

# **‘Queen of Scots’: the Monarch’s Body and National Identities in the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum**

## **Abstract**

On 20 September 2014, in the wake of the Scottish Independence Referendum, pro-union, right-wing British broadsheet *The Daily Telegraph*'s front page was dominated by a photograph of Queen Elizabeth II in the grounds of her Balmoral Estate in the Scottish Highlands, under the headline ‘Queen’s pledge to help reunite the Kingdom’. This article takes the headline as a departure point through which to explore competing discourses of national identity during the Independence Referendum. Understanding the Queen’s body as a site of symbolic struggle over these discourses, this article undertakes visual analysis to unpack the composition of the photograph, in order to understand its social, historical, political and cultural meanings. In so doing, it argues that the use of ‘Queen of Scots’ in *The Daily Telegraph* at the specific conjunctural moment of the Scottish Independence Referendum reveals the complex intersections between monarchy, power, (geo)politics, symbolism, sovereignty, national identity/ies and landscape in the United Kingdom.

## **Keywords**

*British monarchy, Scottish Independence Referendum, national identities, body politic, newspapers*

On 20 September 2014, in the wake of the Scottish Independence Referendum, pro-union, right-wing British broadsheet *The Daily Telegraph*'s front page was dominated by a photograph of Queen Elizabeth II in the grounds of her Balmoral Estate in the Scottish Highlands, under the headline ‘Queen’s pledge to help reunite the Kingdom’ (see <https://ibb.co/KDNGSHj>). The photograph, entitled ‘Queen of Scots, Sovereign of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle and the Chief of Chiefs’, was taken in 2010 as an official portrait of the monarch by photographer Julian Calder. It is given context in *The Daily Telegraph* by its caption, which highlights the role of Scottish culture in its composition: ‘The Queen wears the robes of the Most Ancient and Most

Noble Order of the Thistle, beside Gelder Burn on her Balmoral Estate, for a portrait in 2010’.

The accompanying story by journalist Mick Brown narrates the polling day and its aftermath, including voting statistics and political reaction. The tagline, ‘we have in common an enduring love of Scotland, which is one of the things that helps to unite us all’, is excerpted from the Queen’s post-referendum press release, a longer version of which opens the article. It continues:

Knowing the people of Scotland as I do, I have no doubt that Scots, like others throughout the United Kingdom, are able to express strongly-held opinions before coming together again. My family and I will do all we can to help and support you in this important task (Elizabeth II *in* Brown, 2014)

Here, the Queen continually asserts the importance of moving forward together and (re)uniting, referencing the ‘strongly-held opinions’ of pro-independence campaigners before suggesting these can now be revoked and the status quo can resume, supported by herself and ‘her family’. As a central symbol of British national identity, the Queen’s statement constitutes a key moment in the Independence debate, particularly when reproduced by the pro-union *Daily Telegraph*. The Queen’s tangible delight at the “no” result works towards ‘producing consent’ (Hall et al., 2013) for it in the public imaginary.

## **Introduction**

This article takes the headline in *The Daily Telegraph* as a departure point through which to explore competing discourses of national identity during the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum. More specifically, taking Margrit Shildrick’s description of the body as social and ‘materialised through a set of discursive practices’ (2002: 10), this article explores how the Queen’s *body* becomes a site of symbolic struggle over these competing discourses, embodying complex interrelations of “Britishness”, “Englishness”, and “Scottishness”. In using classic cultural studies methods of reading the cultural politics of a photograph in historical context, I expose multiple representational struggles,

over both the meaning of the referendum and the meaning of the Queen's body, particularly when represented by *The Daily Telegraph*. In so doing, I consider how the power relations of the referendum, the British monarchy, and the United Kingdom are (re)produced in media culture during a conjunctural moment in which the hegemony of British national identity was temporarily fractured.

The photograph 'Queen of Scots, Sovereign of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle and the Chief of Chiefs' (hereafter 'Queen of Scots') was taken by Julian Calder as part of the book *Keepers: The Ancient Offices of Britain* (hereafter *Keepers*; Bruce et al., 2013), commissioned for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012. Written by royal commentator Alistair Bruce, *Keepers* explores the 'collection of odd appointments, names, and titles that were established hundreds of years ago' (Bruce et al., 2013: 10). These titles range from the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, the senior Bishop of the Church of England; to the Bearer of the Dog Whipper's Rod, who was employed in the Middle Ages to clear cathedrals of wild dogs, and is now a ceremonial role. The book states aim to celebrate Britain's heritage, claiming that the titles illustrate 'the story of our past', which were designed to 'make a better life for all' (2013: 2; my emphasis) and which must be 'preserved' (2013: 10). However, the heritage commemorated is exclusively aristocratic: all of the titles are hereditary, and most are tied to family estates and assets. The name 'Keepers' presents the titled as "wardens" of British national culture(s), suggesting that Britain is "kept" under hierarchical class systems rather than shared amongst the citizenry. The inclusion of the Queen reads as demonstrating the monarchy's attempts to "keep" power and privilege, or as Calder and Bruce's dedication to her suggests, how she 'keeps' her Kingdom (2013: 9). The Queen has three separate titles commemorated in the book: 'Queen of Scots', 'Sovereign of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle', and 'Chief of Chiefs'. Calder describes how the photograph 'Queen of Scots' was carefully constructed to reflect these three titles ('Countryfile,' 2018), and this article undertakes visual analysis of 'Queen of Scots' to unpack the symbolic meaning of this construction.

The article begins by outlining the Scottish Independence Referendum as a conjunctural moment and its framing in political discourse and news media, particularly *The Daily Telegraph*. I then consider the relationship between monarchy and national identity/ies, and how this is both symbolic and geopolitical; central to the structure of the United Kingdom. The remainder of this article is split into three sections, each unpacking the three titles attributed to the Queen in *Keepers*: ‘Queen of Scots’, ‘Sovereign of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle’ and ‘Chief of Chiefs’. I analyse these titles to expose their historical context and contemporary mediation, aiming to understand the relations of power and processes of meaning making contained therein. Centrally, this paper argues that the use of ‘Queen of Scots’ in *The Daily Telegraph* at the specific conjunctural moment of the Scottish Independence Referendum reveals the complex intersections between monarchy, power, (geo)politics, symbolism, sovereignty, national identity/ies and landscape in the United Kingdom. At a time when (right-wing) media influencing and boosting political agendas is becoming ever more urgent (Davies, 2018), this particularly striking image offers one way through which to understand the importance of media representations in defining the terms of political debate.

### **The 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum**

On 18 September 2014, Scotland’s electorate voted on independence from the United Kingdom, a parliamentary union spanning 307 years following the Union of Parliaments in 1707, whereby the majority of laws and policies were decided by Westminster. The referendum constituted the climax of Scotland’s gradual distancing from the union over several decades, including creating a Scottish Parliament with devolved powers in 1999 (Mitchell et al., 1998; Devine, 1999; Hassan and Warhurst, 2002). In 2014, 55% of the electorate voted against independence. Despite this, the referendum captured the (inter)national imagination. 84.6% of Scots voted (the highest turnout in UK electoral and referenda history) (McEwen, 2014), and it led to the monumental rise of the Scottish National Party (SNP) who became the third-largest political party in Britain in the 2015 General Election (Oliver, 2015).

While all newspaper headlines ‘pull... readers in’ (Economou, 2008), Marina Dekavalla’s research demonstrates the importance of the media in ‘defining what a referendum is about’ (2018b: 1588, see also 2016, 2018a). UK newspapers were overwhelmingly pro-union, and only *The Sunday Herald* (a Scottish publication) campaigned for independence (Law, 2015; Dekavalla, 2018b). As Charles Pattie and Ron Johnston (2017) have argued, the factors influencing people’s support for independence were complex, and included nationalism, inequality and partisanship. But the majority of UK newspapers (and other national media texts) simplified these debates to frame the referendum as a “crisis of nationalism”, whereby what was at stake in the vote was the (re)establishment of a Scottish national identity. *The Daily Telegraph*, for instance, voiced pro-union sentiment throughout September 2014 by constructing a national “crisis” through a series of headlines sensationalising economic disaster and national decline: ‘Money floods out of UK over Yes vote fears’ (Johnson and Holehouse, 2014); ‘Stay with us: Cameron’s desperate plea to Scots’ (Dominiczak, Spence, et al., 2014); ‘PM begs Scots not to leave the UK’ (Dominiczak and Johnson, 2014); and ‘Ten days to save the union’ (Dominiczak, Johnson, et al., 2014).

This framing emerges from a complex history of Scottish national identity. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (hereafter the UK) is the ‘official umbrella designation’ (Colley, 2014:6) for an assemblage of previously-independent countries (England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland). The unification of England and Scotland occurred firstly under the union of the English and Scottish Crowns in 1603, upon the succession of James VI of Scotland who also became James I of England after Elizabeth I died childless and he was the next heir as the progeny of intermarried Scottish and English kings. The Act of Union 1707 then merged Scotland and England into a single state of the United Kingdom of Great Britain, with a single parliament at Westminster (Colley, 1992, 2014; MacInnes, 2007; Devine, 2008).<sup>1</sup> Hence, the UK is a ‘bundle of islands... acquired at different times by the English crown’ (Marquand in McCrone, 2001: 99). “Britishness” has been ‘superimposed over an array of internal

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<sup>1</sup> England became a single kingdom in the tenth century following years of conquest by different monarchs. Northern Ireland joined the assemblage in 1922. Ireland formally joined the UK in 1801, but seceded in 1922 to become a sovereign republic, apart from six counties in the north which became Northern Ireland. Wales is a constituent unit of the United Kingdom, and joined the kingdom of England in 1536. In 1997 the Welsh Assembly took authority for local politics (Colley, 1992, 2014).

differences' (Colley, 1992: 6), with the state-nations positioned as 'sub-nationalist' to England (Nairn, 2003: 156), as evidenced in the centrality of Westminster party politics (see also McCrone, 1997; MacInnes and McCrone, 2001; Law and Mooney, 2012). This has resulted in some "sub-nations" maintaining local national identity through 'the private sphere of civil society' (Paterson, 2000), and a 'rich myth-history' (McCrone, 1992:19), such as appropriating Highlanders' kilts and tartan as a Scottish tradition (Trevor-Roper in Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983).

Crucially, discourses of a "crisis of nationalism" ignore alternative factors in the independence campaigns. As Lindsay Paterson describes, politically 'Scotland is essentially to the left of England', and there was (and still is, even more so after the referendum to leave the European Union) widespread dissatisfaction among Scots with Westminster politics (2015: 28). The Conservative government in power had no Scottish MPs, and there were significant divergences in political agendas, such as neoliberal privatisation versus social democracy (Gallagher, 2009; Zhu, 2015). As SNP MP Mhairi Black stated, 'the SNP did not triumph on a wave of nationalism; in fact nationalism had nothing to do with what's happened in Scotland. We triumphed on a wave of hope... that there was something different... than the Thatcherite neoliberal policies that are produced in this Chamber' (*Mhairi Black: SNP MP's maiden speech in full*, 2015). Here, "Britishness" was 'seen as itself a conservative identity, associated with a dead empire and a decrepit ruling class' and a 'dominant English tradition of monarchical power' (Paterson, 2015: 28).

These competing discourses suggest that one way of understanding the referendum "crisis" is as a struggle over the *meaning* of the referendum and its representation in the British media. As opposed to a "crisis of nationalism", the referendum could be considered a "crisis of representation": *political* representation through electoral geographies and the subjugation of Scotland to a Westminster government; and *cultural* representation, when over one fifth of Scots feel unfairly portrayed in UK media (Jackson, 2015; see also Monbiot, 2014).

*The Daily Telegraph's* (re)framing of the debates as nationalist is unsurprising given its editorial demographic and history, making it unlikely to disrupt the status quo of Thatcherite neoliberal policies. Indeed, it has been nicknamed *The Torygraph* due to its right-wing leanings (Curtis, 2006), and it supports the Conservative party. The Telegraph Group is owned by David and Frederick Barclay, (in)famously reclusive multi-billionaires who, during the referendum, were the sixteenth richest people in the world (BBC News, 2014). The brothers also own online retailer Shop Direct, the Ritz Hotel in London, and delivery firm Yodel (Sweney and Davies, 2019), and they have avoided UK corporation tax by using offshore holdings for their assets and residing in Monaco (Greenslade, 2012). They were knighted by the monarchy in 2000 for services to charity (Sweney and Davies, 2019). In 2015, the newspaper's chief political editor Peter Osborne resigned over coverage of HSBC and a Swiss tax-dodging scandal, claiming that the newspaper had censored unfavourable stories to protect its advertising deal with the bank, hence putting commercial interests before accurate news reporting (Osborne, 2015). Two years after the Independence Referendum, *The Daily Telegraph* endorsed the Leave campaign in the European Union referendum (Swinford, 2015). Its combination of pro-union and pro-Brexit embeds a (right-wing) UK nationalism for the 1%, and, again, ignores structural factors of global inequalities that underpinned both votes (Darvas, 2016). In October 2019, the Barclay brothers put the *Daily* and *Sunday Telegraph* up for sale for £200 million (Sweney and Davies, 2019).

### **Representing monarchy, representing Britain**

The Queen is the most represented person in British history (Moorhouse and Cannadine, 2012). Indeed, one cannot make a cash purchase without encountering her image. This is part of what Tim Edensor identifies as a 'thick network of allusions to royalty in everyday life and popular culture' (2002: 188), closely related to imaginaries of British national identity. In Michael Billig's interviews with British families on their feelings towards the monarchy, one respondent noted, 'if you've not got the Royal Family there, then you'll not have the British Isles as we know it' (1992: 34). This exemplifies how the monarchy 'somehow embodies national identity [in a way that is] more or less ubiquitous... self-evident, unproblematic and 'eternal'' (Olechnowicz, 2007: 34).

Tom Nairn describes how this ubiquity is purposefully employed:

[a] personalized and totemic symbolism was needed to maintain the a-national nationalism of a multi-national (and for long imperial) entity; and the Crown could effectively translate identity on to that “higher plane” required by a country (heartland England) which has since the 17<sup>th</sup> century existed out of itself as much as in [itself] (1994: 11)

Nairn describes how the national identities experienced by each UK “sub-nation” required cohesion using a ‘personalized and totemic symbol’, the monarchy, which acts as a ‘national spirit essence’ that he terms ‘Ukania’ (1994: 92). ‘Ukania’ defines national identity in terms of Crown loyalism, facilitating a transcendent entity and a ‘metaphorical family unity’ (1994: 90): the royal *family*. As Ernest Gellner notes, there is no “original” national identity, rather discourses of national identity and/or nationalism ‘invent... nations where they do not exist’ (in Anderson, 2006: 6) through ‘a set of meanings’ (McCrone, 1992: 32) or a ‘system of cultural representation’ (Hall, 1992: 292) that make it possible to “think” the nation’ (Anderson, 2006: 22), the monarchy being one example of this practice.

But monarchical influence on national identity is more than just cultural. It is part of Britain’s geopolitical map: the United *Kingdom*. Britain’s political and constitutional structure stems from the transference of power from monarch to parliament, thus endowing the British government with greater authority than other contemporary political bodies (Bogdanor, 1995; Hennessy, 1996; Sunkin and Payne, 1999). Until the Nationality Act 1948, UK inhabitants were not ‘citizens’ but ‘subjects’, with their very existence defined by allegiance to the Crown (Karatani, 2004; Tyler, 2013). Monarchy and nation are thus multiply bound through political and geographical structures, cultural symbols, and historical legal definitions of citizenship. Thus, in reading representations of monarchy, we can read representations of the nation. The remainder of this article



demonstrates this by reading ‘Queen of Scots’ through its reference to the Queen’s three titles.

### **‘Queen of Scots’: the Monarch’s Body Politic**

‘Queen of Scots’ is the most perplexing title of the trio considering it was abolished upon the Union of Crowns in 1603. It now appears to be an affectionate nickname bestowed by Scottish royalists, implying that Scotland embraces the Queen as its *personal* monarch, as opposed to her official title ‘Elizabeth the Second, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and of her other Realms and Territories Queen, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith’, which amalgamates all of her realms. The prominence of ‘Queen of Scots’ in *Keepers* suggests this is a nickname approved by the monarchy.

The symbolic claim to sovereignty over realms has historical context. The Union of Crowns 1603 was a source of contempt for James I who faced widespread disapproval over his crowning, and he sought (unsuccessfully) throughout his reign to consolidate the union and form a single state. This was partly attempted through visual iconography, such as the painting ‘James I’ by John de Critz the Elder, which aimed to legitimate his claim over both thrones through his symbolic body (see [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:John\\_de\\_Critz\\_the\\_Elder\\_James\\_I\\_of\\_England\\_Haddington.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:John_de_Critz_the_Elder_James_I_of_England_Haddington.jpg)). Painted in 1606, James I is depicted wearing a fur cape alongside the appurtenances of the Order of the Garter, the highest order of chivalry in England (Rae and Burnstock, 2014). His hat displays a Crown jewel named ‘Mirror of Great Britain’, designed in 1604 to commemorate the union by ‘dismembering’ (Strong, 1966: 351) other royal jewels, such as Elizabethan diamonds from England and a gem from the Crown of Scotland. In so doing, English and Scottish history is materially united. Like ‘Queen of Scots’, the painting ‘James I’ appears at a conjunctural moment of political crisis, and the monarchs display unionisation on their symbolic bodies: they *are* the United Kingdom.

This conceptualisation of the monarch's body as symbolic of the nation has a complex history, one account of which is the 'body politic'. This can be etymologised in two 'related but distinct' (Axton, 1977: 12) ways: as the monarch's 'two bodies', and as the citizens of the state becoming a body. The former separates the monarch's body natural (a mortal, human body) and the body politic (a symbolic body constituted by the totality of their subjects) (Kantorowicz, 1957). As a mortal body natural, the monarch may die. But they will never truly die, rather there is a 'Separation of the two Bodies', and 'the Body politic is transferred and conveyed over from the Body natural now dead... to another Body natural' – the next monarch (Kantorowicz, 1957: 7-13). Thus, the *symbolic function* (body politic) of the monarch as Head of State is considered separate from their *human state* (body natural).

The second, more common, understanding of the body politic refers to the collective citizenry as a metaphorical human body. The *Head of State*, the sovereign, is considered both the literal and figurative "head" of the citizens, who constitute the body (Herzogenrath, 2010). This analogy implies order and hierarchy through the mind/body dichotomy (Grosz, 1994). Thomas Hobbes, a figure of European liberal thought, uses this second understanding in his book *Leviathan* (1651). Written during the English Civil War, *Leviathan* argues that political turmoil would be assuaged by a strong government, led by an absolute sovereign as the people's representative. The sovereign thus becomes an 'artificial person' called the Leviathan, representing not themselves but the 'words and actions of another' (1651: 106). This artificial person is represented through iconographical visual metaphor on the cover of Hobbes's book (see [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Leviathan\\_by\\_Thomas\\_Hobbes.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Leviathan_by_Thomas_Hobbes.jpg)) (Brown, 1978; Corbett and Lightbown, 1979; Malcolm, 1998).<sup>2</sup> Here, Leviathan emerges from the landscape of his realm, his body composed of his subjects who, in this case literally, comprise the body politic. Although the subjects are faceless, they all peer upwards towards their ruler, who towers over all. As Herzogenrath writes:

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<sup>2</sup> The etching is difficult to attribute to a single artist. Some suggest the engraver is unknown (Newey, 2008), some name Bohemian Baroque artist Wenceslaus Hollar (Brown, 1978; Malcolm, 1998), and some (perhaps most convincingly) designate the work to Parisian engraver Abraham Bosse (Corbett and Lightbown, 1979; Springborg, 2007; Chiquet, 2013).

[the body] visualizes the strengthening armor of scales as the united multiplicity of the consenting individuals, which creates the *person* of the state, the identity of the Body|Politic, the unity of which is achieved only *in/by* representation (2010: 7; emphasis in original)

The consenting subjects come together for protection, and in so doing they “strengthen the armour” of the sovereign. In a complex visual depiction of representative politics, the people’s subjection feeds the ruler’s power, and he is strengthened by their obedience.

The notion of the sovereign and/or government as representative of the collective citizenry is a commonsense way of conceptualising contemporary rule, particularly within democratic government assemblies (see Lowndes, 2013). The use of ‘Queen of Scots’ by the pro-union *Daily Telegraph* presents the Queen as the unifying Head of State, and visualises an apparent democratic desire of the UK body politic to remain united. This is signified in the tagline, a quote from the Queen’s press release following the referendum result: ‘we have in common an enduring love of Scotland, which is one of the things that helps unite us all’ (Brown, 2014). The use of the collective pronoun “we” presents her statement as being on behalf of the nation, and readers are called upon to recognise themselves in that “we” and, thus, as part of the (re)United Kingdom. As Leviathan’s subjects gathered in obedience of their ruler, the newspapers use of ‘Queen of Scots’ calls for the obedience of the British public in (re)affirming their allegiance to the British monarch(y) and concomitant conservative political values. Whether Scots voted for or against independence, in this image they now pledge allegiance to the unity the Queen represents.

### **‘Sovereign of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle’: Landscape and the Body Geographic**

The second title, ‘Sovereign of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle’, refers to the Scottish equivalent of England’s Order of the Garter, the highest order of chivalry from the monarch (Bruce et al., 2013). James II established this in the seventeenth century as a statutory foundation to reward loyalty in Scotland during a

period of political unrest (The Official Website of the British Monarchy, 2015). In ‘Queen of Scots’, the Order of the Thistle is signified by the mantle, which is the insignia worn by members of the Order at ceremonial occasions. The Queen’s shoulders are draped in the Collar of the Order, from which hangs the Jewel depicting Scotland’s patron saint, Saint Andrew. The Collar is a chain comprised of golden thistles and rue sprigs, which originate in the Scottish Highlands.

This symbolic detail compares to the Leviathan frontispiece, which is intricately composed to reflect Hobbes’s argument. The Leviathan figure grasps a sword in his right hand, and a bishop’s crozier in his left. The sword depicts the sovereign’s temporal power, ‘which in the last resort he must use for the preserving of Peace and Security’ (Corbett and Lightbown, 1979: 224). The crozier symbolises Leviathan’s ecclesiastical power and rule over everything within the realm, including the church (ibid.). The bottom section of the etching features compartments, each with an individual symbol. Those under the sword depict temporal power through war (e.g. a canon), and those under the crozier symbolise ecclesiastical power through religion (e.g. a lightning bolt to signify excommunication) (Corbett and Lightbown, 1979). A Latin inscription from the *Book of Job* frames the top, reading ‘there is no power on earth which can be compared to him’ (Corbett and Lightbown, 1979: 219). Indeed, the name ‘Leviathan’ originates in the *Book of Job*, denoting ‘a mighty and terrific beast, usually thought of as a monstrous sea-dweller such as a sea-dragon or serpent’ (Newey, 2008: 34), and used in the text to demonstrate God’s forceful rule over Job. Hobbes’s use of this term for his ‘mortal God’ (1651: 114) highlights the sovereign’s monstrosity, towering over the nation like an omnipotent giant, his sword and crozier extending beyond the edge of the etching. This ‘terrifying, awesome, masked embodiment’ of the state (Olwig, 2002: 87) demonstrates Hobbes’s own strange positionality somewhere between liberal democracy and absolute monarchy. Leviathan is theoretically representative of “the people”, yet the etching clearly advocates his indissoluble power. The monstrosity of monarchy is visible in his allegorical form.

In both Leviathan and ‘Queen of Scots’, the sovereign’s head is adorned with a crown to symbolise monarchical rule. While Leviathan’s body is constituted by his subjects, the Queen’s body is adorned with Scottish cultural markers, connoting Scottish national identity. Both figures are situated in the landscape of their realm. Leviathan physically emerges from the land as though grown from it, the “natural” leader, while the Queen stands upon the 50,000 acre Balmoral Estate that her family privately owns. She too appears to emerge from the land, the thistle and sprig collar around her neck and the rich green robe melting into the Scottish countryside, and the curve of the stream blending into the curve of her robe. Like Leviathan, her presence in/on the Scottish land reaffirms her power and authority over the territory, and this power is naturalised through the depiction of her “at one” with the landscape.

W.J.T Mitchell argues that landscape is not fixed, but ‘a process by which social and subjective identities are formed... a cultural practice’ (in Matless, 2001: 12) that can structure the formation of national identities. In *Landscape, Nature and the Body Politic* (2002), Kenneth Robert Olwig uses the Leviathan frontispiece to demonstrate how the now-commonsense relationship between a country, the body politic and landscape scenery is actually a historical development rooted in James I’s rule. James I’s request for the political union of Scotland and England was refused by parliament because:

the country of England... was manifested as a polity through its representation by parliament... Parliament would not have the same legitimacy with regard to the amalgamated body politic of Britain since there was no precedent by which the English parliament could claim a customary right to represent a country such as Scotland (2002: 44)

James I countered this by invoking cultural representations of “Great Britain” (a figment of his imagination) ‘as a country not in terms of its historical customs, but in terms of the landscape scenery of its geographical body’ (2002: 62). That is, he used court masques to represent the united landscape of his imaginary country. James I’s enactments of the new nation brought it into being in the public imaginary, and this facilitated the now-

commonsense understanding of the British state as a body politic *within* a body geographic, organised by a central state.

Likewise, in ‘Queen of Scots’, the UK’s body politic is united under a shared body geographic, in this case the recognisable countryside landscape surrounding the Queen. Citizens are ‘bound by mystical bonds of soil and blood’ (Olwig, 2002: 219), as the landscape becomes symbolic of a mutual ‘love’ - as the headline suggests - of shared national history. Moreover, the Queen’s authority transcends her physical body, and like Leviathan ‘is made tangible in the landscape scene that [she] surveys and controls’ (Olwig, 2002: 90). The monarch’s power is *in* the UK, and the potential break up of this is symbolically damaging to the monarchy. ‘Queen of Scots’ demonstrates how sensationalist myth-making about the role of monarchy in an independent Scotland is used to produce fear about separation, specifically here by *The Daily Telegraph* but also in wider discourses. As the Scottish Government’s White Paper on an independent Scotland explicitly states, the Union of Crowns 1603 means that the Queen would remain Queen unless a separate referendum on republicanism was held (APS Group Scotland, 2013). Hence, *The Daily Telegraph*’s invoking of losing the Queen in these debates merely dissuades pro-monarchy electorates from voting for independence, and models many contemporary media texts by stoking emotion and fear in voters as opposed to documenting knowledge and facts (Davies, 2018).

### **‘Chief of Chiefs’: Extraction, Exploitation and Enclosure**

While we are invited to read ‘Queen of Scots’ through a ‘tourist gaze’ (Urry, 1990) as a natural, beautiful landscape, this “naturalness” is worth investigating. ‘Queen of Scots’ draws upon key ‘stock scenes, symbols and themes’ of visual representations of the Scottish Highlands, namely heather, mountains, water and rich foliage (MacLeod, 2006: 1). In a special edition of BBC’s *Countryfile*, photographer Julian Calder describes the labourious process of choosing the precise framing for the shot (‘Countryfile,’ 2018), and reveals that it was eventually chosen because it had ‘all the ingredients’ for an aesthetically pleasing composition (Hastings, 2013). A behind-the-scenes photograph of the photoshoot reveals a different surrounding landscape: punctuated by large boulders,

no luscious purple heather, a host of workers disrupting the quiet and powerful solitude, and a man-made wooden track for easy vehicle access (see Hardman, 2015).

Moreover, when placed in historical context, the Queen's presence in the landscape stems from the political terror of the Highland Clearances. As Ben Pitcher argues, 'nationalized landscapes have an astonishing capacity to absorb ongoing histories of conflict and struggle over access and ownership' (2016), where these struggles are gradually erased from historical imaginaries. In the eighteenth century, the Highlands were inhabited mostly by crofters: communities where each crofter (farmer) tenured small, individual arable crofts for small-scale food production, while poorer-quality hill ground was shared as common grazing land for animals (Devine, 1994). By the late eighteenth/early nineteenth century, the Scottish and English aristocracy had discovered the crofters' land, and sought to import mass agricultural production into the region for commercialisation (ibid.). They instigated the enclosure of this land through the destruction and mass displacement of crofting communities, where some were forced to emigrate while many others died after their townships were set alight (Richards, 2012). By 1802, most of the Highlands were 'under sheep' (Devine, 1994: 34). The "natural" landscape of 'Queen of Scots', then, has in fact been shaped by the grazing habits of the sheep introduced by wealthy landlords for profit, and by the terror wreaked on sustainable crofting communities. 'Queen of Scots' actually represents an industrial landscape; a commercial space enclosed and subject to the extraction of marketable resources.

The title 'Chief of Chiefs' stems from a parallel history, referring to ancient Scottish clan systems: extended networks of Highlanders from the same region who adopted the same surname (Prebble, 1961). Clan Chiefs were the regional leaders (ibid.). In the eighteenth century, many Clan Chiefs supported the Jacobite movement to restore the exiled Stuart king James II to the British throne (ibid.).<sup>3</sup> The rebellion resulted in the prohibition of traditional dress (predominantly tartan) and Gaelic speech, the confiscation of many Clan Chief estates – leading to the abolishment of the clan system (ibid.) – and the composition of an extra verse of the British national anthem 'God Save the Queen' to

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<sup>3</sup> James II was exiled after his son-in-law William of Orange invaded England in 1688, in order to depose the catholic James II and re-establish the throne as Protestant.

generate English patriotic fervor. Specifically, this encouraged British army officer Marshal Wade to “crush” and colonise the “Rebellious Scots” (Batty, 2007):

Lord grant that Marshal Wade  
May by thy mighty aid  
Victory bring.  
May he sedition hush,  
And lie a torrent rush,  
Rebellious Scots to crush.  
God save the Queen!

While it is debated if this verse was ever popularly sung (McConnachie, 2013), it illustrates the Scottish struggle for cultural representation later highlighted in the Independence Referendum. There have been political disputes over whether the British national anthem should be entirely replaced (Batty, 2007; BBC News, 2007; Cleland, 2007), and at the 2012 Olympic Games some Scottish members of Team Great Britain refused to sing ‘God Save the Queen’ in protest (Faulkner and Madeley, 2012).

‘Queen of Scots’ can be compared to Clan Chief portraiture, such as eighteenth-/nineteenth-century artist Sir Henry Raeburn’s portrait ‘The MacNab’ (Barribeau, 2014), and indeed ‘Queen of Scots’ is displayed in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery alongside Raeburn’s work. Painted in 1810, ‘The MacNab’ depicts the elderly Francis MacNab, chief of Clan MacNab (see <http://clan-macnab.com/the-notorious-chief/>). Standing in ‘quasi-military fashion’, MacNab wears a military green coat over a red and green tartan kilt, and carries ‘a dirk, broadsword and two pistols’ to connote power (Nicholson, 2005: 163). This dominating stance, and the implicit suggestion of MacNab’s wealth given that portraiture was costly and limited to the wealthy (Schama, 2015), is contradicted by his lifestyle. Curator Robin Nicholson describes MacNab as tarnished by ‘unmanageable debt’ (2005: 164), and his estates were sold after his death in 1816. Furthermore, the wild Highland landscape of the portrait’s background is merely a stage



set in Raeburn's studio (ibid.). As such, Nicholson refers to MacNab's outfit as a costume, a 'fancy dress... a façade of prestige and authority' (ibid.).

Likewise, 'Queen of Scots' appropriates Scottish cultural symbols to establish a nationalist ideology. Comparing it to Raeburn's work exposes the monstrosity of the Queen, robed in her own 'fancy dress' costume to perform "Scottishness". Julian Calder describes how the Queen's upward gaze was chosen to present her as 'looking up at the clans who have amassed on the hillside to come to see her' as their leader ('Countryfile,' 2018). Given the bloodied history of the clan systems, where the British monarchy was one of the institutions destroying the Chiefs' legacies in the Highland Clearances, this is remarkable. The curatorial decision to place 'Queen of Scots' alongside Raeburn's portraits further depoliticises the violent history between the monarchy and Scottish clans. When the Queen stakes out her ownership of Scottish land, she symbolically erases the crofters and clans, and – through her hereditary ownership of Balmoral – aligns herself with the aristocrats who initiated the clearances. Indeed, Balmoral was originally owned by the Chief of the Farquharson Clan before Prince Albert persuaded them to sell it to Queen Victoria in 1847 (Clan Farquharson, 2015), and the estate was demolished and rebuilt as property of the British monarchy (Butler, 2008). As journalist George Monbiot suggests, 'this balmorality is equivalent to Marie Antoinette dressing up as a milkmaid while the people of France starved' (2015). As Highlanders were cleared, Victoria and Albert were appropriating their dress and customs as costumes, and expounding on their emotional attachments to the region in journals (Queen Victoria, 1868). 'Queen of Scots' only comes to fruition at Balmoral because of the destruction of indigenous<sup>4</sup> Scottish communities and the imposition of aristocratic power. If the monarchy's ownership of Balmoral and affiliation with the region has served to strengthen the relationship between the Scottish citizens and the Crown (Butler, 2008), 'Queen of Scots' is a reminder of the symbolic violence of this historical connection.

## Conclusion

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<sup>4</sup> The Scottish Crofting Foundation has been campaigning to have crofters recognised as an indigenous population (Scottish Crofting Foundation, 2008)

In 'Queen of Scots', *The Daily Telegraph* celebrates the culmination of a long-drawn battle for union, using the symbolic body of the monarch as representative of the (re)United Kingdom. If, as I have argued, the Independence Referendum was (in part) concerned with political and cultural representation, then the comparison between 'Queen of Scots' and 'Leviathan' is extremely ironic. In response to a cry for independence, *The Daily Telegraph* presents Scots with a figuration of Hobbes's treatise on absolute monarchy. In many ways, the conjuncture of the referendum is comparable to Hobbes's unstable 'state of nature' (1651), where Scots attempted to fracture the political hegemony. The "no" vote is the solution, and the Queen represents the "stable state" that the British government seeks to provide. The pro-independence campaigners are comparable to Leviathan's subjects, trapped in the British body politic and forced to "look up" at the Queen's monstrous figure, as she simultaneously erases and appropriates Scottish cultural motifs, history, ancestry and land. Hobbes's theory may emphasise political representation, but pro-independence Scots have not consented to this particular vision of the United Kingdom presented to them by *The Daily Telegraph*. Indeed, in 2017 it was reported that 44% of 169 Scots surveyed agreed with the statement 'the monarchy is a meaningless institution', a significantly higher percentage than any other UK region (30% of 96 people in Wales, an average of 28% across nine English regions) (Endersby, 2017). 'Queen of Scots', then, does not represent Scots. Rather, as William Davies (2018) argues, it models contemporary media texts by privileging emotion – in this case fear, anxiety and nostalgia – over expertise and knowledge to stoke a fractious political environment. This is particularly the case at a time of growing global right-wing populism, which, like 'Queen of Scots', hinges on ideologies of nationalism and (non-)belonging.

This analysis of 'Queen of Scots' has sought to expose the meanings of the photograph when used by *The Daily Telegraph* as part of its right-wing, pro-union campaigns. In reading the photograph in cultural, political and social context, this article has exposed its monstrosity: the discourses, histories and power relations it privileges and those it erases. It has made visible how representations of monarch(y) such as these stem from a legacy of extraction, exploitation, enclosure and symbolic violence (Clancy, forthcoming). If the

referendum was predominantly a struggle over meaning, ‘Queen of Scots’ is one key example of this discursive and symbolic struggle.

### **Funding**

This research was funded by the ESRC and the AHRC.

### **Disclosure statement**

No conflicts of interest were reported by the author.

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