"YOU CAN TAKE THE GIRL OUT OF SCOTLAND…"
CRITICAL APPROACHES TO GENDER AND NATION

À l'instar de Hélvétia ou Britannia, la représentation allégorique de la nation dans le corps d'une femme est un trait marquant de l'iconographie nationale et de la littérature écossaise. Une partie importante de la critique féministe contemporaine a battu en brèche cette figure qu'elle juge inacceptable car l'élévation symbolique de la femme va de pair avec le rabaissement et l'impuissance politique des femmes réelles. Pourtant, de nombreux textes, y compris des textes empreints de théorie féministe, qui s'attachent à déconstruire l'idéologie nationaliste patriarcale et conservatrice, ont tendance à utiliser des motifs rappelant ces figures allégoriques. Cet essai démontre comment le rapprochement entre les théories du genre et celles de la nationalité risque de reproduire les images parallèles de la nation et de la femme en tant que victimes, ce qui ramène une fois de plus à l'iconographie traditionnelle et conservatrice.

The intersection of gender and nation is a problematic ground of enquiry, both in terms of how women consider themselves as existing within the nation, and in terms of the representation of the nation as itself gendered. One of the most obvious and visual ways in which the nation is gendered is the representation of the nation itself in the form of a woman. Such a representation is familiar and ingrained in European tradition, and obviously attractive, given its widespread use. The representation of nations by female figureheads, such as Britannia and Helvetia, can be traced back to the seventeenth century, and earlier instances of woman as goddess of place can be found in the classical and the Celtic traditions. The trope elevates and semi-deifies women on the symbolic level but contributes to their political disenfranchisement from the position of citizen on a practical level. This

symbolic elevation appears to value women's role in the nation while it masks the political powerlessness of actual women within the nation. Nationalist discourse makes much use of the allegory of "the nation as a loved woman in danger or as a mother who lost her sons in battle[1]", but this gendered iconography casts men only as citizens, as the nationalist sons of the mother-nation. Not only does the metaphor implicitly exclude women from the subject position of citizen but it also depends upon a sexist ideology in which women are always victims or potential victims. Even strong figures of nation such as Britannia or Marianne still depend upon this construction because implicit in the representation of strength is the threat of the external other, the potential penetration of those impermeable boundaries. Feminist reactions to the use of the trope vary, however, and some feminist critics trace the tradition back to a matriarchal "Golden Age" and thus give it a positive connotation. Even in a "politically correct" age informed by feminist discourse and modern conceptions of the nation, the image of the nation as a woman is still obviously attractive.

In her essay *Three Guineas*, Virginia Woolf states that "as a woman, I have no country. As a woman, my country is the whole world[2]". Her point is that a nation which has historically denied women property, education and the vote can expect no loyalty from women as citizens. Since women have experienced a different relationship to the laws and customs of the state than men have, and since their "position in the home of freedom" is different from that of men, women's interpretation of the word "patriotism" must also be different from a male definition[3]. Woolf's statements provide a clear and concise indication of the problems faced by women in fitting into a nation-state which in its institutions and ideology is predominantly male. Her argument indicates clearly how women may experience the nation in an entirely different way from men. There is a vision of openness, of expansion of territory and ideas contained in the idea of women's country being the whole world. However, the wish to escape from the masculine structure of the nation expressed in the statement

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1. Nira YUVAL-DAVIS and Floya ANTHIAS, eds., *Woman-Nation-State*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989, p. 9-10.

2. Virginia WOOLF, *Three Guineas*, London: The Hogarth Press, 1938, p. 197.

3. V. Woolf, *Three Guineas*, p. 18.

"as a woman, I have no country", while rhetorically striking, is, in its own way, limiting and not entirely satisfactory, providing no answers for the many women who are involved in nationalist movements, or who hold nationalist beliefs, or for the majority of women who simply wish to consider themselves citizens of their nations.

In Scotland, many women seeking to reconcile their feminist and nationalist beliefs have experienced a frustration which is not unlike that expressed by black feminists in America. Using a piece of domestic imagery, Joy Hendry in 1987 described the situation facing Scottish women as the "double knot on the peeny". Hendry explicitly situates Scotland within the colonial context by describing it as an "oppressed colony of England", and uses the colonial exploitation of Scotland to explain the internal exploitation of Scottish women:

> Being a woman is difficult enough. But being a Scottish woman is more difficult still because of Scotland's position as an oppressed colony of England, and a nation with severe psychological hangups. There is this popular myth that the Scottish male is more domineering, his attitudes to women more "primitive" than other men. Certainly, we have the same problems as women everywhere, but perhaps in more extreme form[4].

Marilyn Reizbaum uses the same critical approach when she suggests that:

> The need to define nationalism in patriarchal terms in countries that have struggled against a colonising "father" is perhaps a response to the historical figuration of cultural "inferiority" in stereotypes of the feminine[5].

Both articles postulate that the patriarchal nature of Scottish culture is a reaction to stereotypes of cultural inferiority imposed upon Scottish culture. Hendry identifies the loss of Scottish nationhood as "an experience something like castration" and concludes that this experience, together with poverty, the injustices of Scottish history and the erosion of Scottish culture, has

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4. Joy HENDRY, "A double knot on the peeny", in *In Other Words : Writing as a Feminist,* ed. Gail Chester and Sigrid Nielson, London : Hutchison, 1987, p. 36.

5. Marilyn REIZBAUM, "Canonical Double-Cross : Scottish and Irish Women's Writing", in *Decolonizing Tradition : New Views of Twentieth Century "British" Literary Canons,* ed. Karen K. Lawrence, Urbana & Chicago : University of Illinois Press, 1992, p. 172.

"brutalized the Scottish male[6]". This metaphor works on two levels because, while the individual Scottish male is brutalised, it is evidently the Scottish nation which has suffered castration through the loss of its organ of political power. This image of the Scottish nation as emasculated, and therefore tending towards the feminine, is an interesting corollary to the metaphor proper which allegorises the nation's vulnerability to invasion and exploitation by representing the nation as a female victim. The titles of each of these articles focus on the idea of "doubleness" as a crucial factor in women's engagement with their national identity, whether as citizens, readers, or writers. This doubleness is expressed as a double oppression: Scottish women occupy a position of inadequacy not only because they are Scottish but because they are women. The image of the nation as a woman plays a role in this double oppression since the myths surrounding the "mother nation" conceal not only the oppression of women within society but also the objectification of the female form.

What I want to do here is look at the way in which critics have already addressed the intersection of gender and nationalism in Scotland and situate them in a wider critical context. They can be seen as falling roughly into two categories, each illustrating a different reaction to this idea of double oppression. Firstly, there are critics who focus on feminism and nationalism as part of a system of multiple struggles against oppression. These struggles would ideally complement each other but in practice one struggle is inevitably privileged, and therefore the feminist cause must be sacrificed for the greater good of the nationalist cause, or vice versa. This returns us to the dichotomy articulated by Virginia Woolf, that "as a woman I need no country", or, in a Scottish context, by Liz Lochhead, who claimed that she did not really consider herself to be a nationalist or even primarily a Scottish poet, since, as she put it, "until recently I've felt that my country was woman[7]".

Much feminist theory states that all forms of oppression are linked in society and are supported by similar institutional structures. Black American feminists, by conceptualising feminism as

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6. J. Hendry, "A Double Knot on the Peeny", p. 36.
7. Colin NICHOLSON, "Liz Lochhead: The Knucklebones of Irony", in *Poem, Purpose and Place: Shaping Identity in Contemporary Scottish Verse,* Edinburgh: Polygon, 1992, p. 223.

"a struggle against sexist oppression", allow recognition of the fact that men may be equally oppressed, on grounds of race or class. Thus feminism, as a struggle against oppression, must necessarily incorporate a struggle against all forms of oppression : racial, class, and national[8]. However, the idealistic aims of such theorising are not so easy to achieve in practice. Often the incorporation of one struggle against oppression within another is merely nominal and one of these struggles therefore becomes devalued and ignored. In such a pattern, the feminist struggle is invariably subordinated to the nationalist. Often, the discourse of nationalism is able to subsume the oppression of women into its master narrative and represent it as one of the many injustices which will be overturned when the principal aims of the movement are achieved. Thus, in many nationalist struggles we witness the recurring myth which implies or states explicitly that gender oppression follows directly from national oppression. If there is an identifiable oppressor, that oppressor must be responsible for all forms of oppression, including sexist oppression, and if there exists a golden age myth, it is a construction of a golden age in which no form of oppression existed. In Irish Republican ideology, therefore, the contemporary subjugation of Irish women is a direct result of the conquest of Gaelic Ireland and the destruction of its ancient egalitarian traditions, while Welsh nationalist ideology emphasises the better treatment of women under the medieval laws of Hywel Da[9].

In the Scottish context, the conflicting selves within the subject position "Scottish" "woman" "writer" are still being worked out. As the editors of *The History of Scottish Women's Writing* note, the volume provoked the familiar debate as to "what constitutes a 'Scottish' writer or work", in a more extreme form. This could be because, as the editors suggest, the lack of an established canon

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8. bell HOOKS, *Feminist Theory from Margin to Center*, Boston : South End Press, 1984, p. 18 ; p. 35. See also b. HOOKS, *Ain't I A Woman : Black Women and Feminism*, Boston : South End Press, 1981 ; Alice WALKER, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens,* New York : Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984 ; Audre LORDE, *Sister Outsider*, The Crossing Press, 1984.

9. Margaret WARD, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries : Women and Irish Nationalism*, London : Pluto Press, 1983, p. 254-5 ; Charlotte Aull DAVIES, "Nationalism : Discourse and Practice", in *Practicing Feminism : Identity, Difference, Power*, ed. Nickie Charles and Felicia Hughes-Freeland, London & New York : Routledge, 1996, p. 166.

of Scottish women writers means there is no real benchmark against which to define the Scottishness of individual female writers[10]. The tendency towards a "ghettoisation" of Scottish literature within the Scottish academic community results in the imposition of a uniform definition of "Scottishness" upon texts, which leads to a very narrow and almost necessarily androcentric canon, into which it is difficult to insert Scottish woman writers. It remains difficult for women to write themselves into the tradition, particularly into a nationalist literature where the "nationalist traditions of 'sonship' are crossed with and reinforced by the vocabularies of patrimony and filiation which inform literary mythology[11]". Marilyn Reizbaum's study of the "double cross" suffered by Irish and Scottish women is a specifically "canonical double cross". Countries like Scotland and Ireland, struggling against exclusion from and marginalisation within the Anglo-American canon, notably exclude women from their own canons[12]. As Reizbaum points out, there is a strong parallel between the feminist challenge to the male canon and the challenge presented by "Scotland, Ireland, and other countries like them" to the mainstream Anglo-American establishment. She goes on to suggest that writers who are able to work towards a "dynamic relation of movements, in this instance, nationalism and feminism" provide a more "revolutionary" solution to both problems[13]. The parallel which she highlights between women and colonised countries lends itself to further development, and while the initial motivation for comparison of the two seems legitimate enough, extended development of the parallel often risks reproducing conservative ideologies.

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10. Douglas GIFFORD and Dorothy McMILLAN, eds., *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997, p. x. The bibliography to the History emphasises that "decisions about inclusion [...] have tended towards openness in the interpretations of Scottishness." Fiona BLACK and Kirsten STIRLING, "Select Bibliographies of Scottish Women Writers," in *A History of Scottish Women's Writing,* eds. D. Gifford and D. McMillan, p. 677.

11. Elleke BOEHMER, "Motherlands, Mothers and Nationalist Sons: Representations of Nationalism and Women in African Literature", in *From Commonwealth to Postcolonial*, ed. Anna Rutherford, Sydney: Dangaroo Press, 1992, p. 235-6.

12. M. Reizbaum, "Canonical Double-Cross", p. 166.

13. M. Reizbaum, "Canonical Double-Cross", p. 168.

This second, more theoretical, approach to the interaction of nation and gender demonstrates that the two struggles in fact contain the same structure, and that lessons might be learned from applying feminist theory to national or post-colonial struggles, or, conversely, applying post-colonial theory to the situation of women. This approach avoids the somewhat defeatist attitude of the first school and does provide many valuable insights. However, despite its very modern and theory-driven credentials, such an approach contains highly conservative elements, not least its tendency to reproduce the equation of woman with nation, along with all the dangers and contradictions inherent in that trope.

Both post-colonial and feminist criticism have made explicit comparisons between the exploitation of women and of colonised peoples. Each field draws on the discourses and terminologies of the other to express the politics of oppression :

> Women in many societies have been relegated to the position of "other", marginalised and, in a metaphorical sense, "colonised". [...] They share with colonised races and peoples an intimate experience of the politics of oppression and repression[14].

The parallels drawn between the "othering" of women and the colonised are based on the premise that all forms of oppression are connected and are supported by similar institutional structures, and provide useful insights into ways of ordering resistance against the power structures in action in each instance. Similarities in the very language used to characterise the "other" in both female and racial oppression also encourage such parallels :

> In the language of colonialism, non-Europeans occupy the same symbolic space as women. Both are seen as part of nature, not culture, and with the same ambivalence : either they are ripe for government, passive, child-like, unsophisticated, needing leadership and guidance, described always in terms of lack — no initiative, no intellectual powers, no perseverance ; or, on the other hand, they are outside society, dangerous, treacherous, emotional, inconstant, wild, threatening, fickle, sexually aberrant, irrational, near animal, lascivious, disruptive, evil, unpredictable[15].

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14. Bill ASHCROFT, Gareth GRIFFITHS and Helen TIFFIN, *The Empire Writes Back : Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures,* London and New York : Routledge, 1989, p. 174-5.

15. Helen CARR, "Woman / Indian : 'The American' and his Others", in *Europe and Its Others,* ed. Barker et al, vol. 2, Colchester : University of

The very fact that oppressed nations suffer from many of the same stereotypes and power structures as women do has led many critics to attempt a reconciliation of the two fields of study. Instead of emphasising the subordination of one form of oppression, or the "multiple" or "double" nature of the female position within the nation, we witness an interchange of critical and theoretical methodology between the two fields, on the level of theory rather than practice.

This type of cross-disciplinary exchange between feminist and post-colonial theory has a slightly longer history than the fairly recent advent of studies which incorporate feminism and nationalism. Nationalist theory in general paid very little attention to gender until the topic began to be tackled from a feminist angle in the late 1980s[16]. Studies such as Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* and Ernest Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism*[17] espoused a modern and constructionist view of nation which, rather than analysing the citizen's relationship to a pre-existing state, began to analyse the process whereby the idea of the nation is created by a communal consensus. While this new method of theorising the nation represents a liberating and exciting approach to the subject, and one which had a great influence on literary critics, all these books may be and have been criticised for their "androcentric perspective[18]". The perceived masculinity of the

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Essex, 1985, p. 50.

16. Kumari JAYAWARDENA, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World,* London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1986; N. Yuval-Davis and F. Anthias, eds., *Woman-Nation-State*; Cynthia ENLOE, *The Morning After: Sexual Politics at the End of the Cold War*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

17. Benedict ANDERSON, *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, London: Verso, 1983; Ernest GELLNER, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1983. See also Anthony SMITH, *Theories of Nationalism*, London: Duckworth, 1971; *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford and New York: Blackwell, 1987; E. J. HOBSBAWM, *Nations and Nationalisms*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

18. "The androcentric perspective of such theorising is discernible at various levels, the most obvious being that of simply leaving women out, a total disregard for women's contributions to the process or how they may have been affected by it". C. A. Davies, "Nationalism: Discourse and Practice", p. 170; "as insightful as Ben Anderson's and other landmark books of this era were in charting new ways to think about the creation of nationalist ideas, they left nationalists — and pre-nationalists and anti-nationalists — ungendered. Our understanding of nationalism suffered". C. Enloe, *The Morning After,* p. 231.

processes of the nation state is reproduced in the theory of the construction of nation, which is concerned with a male subject, or at best, an ungendered, universal subject who is assumed to be male.

In *Imagined Communities,* Benedict Anderson introduces the question of gender by remarking that "everyone should have a nationality as he/she has a gender[19]". He does not, however, question this statement, and this almost throwaway use of the word gender has been picked up by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick:

> To suggest that everyone might "have" a nationality as every-one "has" a gender presupposes, what may well be true, and may well always have been true, that everyone does "have" a gender. But it needn't presuppose that everyone "has" a gender in the same way, or that "having" a gender is the same kind of act, process, or possession for every person or for every gender[20].

This destabilisation of any normative notion of fixed identity tackles Anderson's unquestioning use of gender as a fixed category and proceeds to use the destabilising thrust of recent gender theory in order to equally call into question the idea of "nationhood", asking whether any two nations can be said to possess "nation-ness" in the same way. The gap between Anderson and Sedgwick illustrates the considerable change in both the visibility of gender theory and the theoretical direction of nationalist theory. Anderson was writing in 1983, Sedgwick in 1994. Sedgwick is able to use gender theory to destabilise a fixed notion of national identity, in the same way as feminist theory is now able to access the discourse of post-colonial theory to describe women as "colonised".

Various critics have transferred this interchange of methodologies into the Scottish context, despite the fact that defining Scotland as postcolonial is in itself rather problematic. The Treaty of Union between Scotland and England is a unique instance in political history and means that Scotland cannot technically be described as a colony. While an analysis of the cultural relationship between Scotland and England could be said to match the colonial model, an extended post-colonial analysis of the Scottish

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19. B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 14.
20. Eve Kosofsky SEDGWICK, *Tendencies*, London: Routledge, 1994, p. 148-9.

situation seems impossible. Nevertheless, Scottish literary critics have been flirting with post-colonial criticism for some time, some going all the way and some maintaining their critical distance[21]. Perhaps the inclusion of Scotland in a post-colonial context is intended to give Scottish studies a legitimacy outwith the immediate (parochial) context of Scotland. The application of feminist theory to Scotland, following the post-colonial model, is intended to open up new avenues for discussion and also perhaps to find some way of reconciling the feminist and the nationalist in Scottish studies, given the sense of double oppression expressed by critics such as Hendry.

In *Language and Scottish Literature* (1994), John Corbett "adapts" Sara Mills on feminist reading practices in order to promote a *Scottish* reading practice which approaches texts specifically as Scottish texts. He appropriates a passage from Mills in which she proposes a model which might help to discover how texts are interpreted by different social groups.

> As feminist readers, therefore, we need two kinds of information to construct the possible readings of a text which might be arrived at. First we need to make a close textual analysis of the text, identifying certain features of form — literary conventions, syntax, lexis, genre and so on : the cues to interpretation. Second, we need to make some generalized predictions about groups of readers' background knowledge — of language, of literary conventions — and of their models of the world. By uniting these two kinds of information, it should be possible to build up a picture of how specified social groups might read a text[22].

Corbett suggests : "If we substitute the word 'Scottish' for the word 'feminist' in the above quotation, we can reconfigure Mills' project for a different affiliation[23]". Corbett's proposal here is not unreasonable, as Mills herself acknowledges that her model may

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21. Bertholdt SHOENE, "A Passage to Scotland : Scottish Literature and the British Post-Colonial Condition", *Scotlands,* 2.1 (1995), p. 107-131, and Liam CONNELL, "The Colour of Our Vowels : Post-Colonising the Language Debate", published on the web at http :// pages.britishlibrary.net / liam.connell / abertay.html ; both question the validity of the application of post-colonial theory to Scotland.

22. John CORBETT, *Language and Scottish Literature*, Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press, 1997, p. 33. Sara MILLS, *Feminist Stylistics,* London and New York : Routledge, 1995, p. 35.

23. J. Corbett, *Language and Scottish Literature*, p. 34.

be applied to more than one type of affiliation. However the shift from "feminist" to "Scottish" reader is questionable, firstly because although the reader position "feminist" is necessarily politicised, there is no reason why every Scottish reader (as opposed to Scottish nationalist reader) needs to be politicised. Also, the idea that the substitution of one word can legitimate the shift of methodology from one field to the other is highly problematic.

This method of substitution is developed further by Christopher Whyte. In the introduction to his *Gendering the Nation* (1995), Whyte goes further than Corbett, and illustrates the relevance of gender theory for nationalist theory by taking a passage on gender theory from Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* and substituting "Scottish" for "feminist" throughout:

> The postulation of the "before" within Scottish [feminist] theory becomes politically problematic when it constrains the future to materialize an idealized notion of the past or when it supports, even inadvertently, the reification of a pre-Union [pre-cultural] sphere of the authentic Scottish [feminine]. This recourse to an original or genuine Scottishness [femininity] is a nostalgic and parochial idea that refuses the contemporary demand to formulate an account of nationality [gender] as a complex cultural construction. This ideal tends not only to serve culturally conservative aims, but to constitute an exclusionary practice within Scottish theory [feminism], precipitating precisely the kind of fragmentation that the ideal purports to overcome[24].

Whyte quotes this passage to illustrate "how much those working in the related fields of gender, sexual orientation and nationalities have to learn from each other[25]". The passage is adroitly chosen, as the situation which Butler describes is almost uncannily appropriate to the construction of Scottishness as a fixed immemorial form of identity which dominated the Scottish renaissance of the early twentieth century. Whyte's "emendation" of this passage thus creates the powerful illusion of a link

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24. Christopher WHYTE, *Gendering the Nation: Studies in Modern Scottish Literature*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1995, p. xii. Whyte describes this as an "emended form" of Judith BUTLER, *Gender Trouble*, London & New York: Routledge, 1990, p. 36. He reproduces the deleted words in square brackets immediately after the words which have replaced them.

25. C. Whyte, *Gendering the Nation*, p. xiii.

between gender and nation. However the serendipity of this simi-
larity does not mean that gender theory can be applied in its entire-
ty to theories of national identity, within Scotland or without. And
while nationality is without question a "complex cultural
construction", it is not constructed in the same way as gender. It
seems questionable and not entirely helpful to suggest that the
structures and methodologies of one field may be applied whole-
sale to another.

The most extended use of this cross-disciplinary approach in
the Scottish context is found in an article by Susanne Hagemann
entitled "A Feminist Interpretation of Scottish Identity" (1994).
Hagemann, indeed, explicitly claims that she is "retaining the
structures and arguments of [...] feminism, and applying them to
the literature of region and nation in their entirety". She does not,
in actual fact, go on to fulfil this intention entirely, acknowledg-
ing later in the article that "in some fields, e.g. sexuality on the
one hand and political independence on the other, significant cor-
respondences do not come readily to mind[26]". But she takes two
feminist approaches to literature, "feminist critique" and "gyno-
criticism" — that is, images of women in literature by men, and
criticism of literature written by women — and transfers the
methodology of each approach to a regional / national approach to
Scotland. Her use of feminist critique falls at the first hurdle
because, unable to find a sufficient number of examples of de-
scriptions of Scotland from an English point of view, she is forced
to pervert her data somewhat and deals instead with texts contain-
ing descriptions of the Highlands from a Scottish Lowland per-
spective[27]. Her appropriation of "gynocriticism" is more persua-
sive and follows a similar pattern to the methods used by Whyte
and Corbett above. She takes Elaine Showalter's periodisation of
women's writing into three broad periods which Showalter names
"feminine", "feminist" and "female", and finds corresponding
phases in the history of Scottish literature. She identifies a "region-
al" or "provincial" phase, marked by "conscious Anglicisation",
corresponding to Showalter's "feminine" phase; a "nationalist"
phase — the twentieth century renaissance — corresponding to

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26. Susanne HAGEMANN, "A Feminist Interpretation of Scottish Identity",
in *Proceedings of the Scottish Workshop of the ESSE Conference, Bordeaux
1993*, Grenoble: Études écossaises, 1994, p. 79; p. 89.
27. S. Hagemann, "A Feminist Interpretation of Scottish Identity", p. 81.

the "feminist" phase; and a "national" phase, which is "self-consciously Scottish to such a degree that it feels no need to define itself in opposition to England[28]".

It is in the section on feminist critique, however, that this theorising runs seriously aground. Hagemann parallels patriarchal discourse with Anglocentric discourse and discusses the representation of both Scotland and woman as "other". Such an approach depends upon transforming "images of woman" criticism into "images of Scotland", and comes dangerously close to reproducing the metaphor of Scotland as a woman. The theory indeed requires us to compare Scotland to a woman. Hagemann uses Malcolm Chapman's list of stereotypes of the Celt in order to justify her parallel of women and Scotland. Both women and Celts have been constructed as more emotional than intellectual, as intuitive rather than rational, as closer to nature rather than culture, and concerned more with family than society[29]. Chapman's list of binary oppositions does prove that women and Celts are subject to similar mechanisms of stereotyping. However the fact that Celts have been stereotyped *as feminine* should not be used to validate further critical interpretation along the same lines. Hagemann's analysis verges on the ridiculous when she extends her categories of centre and periphery to suggest that we may consider the Highlands by connecting them to lesbianism:

> If lesbians can arguably be considered the most radical woman-identified women, the Highlands, more precisely various aspects of Gaelic culture, are very often seen as the epitome of Scottishness[30].

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28. S. Hagemann, "A Feminist Interpretation of Scottish Identity", p. 88. Showalter's periodisation is as follows: "First there is a prolonged phase of *imitation* of the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition, and *internalisation* of its standards of art and its views on social roles. Second there is a phase of protest against these standards and values, and *advocacy* of minority rights and values, including a demand for autonomy. Finally there is a phase of *self-discovery* a turning inward freed from some of the dependency of opposition, a search for identity". Elaine SHOWALTER, *A Literature of their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977; quoted by S. Hagemann, p. 86. Hagemann admits that she is functioning on a different timescale to Showalter, and finds no feminist parallel for Scotland's pre-Union stage of "non-peripheral autonomy" (p. 87).

29. Malcolm CHAPMAN, *The Gaelic Vision in Scottish Culture*, London: Croom Helm, 1978, p. 106.

30. S. Hagemann, "A Feminist Interpretation of Scottish Identity", p. 85.

Hagemann's article represents an extreme example of this trend of applying feminist theory to Scotland, but it highlights problems which are embedded in the more tentative approaches of Corbett and Whyte.

Using feminist theory to consider the nation inevitably reproduces the metaphorical equation of nation equals women. Such criticism offers very little that is valuable or positive to a female writer or reader attempting to come to terms with the contradictions inherent in her position. What it suggests is a return to the type of nation as woman metaphor in which the position of women as victims within society acts as the "index of the state of the nation". The attempt to escape from oppression through a re-visualisation of the problem creates its own problems, and ultimately succeeds only in closing down possibilities for development rather than opening them up.

What creates an interesting dichotomy is that all the critics cited above who use gender theory to read the nation in this way are doing so with the best possible intentions. Both Whyte and Hagemann have demonstrated the objectification of women inherent in the nation as woman trope in Scottish literature. Elsewhere, Whyte formulates the process whereby the representation of the nation as a woman effectively excludes women from the position of citizen, saying that "although Scottish women are not actually Scottish, at some level Scotland *is* a woman[31]". It is this very awareness of the way in which the iconography of nationalism impinges upon gender which leads critics to seek to link the two fields in a more enabling way. But although the motivation behind such theorising is progressive and intended to break down categorisations, it risks coming full circle and returning to the conservative trope of representing the nation as a woman. Criticism which parallels the position of women in society with the position of Scotland perpetuates an ideology in which both women and Scotland are constructed as victims. In seeking an alternative to the restrictive imagery of nation as woman this theorising ends up threatening to reproduce the very ideologies which it is trying to escape. The nation as woman trope proves very resistant to dismantling, proving, perhaps, a

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31. Christopher WHYTE, "Not(e) from the Margin", *Chapman*, 80 (1995), p. 31.

version of the old saying, "you can take the girl out of Scotland, but you can't take Scotland out of the girl".

Kirsten STIRLING