of Scottishness and Cornishness on screen can be read in different ways. Higson remarks that this is the case of the heritage genre, different films will be read in different ways by different audiences.¹⁵⁷

5.2.1 Preservation of Tradition and Distinctiveness in *Outlander*

With the 18th century in *Outlander's* fictional repackaging of the Highlands in Scotland, it is important to recall is that this is also a product of US stereotypes concerning Scotland, most likely borrowing exaggerated representations of Scottishness, and redigesting it for an American audience as well as a global audience. Before we investigate how the other is represented by in the English Redcoats, this thesis will look closer at the use of Highland traditions in the series.

Highlandism is thoroughly romanticised *Outlander*. The age of clans, kinship, and a different culture to the one there is today, may well be a source of nostalgia for these collected memories of familiar traditions. The Highland culture in *Outlander's* terms is tartanry, clans, spirituality, Gaelic language and Jacobitism. Using such tropes of independence and traditional symbols, illustrate the reinforcement of Guibernau's cultural and historical dimensions. The presence of Gaelic is for example effective in creating an authentic Scottish 18th century atmosphere: Jamie uses his Gaelic tongue frequently, this to the frustration of Claire, the 'Sassenach'. The audience is neither provided with any subtitles to emphasise Claire's narration. The exclusion of Claire in the first episodes of the show by her not sharing the knowledge of Gaelic, is certainly also construction of a 'we' by the Highlanders being the collective unit and creating an 'other', being the 'outlander' Claire in this case.¹⁵⁸

Clan Mackenzie, who takes Claire under their wing, appears to be a harmonious collective of Gaelic-speaking people enjoying their feasts of drinking and bagpipe-music while dressed in tartan, constructing atmospheric scenes of the Highland culture, arguably being a nostalgic haven for certain audiences. These representations are in line with what Devine argues was adopted as the 'face of Scotland' in the 18th century – the distinctive Highland *regional* identity and culture is romanticised and constructed as Scotland as a *nation*.¹⁵⁹ In the 18th century, Glasgow and Edinburgh were active cities and a major part in the pro-union cause. However, in the first season the focus is exclusively on the Highlands as if there were nothing else. *Outlander* to a large degree reinforces the image of the romantic Highlands of a rural clan life through its visual context. If we bear in mind that *Outlander* is a joint production of UK- and US-companies, based on a story of an American author, it is crucial to remember that this is an invented regional representation origination provided by an external factor. Despite the heavy reliance on Scottish stereotypes, it is still a reinforcement of the Scottish identity and culture.

There is no lack of the Scottish heritage of tartanry, or 'invented tradition' as in Trevor-Roper's phrase, in *Outlander*. The purpose of this thesis, however, is not discussing the historical accuracy of depicting the kilt, but rather mark the steadfastness of the kilt in the series, and the value and meaning it harbours. The reinforcement of the kilt as a symbol of Scottishness is nothing new in Scottish heritage on screen. In *Outlander*, the kilt is presented as crucial to the Highlander identity, being connected to the region through its colour scheme and woollen material providing camouflage, mobility, and

¹⁵⁷ Higson, 2003: 147-148

¹⁵⁸ Paasi, 1996: 36, also see Colley, 1996: 6

¹⁵⁹ Devine, 2012: 231

warmth. Jamie's Highland dress holds emotional value and represents his regional belonging and allegiance. In episode 7, Jamie Fraser and Claire are to wed. For the occasion, Jamie bears a new kilt in Fraser colours, even though he knows this is dangerous to do as he is a wanted man. Jamie's friend, Murtagh warns him: "what do you think would happen when you prance out of here with your red hair and your muckle size wearing Fraser colours? You might as well paint a target on your back." To which Jamie replies: "I plan to be wed but one time, Murtagh. So I'll do it in a way that would make my mother proud."¹⁶⁰ Jamie makes a point on the Highland dress and its importance for his identity as he will wear it on whatever the cost: he will marry once, and it must be done *right*. The emotional aspect of the kilt is also essential: wearing the Fraser colours connects Jamie to his memories of his family. The Highlanders are wearing their kilts in every episode of season 1, and this scene with Jamie comments upon its importance – it is not only used as an 'authentic' factor of the costume design. It explicitly states the relationship between the idea of Scottishness and the kilt – at least from this show's perspective.

The pride and emotional attachment to the kilt and Scottishness itself clash in episode 6 of *Outlander* as it enters contact with Englishness. As Claire, the narrator, is invited to dine with the Garrison Commander, Dougal, war-chief of Clan Mackenzie, escorts her. The differences between the Highlanders and the English are enforced when in contact here. As they enter the British garrison on Scottish soil, Claire narrates: "A Scottish village it may be, and on Mackenzie land at that, but for Dougal it was now enemy territory, and *he* was the outlander."¹⁶¹ We may note how the imagined community, in Anderson's words, is an 'elastic boundary' no longer including that particular Scottish village which the Redcoats now occupies.

Dougal treats the Commander as an equal, yet he is met with disrespect and arrogance. He is ridiculed for his Scottish accent and kilt, and is eventually asked to wait outside the room while the party eats. The Commander speculates whether he might become a Laird if he stays on the 'blasted turf' of Scotland much longer, but he repels the idea when he remembers he would have to wear "one of those woollen skirts." The Commander turns to Dougal and points out that "I'm told it's a grave insult to ask a clansman what he wears underneath that thing", pointing at Dougal's kilt. On the verge of a brawl, Claire manages to calm the men down, and the Commander concludes: "What is under the kilt will have to remain an enigma."¹⁶² The tension of this scene is a prime example of the different identities at odds with each other – in their 'culture clash' they are positioned as in stark contrast to each other, the Scottish more favourable because of the negative traits portrayed in the English.

5.2.2 The 'Enemy' in *Outlander*: The Redcoats

There is a distinct division of the 'good' versus the 'evil' in *Outlander* in true Hollywood fashion. The Redcoats are the clear villains of this storyline as they have been in many other films dealing with older Scottish 'history'. In *Outlander*, the Redcoats emphasises the English physical violence of the Scots, being clearly constructed, not as an 'other', but as an 'enemy', as in Colley's terms. They serve the British Crown in the way they see fit, ruthlessly subduing the Scottish way of life to 'keep the peace' and ensure the acquired territory remains loyal subjects. Aside from their stark red tone in colour as a misfit in the rural communities of the Highlands, there are other elements expressed

¹⁶⁰ Moore, 2014: (episode 7) 23:50

¹⁶¹ Moore, 2014: (episode 6) 3:52

¹⁶² Moore, 2014: (episode 6) 8:10

throughout the first season of *Outlander*, which constructs the Redcoats as the 'enemy' and the outsider. As I will illustrate next, the show's primary strategy to villainize the Redcoats is to portray them as assaulters and rapists of the pro-Scottish characters.

As Claire arrives in Scotland in 1743, she is immediately in danger of the Redcoats. They are fronted by the show's villain, Captain Randall, who at his first meeting with Claire tries to rape her – but the Highlanders save her just in time. Similar assaults will be a recurring pattern throughout *Outlander* and the culmination of the first season as Jamie is condemned to hang in Wentworth prison. As the noose is placed around Jamie's neck, Randall appears and commands the execution to halt. Jamie returns to the dungeon, and Randall explains to him that he should have a more noble ending. But Randall has one condition: "First, you must give me your surrender. Make no mistake. I will have your surrender before you leave this world."¹⁶³ Jamie refuses, but is left with no choice as Claire sneaks into his cell trying to help him escape and is overmanned by Randall. Jamie is thus forced to surrender to save the life of Claire, saying: "Have me. Let her go in safety and you can have me. I won't struggle. You can do what you wish."¹⁶⁴ Randall cuts open the back of Jamie's shirt and touches the scars on his back – a previous punishment by Randall. He studies the scars carefully and eventually licks them while Jamie's tears are running silently down his face.¹⁶⁵ With the many scenes of English abuse on people, Randall's torture of Jamie in the dungeon is by far the most brutal and symbolic one. Jamie's final surrender to Randall is dealt with over the two last episodes of the season, with the most traumatic rape-scenes presented as flashbacks from Jamie's perspective after he has been rescued. Randall emphasis on Jamie's 'surrender' to him, I argue, functions as Randall being a fronting representative of England and Jamie of Scotland. This scene then holds symbolical value as to Scotland's 'surrender' to England. In Colley's words, there is still no 'us' the British, in opposition to an 'other' – there are two opposite camps: 'us', the Highlanders, and the English redcoats, the 'enemy'.¹⁶⁶

In the following episode, the Redcoats are lined up in the courtyard for their royal salute, orchestra playing while raising the Union Jack. The scene shifts to Jamie, lying naked and still, staring blankly into the room. The camera moves slowly over Jamie and soon Randall appears behind him, sleeping peacefully.¹⁶⁷ With the orchestra playing in the background, it is a moment of victory for the English – celebrating the Scots' surrender. The violent assault of Jamie by Randall is presented as flashbacks when Jamie has been rescued and reunited with Claire. One of Randall's attacks involves the rape of Jamie, bent over a table wearing only his kilt.¹⁶⁸ Following the interpretation previously, Jamie's silent torture would represent Scotland's surrender to England. Moseley and Goodman understand the violation of Jamie's body as a "powerful and symbolic expression of the rape and conquer of Scotland by England."¹⁶⁹ Randall's repeated violence and sexual abuse are a personification of England's internal empire of a Highlander's perspective. Jamie's back of deep scars and dead skin, inflicted by Randall, Moseley and Goodman illustrate as the ruin of Scottish territory and the Highland's broken culture.¹⁷⁰ I would

¹⁶³ Moore, 2014: (episode 15) 23:00

¹⁶⁴ Moore, 2014: (episode 15) 40:53

¹⁶⁵ Moore, 2014: (episode 15) 49:30

¹⁶⁶ Colley, 1996: 5

¹⁶⁷ Moore, 2014: (episode 16) 2:30

¹⁶⁸ Moore, 2014: (episode 16) 16:00

¹⁶⁹ Moseley and Goodman, 2015

¹⁷⁰ Moseley and Goodman, 2015

add that Randall's pleasure in seeing his 'masterpiece' of scars, could be interpreted as the pleasure of being an imperial power in full control.

As symbolic as the assault of Jamie, is also Randall's downfall. Claire and the Highlanders lead a herd of Highland cattle into the prison rescue Jamie, and the herd (seemingly) trample Randall to death. As the herd trample their way, bagpipes are playing loudly in the background. The herd continues to the courtyard to terrorize the rest of the garrison.¹⁷¹ The Scots are back in command. The highland cow is used as an important symbol of Scottish resistance, also used in *Rob Roy*. Here the main character uses a corpse of a cow to hide within as protection from the Redcoats. Yet again emphasising redcoats as negative force of violence and Highlanders and cattle as putting up brave resistance against them. Using the symbol of the Highland cattle, the hardy animal fit for the conditions of the Highlands,¹⁷² operates within Paasi's explanation of ritualised common symbols within a culture and its importance in providing a framework of those belonging to that culture.¹⁷³ Highland cattle's presence in this scene is a strong symbolism of the Highland culture's resilience and the men's utilisation of animals doing their fighting for them – there is nothing the Redcoats can do, as the Highlanders, men and cattle, unifies against them.

5.2.3 The Jacobite Cause in *Outlander*

In a television series depicting the Highland culture of the 18th century, it would have been strange not to refer to the Jacobite cause. The Jacobites does indeed make their presence in *Outlander*, laying the grounds for events which will take place in the next season. The independence trope has long run through Scottish historical, cultural, and political contexts, as in *Braveheart*. *Outlander* is no exception, which illustrates Guibernau's historical dimension in using the distant, yet present collective memory of the Jacobite struggle. In *Outlander*, Scottish independence is the Jacobites' main wish, not necessarily a Stuart on the British throne. Dougal Mackenzie, Jamie Fraser's uncle, is arguably the strongest Highlander stereotype, being amongst others a whiskey-drinking warrior Jacobite. Being a masculine, fiery and flawed war-chief of Clan Mackenzie, Dougal is in continuous tension with Claire. The series does not invite the audience to sympathize with Dougal as with Jamie. The latter is likeable, moderate character, relatively respectful towards women and a more empathetic character in general. Arguably Jaime is a less authentic portrayal of a male Highlander of the 18th century than Dougal, yet the portrayal of Jamie is the most favourable.

The series invites the audience to sympathise with Jamie. A particularly effective way of doing this is by showing the main narrator's growing love for him – romanticising this Scottish Highlander even more. When Jamie then is mistreated by Randall, as illustrated above, the English are constructed as an even greater enemy and oppressor of this neighbouring nation. Episode 15 and 16 of *Outlander* are uncomfortable to watch whatever opinion one has of the character of Jamie. In this way, the series takes on a different view of this very familiar period of Scottish history, being a fictional micro-perspective of the Redcoats' treatment of the Highlands. By portraying a literal rape of a Highlander, and not reducing the plot to be purely a showcase of Jacobite rebellion and battle, I would argue is a clever way of leading the audience and achieving sympathy for the Scottish.

¹⁷¹ Moore, 2014: (episode 16) 5:15

¹⁷² Boden & Andrews, 2015: 412

¹⁷³ Paasi, 1996: 34

Claire, the 'sassenach', explicitly expresses her sympathies with the Highlanders when she dines with Randall and the British Commander of the redcoats in Scotland: "The Scots just want the same freedoms we enjoy. Freedoms we take for granted. They are not aggressors, Captain, we are. It is their land, and we are occupying it."¹⁷⁴ The Commander finds Claire's sympathies "extraordinarily puzzling" as he reminds her that they are on "the King's land" – Claire assures the Commander that her loyalties lie with the King. Both in *Outlander* and *Rob Roy*, neither the British King nor (for some) the union is the problem. The problem lies with the treatment of the Scots and the suppression of the Scottish culture. The problem is what the English *do* on Scottish territory, to the Scottish people and society. There is no emphasis on retrieving a Stuart for the British throne just for the sake of it. One could say the series support for the Jacobite cause is only partial, as the invitation is to sympathise with the more moderate Jamie and not Dougal, the firm believer in a free Scotland. The author or producers of the show may have been reluctant to take a political stand with the series, yet the terrorizing of the English Redcoats on Scottish soil nevertheless invites the audience to sympathise with the Highlanders.

5.2.4 Preservation of Tradition and Distinctiveness in *Poldark*

In *Poldark*, on the other hand, it is important to note that the presented identities are much fuzzier than in *Outlander*. After all, the Cornish are English as well, making identities in Cornwall less easy to separate. While the traditional trope of independence has been running through many contexts in Scotland, the historical and political fighting for independence is not a force in Cornwall in the same way. In *Poldark*, the English are not constructed as a clear 'enemy' as in *Outlander*. Nevertheless, the series invites the image of conflicting identities in *Poldark*. This is done through emphasising the gentry not being 'in touch' with their Cornish mining heritage. The gentry in *Poldark* illustrates well the characterisation of Englishness by Kumar and Ward as being 'anti-urban' and 'anti-industrial'.¹⁷⁵ However, their identity is still rather fuzzy, and indistinctiveness of English identity prevailing in the series may well align with McCrone's argument of being 'designed' to be undistinctive as to embrace the local variations of distinctiveness within England.¹⁷⁶ Before exploring the opposing force of the gentry, however, we will take a closer inspection of the primary Cornish identity marker, the mining heritage.

As *Outlander* reinforces the Highland culture, *Poldark* engages with the Cornish mining heritage, reinforcing this regional identity of Cornwall. As a portrait of proto-industrialism and its distinctiveness from the rest of southern England, the mining industry runs as a parallel to the Cornish landscape as an identity marker. Rather than an 'invention' of tradition, the Cornish mining industry presented in *Poldark* works as a 'reinforcement' of tradition, illustrating Guibernau's historical dimension. The mining heritage is 'revived' through the show as the primary identity marker of Cornishness. The risks of mining and individualistic romanticism go hand in hand, and preservation of the mining community in his area of Cornwall is the great task Ross has put on himself. His uncle would rather sponsor his education and proposes a move to London. They stand together on a cliff and Ross' uncle asks him what he sees when looking at his uncle's extensive mine. Ross answers that he sees his uncle's mine, but the uncle responds: "not so – what you see is the past." Compared to the mines of Wales, the Cornish mines are far too unproductive,

¹⁷⁴ Moore, 2014: (episode 6) 17:00

¹⁷⁵ Kumar, 2001: 50 and Ward, 2004: 55

¹⁷⁶ McCrone, 2001: 97

and owners sunken in debt.¹⁷⁷ The mining heritage presented in the show includes its ups and downs, which would be a realistic representation of such industry. The hazards of owning and working in a mine are continuously distressing to the protagonists, but Ross' never-ending struggle for the glimmer of copper sustains, nevertheless. His own and his friends' livelihood depends on it. The industrial heritage portrayed in *Poldark* is wrapped up in the pride and nostalgia of Britain being the 'workshop of the world' through the Cornish mining community with Ross as captain.

In the second episode of *Poldark*, Ross ponders how he is to resurrect his father's old mine. Ross' old servant says to him: "It is in the blood, your father'd say. Mining, it is in the blood. Like a vein of copper. It is the bread of life. Eat, sleep, live and breathe it. She's your salvation and your downfall."¹⁷⁸ Mining is not a job; it is a life which Ross dedicates himself to. The industrial identity comes first, any other identities such as being Cornish, English or even a father, the series seems suggests is secondary. The solidarity of the mining industry, presented through Ross and his eventual workers, align with David Howell's research on miners and the British strike of 1984, despite the different historical context. Howell illustrates an industrial and political solidarity within the mining community seldom seen in any other industrial groups of workers.¹⁷⁹ Ross still chooses to resurrect his old mine, implying his willingness to take on the risks it will entail. Ross is depicted, perhaps somewhat unrealistically, working alongside the workers in the pits underground, and continuously working for a fair price on the metal to be able to pay his workers the wages they deserve. The division of class is whisked away when at Ross' mine, Wheal Leisure. Here, solidarity prevails, with Ross as captain promoting it.

The conflict within the mining industry presented in *Poldark* primarily relates to the local bankers of Cornwall: the Warleggan's, George, Ross' rival, and his uncle. Every mine owner of the area is deeply indebted with the bank, giving the Warleggan's an economic control. The Warleggan's economic success has earned them a place within the highest class of Cornwall, even without an ancient family name. By calling a mine-owner's loans, resulting in the mine-owner taking his own life, George worries they drove him to his death, his uncle replies: "Are we in business of sentiment or profit?"¹⁸⁰ Their ruthlessness and lack of sentimentality bears parallels to the Thatcherite mining strategies of the 1980s where Thatcher challenged the miners and insisted on "closure of economic pits," resulting in the violent strike of 1984 lasting until 1985.¹⁸¹

The two conflicting mindsets of 'sentiment' versus 'profit' is what differentiates Ross from the Warleggan's – Ross' inner drive *is* based on sentiment for Cornish people and the Cornish heritage of mining. That is why he goes great length to sustain his mine: to preserve tradition and provide work. As mines are closing and Ross himself is on the verge of bankruptcy, he still holds fast: "The Warleggan's have a habit of buying up mines and closing them down just to suppress competition to their own holdings – I'll be damned if I let that happen to Wheal Leisure."¹⁸² Ross' 'sentimentality' holds a connection to Cornishness, he fights for preserving the Cornish heritage. As Demelza is portrayed as the 'Celt', in Trower's words, Ross would be a good example of what Hale, Husk and Williams call the 'industrial Celt', meaning a fusion of industry and Celticism.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁷ Horsfield, 2015: (episode 1) 32:54

¹⁷⁸ Horsfield, 2015: (episode 2) 2:00

¹⁷⁹ Howell, 2012: 49

¹⁸⁰ Horsfield, 2015: (episode 2) 4:20

¹⁸¹ Turner, 2003: 38

¹⁸² Horsfield, 2015: (episode 8) 19:38

¹⁸³ Hale, 2001: 194 and Husk & Williams, 2012

It is stark contrast to the character of George Warleggan, being a ruthless, ambitious type with the sole focus on 'profit', and expanding his little 'empire'. Such character traits are portrayed as an opposite to Ross, also ambitious, but not for the sole sake of status and money, which is the Warleggan's main drive in the first season.

5.2.5 The 'Other' in *Poldark* – The Gentry

As in *Outlander*, the Redcoats also appear in *Poldark*, but here they are not a relentless element of disturbance. In *Poldark*, the gentry is the main source of grievance for the protagonist. Issues of class are dealt with throughout the series; the gentry's way of life and work is at odds with Ross' romanticised wish for the Cornish community. The 18th century portrayal of Cornwall is split in two worlds, the poor workers, and the rich owners. The grand manors, patriarchy, pretty costumes and fine manners of the genteel class, is in stark contrast with the mining and fishing community of Cornwall where the people are struggling to make ends meet. Ross finds himself pulled to both sides and trying to 'build bridges' between the two. The class structures and values of the gentry is in tension with the industrial heritage struggling to stay alive, but there remain an optimistic and genuine comradeship within the latter that the gentry lacks – in this way, the harbinger of nostalgia is not connected to the gentry, because the genteel does not act *genteel* at all, as the tendency was in the 'classic' heritage films. As we shall see, in the case of *Poldark*, the gentry is cast as the 'other', and the romanticisation relates to Ross' work to create a better opportunity for the Cornish mining community.

Life at Nampara, Ross' relatively small estate, I argue the show invites the audience to view as a harbinger of nostalgia, idealising the grounded living. The protagonist is romanticised himself, acting as an avant-garde character, the individualistic, good, and fair estate owner. While being a part of the landed gentry of Cornwall, Ross feels great responsibility his tenants and the local community, people whom he also considers his friends, which differentiates Ross from the rest of the privileged society. Ross resist to adhere to the customs of his own class, this being a source of confusion and suspicion for his peers. Ross' rival, George Warleggan, finds Ross particularly puzzling: he states that: "It delights you to thumb your nose at society, because you consider yourself above the niceties by which it operates," to which Ross answers: "Not above. Just indifferent."¹⁸⁴ Ross' radical position to the society's structures steps away from the 'traditional' heritage cinema, representing English gentry as the 'core' heritage with little to no portrayal of the rest of the community. Here, *Poldark* is different, portraying different levels of society. As we know, heritage series usually "stress resonances with the present,"¹⁸⁵ and the empathic landowner working for those less fortunate allows the audience to be more sympathetic towards him. Ross is the 'good' property owner, finding his own path based on his feelings of what is right and wrong.

The question of the series' authenticity and historical probability then arises when portraying Ross as one of the privileged, yet actively a part of the workers' world. This illustrates the British phenomenon of 'downplaying' social background as Friedman, O'Brien and McDonald described. It aligns with the series continuous reinforcement of Ross as the *worker* and not just an inheritor, hiding the 'unfair privilege' and the reality of class divisions away through the protagonist. Whereas other heritage series such as *Downton Abbey* (2010) have been criticised for "exporting is nostalgia, an unhealthy obsession with class, and a peculiarly dusty form of conservatism"¹⁸⁶ by The Guardian's

¹⁸⁴ Horsfield, 2015: (episode 4) 22:35

¹⁸⁵ Monk, 2011:23

¹⁸⁶ Groskop, 2014

Viv Groskop, *Poldark* takes on the role of criticising the social structures of class by showing the implications it has for the Cornish community, with a particular focus on the mining industry. The series invites the audience to view the solution of Ross, the privileged individual identifying across the different groups of society. A nostalgic utopia, perhaps, of the harmonical world of the Poldark estate. The realism concerning Ross' position is debatable, yet it is fiction after all, and most likely an effort to create a character worth the audience's time.

As mentioned, the protagonist was initially portrayed as a mediator building bridges between the divisions of society, but this changes throughout the season. Whereas the identification of the 'other' might have been blurry before, it then becomes firmly established as the gentry. The turning point occurs as Ross sees the viciousness of the world's injustices, becoming apparent as his friend and mine-worker, Jim, dies in prison. When visiting his friend, Ross sees him fatally ill due to the poor conditions, as has no other choice than to help Jim escape, but it was too late. Jim was imprisoned because of illegal poaching on private property, and Ross conveys his anger to Demelza: "The magistrates should have been there [seeing the poor conditions in prison]. Smug, self-satisfied upholders of the law. And so-called gentlemen – who price game above honest working men. He tried to feed his family. How is that a crime? My god I could commit murder myself." As Demelza is concerned about the consequences of Ross' actions, particularly as they were expected at Warleggan's ball that evening. Ross responds: "I could almost be induced to go amongst them tonight at that ball if I thought I might infect them."¹⁸⁷

Ross and Demelza do attend the ball, as Ross is advised to remind the 'polite society' that he *is* a gentleman himself even though he helped a prisoner escape. He spends his night drinking, gambling, and neglecting Demelza. Ross' unfiltered feelings become even more apparent: "Look at them all – over painted overdressed, over-stuffed. If these are my people, I'm ashamed to belong to them." He blames the gentry for their "ignorance, their selfishness, their arrogance." Demelza, however, counters with another observation: "If you think all the stupid, fat, and ignorant are in your class you're mistook. I've lived long enough to know that they're everywhere."¹⁸⁸ The series invites us to see the bigger picture, such flaws are found in all sections of society. Nevertheless, this is arguably the scene where the most explicit marker of Ross' opinions and values of the privileged society are served. Firmly put forth because of Ross' drunken state, but nonetheless far from what one usually can find of critique of the upper classes in heritage cinema.

As we see in the storyline and dialogue of these two series, many collective traditions and 'historical frames of reference' are reinforced, such as the kilt, Jacobitism and the mining heritage, illustrating Guibernau's historical and cultural dimensions of identity construction in different ways. There is also the creation two 'camps' put up against each other. Now this is nothing revolutionary in cinema or television series, there is usually a construction of the 'good' side versus the 'bad' side. What is interesting in these cases, is the promotion of the Celtic camp, the Highlanders and the Cornish workers, and the grim portrayal of the dominant English and the gentry of Cornwall, out of touch with their Cornishness, more in-touch with their 'anti-industrial' Englishness. *Outlander* illustrates Guibernau's psychological dimension, as the audience is served a depiction of a villainous Redcoats, a strategic construction of an enemy which promotes the uniting of

¹⁸⁷ Horsfield, 2015: (episode 6) 24:45

¹⁸⁸ Horsfield, 2015: (episode 6) 43:13

Highlanders easily gaining sympathy of its audience. Whereas the construction of the opposing camp is not nearly as explicit in *Poldark*, there is still a construction of 'us', the good, Cornish industrial workers, whom the audience is invited to sympathise, put up against the 'other', the selfish and un-Cornish upper-class.

6 Conclusion

We can see that popular culture does indeed shed an interesting light on the past through their reconstruction and reinforcement on certain aspects of the creator's choosing. It is also important to remember that these seemingly 'innocent' medium of television series, can reach out to a broad global audience – in that way functioning as an international cultural ambassador. Regional identities within the 'Celtic fringe' represented through the television series *Outlander* and *Poldark* are reinforced through the image of conflicted identities within the Anglo-Scottish Union, including the Cornish peninsula. Heritage cinema traditionally promotes a territorial past and identity, and in this case the regional identities of Cornwall and the Highlands are portrayed in a favourable light, as several elements such as landscape, culture and history are romanticised and at odds with what is embodied as Englishness.

Thus, this thesis has examined the representations of the 'Celtic fringe' in popular culture. Guibernau's framework for the construction of a national identity has been useful for the exploration of the regional Celtic representations of identity in mapping out the areas providing a sense of distinctiveness and promoting emotional bonds within a territory.

The two series first and foremost portray a connection between the Celtic identity and their respective landscape, illustrating Guibernau's territorial dimension well. The landscape portrayal can be read in different ways by different audiences – while some may view the emphasis on landscapes as reducing the heritage to a mere spectacular scene, some view it as a celebration of distinctiveness. I have argued that the emphasis on the landscape would fall into the latter category regarding *Poldark*, as it is used actively as landscape allegory, emphasising the protagonist's moods through the Cornish seascape in a dramatic or idyllic state. In *Outlander*, the tourist gaze prevails; the Highlands are 'reduced' to a spectacular backdrop most of the time, much because of Claire's narration. In episode 9, where Jamie functions as narrator, the landscape becomes a more active element. Despite the general tourist gaze of Claire on the Scottish landscape, one also sees Guibernau's cultural and historical dimensions emphasised. Scottish symbols, traditions, culture, and history, make it difficult to declare *Outlander* a reduction to a spectacular scene – yet the series reinforces the prevalence of the Highlandism as the face of Scottishness.

In both series, Celticism is harboured in the natural environment of the Highlands and the Cornish coast. Jamie, in *Outlander*, and Demelza, in *Poldark*, are portrayed as the 'primitive Celts' bound to the outdoors along with an earthy tone in clothing making them camouflaged in their surroundings. Both series invite the audience to sympathise with these characters, depicting them as thoroughly 'good'. Their innocence and feet planted firmly on the ground make the injustices inflicted upon Jamie especially effective in gaining sympathy for the Highlanders. Ross Poldark, however, is presented as the 'industrial Celt', in tune with the Cornish seascape in greys, blacks, and blues. The element in stark contrast is the English redcoats, making their appearance as a bright, red, misfit light.

Through the explicit identity markers of the storyline and the dialogue, I have found different portrayals of the opposing force of Celticism in the two series. While both promote the Celtic heritage, and the characters embodying this are whom the audience is invited to sympathise with. The construction of the 'other' clearly differentiates the two

series, illustrating Guibernau's psychological dimension well. In *Outlander*, the 'other' is rather the 'enemy', presented through the thoroughly villainised English Redcoats, fronted by the evil Captain Randall. They represent physical violence and demand the Scottish surrender, illustrating Guibernau's historical dimension by reinforcing the independence trope. Scottish heritage cinema of the 1990s presented the violation of the Highlands, this is also eminent in *Outlander*. The relentlessness of the Highlanders prevail, and the audience is invited to sympathise with them through explicitly depicting the horrors of the Redcoats on Scottish soil. Jamie is the undeserving victim of Randall's tyranny. Jamie represents the 'contested Scottish territory', but does not need to be portrayed as the military-minded Jacobite to attain the audiences' sympathy for an independent Scotland, as the actions of the Redcoats speak for themselves.

While the Scottish and English identities are clearly at odds with each other in *Outlander*, the identities are fuzzier in *Poldark*. Cornwall is, after all, a part of England, and there is no political or historical trope of the lost independence portraying the Cornish against the English as we see in Scotland. What we do see in *Poldark*, however, is the construction of the 'anti-industrial' gentry as the 'other', becoming increasingly notable as the storyline evolves, and the protagonist will not bear the injustices of his class any longer. Two imagined communities are portrayed, clearly divided into two opposites, being the workers at odds with the gentry. While Ross initially tries to build bridges between the two worlds, he finds no pride in belonging to the privileged class as he sees their treatment of the poor and their discard of the Cornish mining heritage in Warleggan's case. The Cornish mining industry is vital in the series, illustrating Guibernau's historical dimension, as well as nostalgia in having been a leading industrial region. Ross's primary identity marker is the 'industrial Celt', increasingly removing himself from the anti-industrial gentry, wishing to close the mines. As in the 'classic' heritage films representing Englishness, we find no nostalgia harboured in the lives of the privileged in *Poldark*: the nostalgia resides within the landscape, whether mining the rocks or being in tune with the Cornish nature as Demelza.

While this investigation has demonstrated the series' representation of the 'Celtic fringe', it cannot say how audiences have received them. As Higson suggested, viewers interpret heritage on screen in different ways: some find nostalgic representations enjoyable, others do not and claim a faulty representation of the past: "the films can be read in different ways by different audiences".¹⁸⁹ The implicit visual representations and the explicit meanings in the series investigated in this thesis are no exception. An interesting solution to this issue would have been a qualitative research of the series' reception in media or surveying the audiences' opinions. Such a research could examine whether they feel their respective identities reinforced, stirrings of nostalgic emotions, or simply an entertaining way to pass the time, however, this will be left for future research. Anyhow, without such examinations, my study has shown how popular culture serve nostalgic images of regional past through fiction, allowing the creation of competing identities within the UK.

Continuous vivid representations of 'others' and 'enemies' on screen depicted as attacking 'us', 'our' people and heritage, might add fuel to the fire of further division in the UK. If the 'break-up of Britain' is inevitable, as Nairn predicted, this will then be by the result of many different reasons, not only representations in popular culture. Yet, the correlation of the series' promotion with a Scottish independence referendum and a

¹⁸⁹ Higson, 2003: 147-148

Cornish minority status is peculiar indeed. We experience a wave of enthusiasm towards a more distinctive 'Celtic fringe' noticeable within popular culture. While popular culture may indeed be entertaining, we might also find messages with hidden meanings which construct favourable representations of some territories and tarnished representations of others. In my thesis, these explorations of identity are vital, as these are prominent in the series and thus convey a celebration of these distinctive Celtic cultures, despite outside forces of the neighbouring majority.

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Appendix

Lastly, this thesis will explain the relevance of this work for the teaching profession. First and foremost, the importance of the teacher engaging and showing interest in the pupils' lives is crucial for connecting and building valuable relationships with them. It is no secret that popular culture and television series take up a considerable amount of time in the modern, young adult's life. This thesis proves that it is possible to choose material from popular culture that pupils already engage in and use it sensibly in class. Such strategies as using the pupils' interest in class are essential in maintaining motivation and the feeling of relevance for their lives. For this, I would argue that the heritage genre is indeed a valuable resource for the classroom.

In analysing a heritage series, many opportunities in practising key skills within the English course are provided, such as understanding the English language and different English-speaking cultures. The pupil would practice his or her understanding of oral English in a more authentic English-speaking setting, meaning a more realistic speed of speech compared to what the pupil would encounter if practising oral English in the classroom. Some possible strategies of using the heritage genre in class are to compare films with their original literary work, analyse important characters or split the film into certain important scenes for the pupil to close read. As we have seen in this thesis, there is an abundance of elements to dive into: the representation of regional or national past, culture, inspect the values, traditions, beliefs or one could investigate historical accuracy of what is portrayed: the possibilities are endless.

Of course, using English speaking films may pose problems as well. With a variety of proficiency in the classroom, some pupils might not follow the authentic English-speaking setting, with a high speed, an unfamiliar English accent and many impressionable elements within the film or in the classroom itself, stealing away the pupils' attention and losing interest. Preparational material in advance of the film or episode, such as context material, analysing historical elements or relevant glossary, is a possible solution to lay the grounds for understanding the work. Also, announcing that there will be work with the film or series afterwards would stress the importance of paying attention to the film. A teacher's mission is to provide the pupils with various methods and sources to tackle the subjects and lay the grounds for a motivational, challenging, yet fruitful learning environment. This is key for the pupils' purpose and well-being in school, and elements of popular culture, such as I have dealt with in this thesis, is one good possibility.

