46-National issues and their reflections in *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil*

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Abstract

Having left an immense impact on audiences of almost all ages and social backgrounds in Scotland, *the Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil* is a theatrical show which raises national issues like Scottish identity, sense of belonging, Gaelic culture with direct references to economic and cultural policies implemented by central government in Britain. On the one hand, the play mainly gives a universal message that the working-class should gather under the roof of socialism against capitalism which has led to the economic and cultural destruction; on the other hand, it celebrates revival of Scottish culture, which has undergone a large-scale erosion and degeneration by the dominant culture, namely the English. The national issues depicted in the play have led to a growing awareness about Scottishness among Scottish audiences who started questioning their political positions in the UK. The fact that the indigenous people have been invited to re-assess the past events and make direct links with the present events such as the discovery of North Sea Oil has triggered the Scottish communities to raise a louder voice against British policies on Scotland. The play has probably had a direct impact on cultural and political relations between Scotland and Britain, for the number of independence supporters has been on the rise since the 1970s. With the devolution in 1998, Scotland re-established its parliament, adjourned with the Act of Union in 1707. Such political gains and the UK's withdrawal from the EU have enhanced Scottish people's desire to officially separate from the UK through a new referendum, which they believe, will result in success. This paper puts forward that the play could be used as a means of propaganda to increase the number of 'Yes' votes in the referendum process.

Keywords: Scottish national politics and identity, the UK, independence

The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil oyununda ulusal meseleler ve yansımaları

Öz

İskoçya'da toplumun hemen hemen her kesiminde derin etki uyandırmış olan *the Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil,* Britanya'daki merkezi hükümetin ekonomik ve kültürel politikalarına doğrudan göndermeler yaparak İskoç kimliği, aidiyet duygusu ve Gal kültürü gibi ulusal konulara temas eden bir oyundur. Oyun geneli itibariyle ekonomik ve kültürel yıkıma yol açan kapitalizme karşı işçi sınıfının sosyalizm çatısı altında toplanması gerektiğine dair bir mesaj verirken; egemen İngiliz kültürün etkisiyle, büyük çapta erozyona ve bozulmaya maruz kalmış İskoç kültürünün yeniden canlanmasını ön plana çıkarmıştır. Oyunda ele alınan kültürel meseleler İskoç seyircileri arasında İskoç olma konusunda farkındalık yaratmıştır ve İskoçların Birleşik Krallık'taki politik

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konumlarını sorgulamaya sevk etmiştir. Yerel halkı geçmişte yaşanan olayları yeniden değerlendirmeye ve Kuzey Denizi petrolünün keşfi gibi güncel meselelerle doğrudan bağlantı kurmaya teşvik eden oyun, Britanya'nın İskoçya'da uyguladığı politikalara karşı halkın daha yüksek ses çıkarmasını tetiklemiştir. Oyunun İskoçya ve Britanya arasındaki kültürel ve siyasi ilişkileri doğrudan etkilemiş olması muhtemeldir zira 1970lerden bu yana bağımsızlık taraftarlarının sayısında artış görülmektedir. 1707'deki Birleşme Yasasıyla kendi meclisini askıya alan İskoçya, 1998'de çıkan yasayla İskoç Meclisini yeniden oluşturdu. Elde edilen politik kazanımlar ve Birleşik Krallık'ın AB'den ayrılması İskoçların başarıyla sonuçlanacağını düşündükleri yeni bir referandumla Birleşik Krallık'tan resmi olarak ayrılma isteklerini artırdı. Bu çalışma, oyunun referandum sürecinde propaganda aracı olarak 'Evet' oylarını artırmak için kullanılabileceğini öne sürmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Ulusal İskoç politikaları ve kimliği, Birleşik Krallık, bağımsızlık

Introduction

Very few political plays have been as influential in Scottish drama as *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil* (hereafter *The Cheviot*), in which national issues related to Scotland and Scottishness have been overtly raised. John McGrath set up the 7:84 touring theatre company, whose name he derived from a statistics published in The Economist that eighty-four percent of the UK's wealth was in the possession of seven percent of the population, in order to draw attention to the 'wild capitalism' that had been growing and spreading larger and larger day by day. Being split into England and Scotland branches due to financial matters and theatrical concerns, 7:84 earned great success and popularity for many years reaching the mass of audiences throughout the UK. The 7:84 (Scotland) was predominantly Scottish in that the plays were mainly staged by Scottish actors for Scottish audiences, including the most well-known play *The Cheviot*. Although *The Cheviot* has generally been reviewed and studied as a play dealing with international issues, which the company produced with an aim to spread socialist ideology—based on classless society with equal rights—as an alternative to capitalism, this paper focuses on national issues with references to economic, social and cultural politics directly related to Scotland. By arousing attention and interest among Scottish people who have experienced harsh outcomes of policies carried out by the central government, the play has also been analysed with regard to its direct contributions to radicalization of indigenous people. This paper consists of three sections. The first one looks at the style and form which the playwright has adopted in emphasising general characteristics concerning Scotland. The second one elaborates on national issues as depicted in the play with their reflections in social and political milieu both in Scotland and Britain. The final part links the national issues raised in the play within contemporary context and presents some assumptions for future.

The style and form to call attention to Scottish issues.

As a political playwright with Marxist insight, McGrath was very well aware of the fact that theatre could neither remain indifferent to public concerns and the state politics nor dissociate itself from history. In his own words, the playwright views "theatre [as] the place where the life of a society is shown in public to that society, where that society's assumptions are exhibited and tested, its values are scrutinized, its myths are validated and its traumas become emblems of its reality" (McGrath, 1989: 83). With such beliefs in mind, he paid particular attention to local history of Scotland as a starting point to show the Scottish audiences how and why they had been experiencing suppression

and exploitation imposed by British Parliament through legislations with regard to education, economy and culture for about centuries. In order to explicate the impacts of these regulations on the Scottish nation, the playwright focuses on three periods; from the eighteenth century to the present day, during which these regulations have mostly been applied in disfavour of the majority of the nation. The play starts with the infamous clearances when crofters were removed from their lands to make way for the cheviot sheep; then continues with how the Scottish Highlands were turned into tourism centres and hunting fields for British aristocrats, and finally touches on the discovery of North Sea Oil, clarifying how Scotland's natural resources have been exploited by the English and international companies. Considering that the play started to be performed at any accessible locations such as village halls, dance halls, clubs, community centres and schools both in the Highlands and Lowlands, reaching large numbers of people in the early 1970s when the questions of 'Who owns Scotland? and Who makes most of its natural resources?' were hotly debated in Scotland, the issues raised in the play helped audiences to make a comparison between the past and the present, and encouraged them to contemplate about future. These policies implemented in Scotland in different courses of history become an explicit reminder of the fact that although times have changed, the problems of indigenous people have remained the same.

The playwright made use of unofficial local histories like eye-witness historical accounts, facts, figures and documentary statistics about oil in the play, which directly appealed to the minds of audiences and encouraged them to re-evaluate these historical events within contemporary context. This mediation between historical and contemporary events prompted "… the Scottish psyche that was emerging in the wider context of national self-reflection, growing confidence and increasing political nationalism" (Holdsworth, 2002: xvii). Besides, the playwright raised serious issues in a rather ironic and satirical manner through popular forms of entertainment like fiddle, ceilidh, panto, music hall, dance, songs, jokes, sketches, anecdotes and parody. The fact that the playwright chose to use the ceilidh form, unofficial histories, local music and the vernacular language peculiar to the regions where it was performed played a crucial role in recapturing cultural memory and legacy in the minds of indigenous people (Holdsworth, 2002: xvii). In line with this, the play enabled not only the Highland audiences who had seen so a few live performances due to distance but also Lowland theatre-goers to see a play that both celebrates cultural traditions and revives Scottishness in an entertaining way.

In order that the play could be efficacious on audiences, McGrath presents a list of devices and techniques—*directness*, *comedy*, *music*, *emotion*, *variety*, *effect*, *immediacy* and *localism*, each of which he makes use of throughout the play. To his way of thinking, working-class audiences like to know exactly what is being said to them; they like laughs, music in shows which appeal to their emotions and want to see different forms of entertainment like ceilidh. In addition, the subject matter is to include local characters and events; to accord with the audiences' lives, and to show its effects immediately (McGrath, 1989: 54-58). To this end he concentrated on cultural values of Scottish nation and helped them win the self-confidence by laying stress on historical and national suppression that they had undergone.

National images and politics in *the Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil*

As far as *The Cheviot* is concerned "the underlying structure of the show aims to generate an ideological identity of *local* community… in relation to a *regional* history of oppression … and then the region inevitably is defined as part of the Scottish nation" (Kershaw, 1992: 161). So it goes without saying that with these insights in mind, McGrath has chosen to depict local resistance events across

Scotland, which he states, "is itself a nation … with distinct cultural, social and political differences from England and the so-called 'United Kingdom'. It also has within it a great variety of cultures, at least two languages, and a great range of ways of expressing reality and real feelings in the theatre" (McGrath,2002:209). Using the vernacular language—either Gaelic, Scots or English— in this very anti-London play, he not only picked up local events and statistics about a region but also resorted to some changes in some songs and scenes according to where the play was going to be staged. For instance, "the dramas aimed at a Highland audience [contained] more folk melodies and Gaelic songs, those aimed at an audience in the industrial areas [would] include rock-based music" (Winkler,1990: 294-295), through which the audiences actively participated in the show while feeling mournful for the cultural and economic losses due to socio-cultural and economic policies implemented to their disadvantage.

The play includes some cultural instruments and forms of entertainment peculiar to Scotland like fiddle and ceilidh as contributors to localism. Both function as inviting elements to integrate audiences with the show. Being a central part of Scottish folk traditions, the fiddle, for instance, had immediate impact on old audiences who, without any invitation and hesitation, joined the dances and songs (McGrath, 1981: xviii). As for ceilidh, a traditional gathering which involves Gaelic music, dancing, singing and telling stories for entertainment has had both political and cultural aspects. After a Gaelic sad song is sung, for instance, M. C., acting like one of narrators, comes to the microphone and directly speaks to the audience and draws their attention to the fact that Scottish people, on the whole, had been on good terms with the British ideals as well as interests, and had served in commitment to the Queen Victoria. Duke, on the other hand, ironically asks for Scottish people who had never escaped and avoided acting for the benefit of Britain when they were needed.

> M.C. During the time of the Clearances, many of the men did not resist because they were away in the Army, defending the British way of life. By the 1850's, it slowly dawned on people that they were being used.
> *A ridiculous procession, led by bagpipes and drums comes on, followed by the 3RD DUKE OF SUTHERLAND. He addresses the audience.*
> DUKE. Good morning. I have come all this way to Golspie to speak to you, my tenants, because our country is in need (McGrath, 1981: 45)

As far as the relations between Scottish communities and Britain, what happened in the past did not change to a great extent. No matter how much they suffered, Scottish people still kept on adhering to central state politics until the late twentieth century. As in the case of the discovery of the North Sea Oil, natural resources in Scotland were not wholly used by and for Scottish people. Instead they were used in the financial interests of international companies. Texas Jim, as the representative of American oil companies among other international ones, tells how they exploit these natural resources through a song:

> TEXAS JIM: Take your oil-rigs by the score,
> Drill a little well just a little off-shore,
> Pipe that oil in from the sea,
> Pipe those profits – home to me.
> I'll bring work that's hard and good –
> A little oil costs a lot of blood.
> Your union men just cut no ice
> You work for me –I name the price.
> So leave your fishing, and leave your soil,
> Come work for me, I want your oil.
> Screw your landscape, screw your bays
> I'll screw you in a hundred way – (McGrath, 1981: 59)

In addition to international companies who have been 'screwing' and 'piping' natural resources in Scotland, narrators in the play *"step on the stage again,* [and] *speak to the audience"* (McGrath, 1981: 65). They address the audience informing them about how lands and properties in Scotland have been sold to international corporations, who will not take into account the concerns and possible economic losses of Scottish people.

> M.C.3. Listen to this. Farmers in Easter Ross have had their land bought by Cromarty Firth Development Company.
> M.C.2. Crofters in Shetland have had their land bought by Nordport.
> M.C.1. Farmers in Aberdeenshire have had their land bought by Peterhead and Fraserburgh Estates.
> M.C.3. All three companies are owned by Onshore Investments "of Edinburgh."
> M.C.2.Onshore Investments, however, was owned by Mount St. Bernard Trust of London and Preston, Lancashire.
> M.C.3. A man named John Foulerton manages this empire. But whose money is he handling? Who now owns this land in Easter Ross, Shetland and Aberdeenshire? Whose money is waiting to buy *you* out?
> *Drum roll.* (McGrath, 1981: 65)

Considering both cases, the playwright makes an analogy between the past events that resulted in cultural marginalization of Scottish people in the course of history and the present ones—distribution of oil revenues to international companies rather than Scottish communities— through ceilidh format in order to evoke their suppressed feelings and prompt them to realize the dangers awaiting them.

In line with audiences' taste and culture, ceilidh has also "culturally played a significant role in the lives of geographically isolated Scottish communities [who] … would get maximum enjoyment while watching a performance, and at the same time they would be enlightened on political, social and all other issues that concern them" (Yerebakan, 1997: 199). Serving as an expression of ideological identity and entity, the ceilidh format has been used as an effective binding instrument to bring the indigenous people together under the roof of Gaelic and Scottish culture.

Use of songs both in English and Gaelic play a key role in conveying nationalist messages to audiences. Songs do not only authentically tell the history of the Highlands; they also support the meaning of scenes. *The Cheviot* starts with the song 'These are my mountains', which "embodies a range of sentimental motifs about Scotland, its notoriously romantic mountains, exploiting the emotional sense of exile of the Scottish diaspora, or at least the wandering Scot" (Brown and Innes, 2012: 31-32). Thus, the fact that the play starts at the very beginning with this song signals that what the audiences are going to see is directly related to Scottish communities, their culture and identity.

> For these are my mountains
> And this is my glen
> The braes of my childhood
> Will see me again
> No land's ever claimed me
> Though far I did roam
> For these are my mountains
> And I'm coming home
> For fame and for fortune
> I've wandered the earth
> But now I've come back to
> The land of my birth
> I've gathered life's treasures
> But only to find
> They're less than the pleasures
> I first left behind (McGrath, 1981: 2)

Accompanied with such authentic materials as fiddle and accordion, the song becomes a triggering force to grow an emotional response and tenderness among audiences. While immediately starting to dance and joining the song that celebrates idyllic beauties of the Highlands, they lament the great changes that have taken place due to cultural and economic policies implemented by British State. Additionally, audiences are very well aware of the fact that although these mountains are literally geographical areas of Highlands, they do not belong to the Highlanders in practice. Once owned by Queen Victoria as the royal representative of the U.K. and by British aristocrats, these mountains are now under the service of either English or international corporations whose sole aim is to make more money and profit, ignoring any discomfort, economic losses and/or cultural damages they may have caused among the local people.

While songs in English mainly tell of past and present events with possible outcomes in the future to the Scottish's disadvantage in a more comic and entertaining tone, Gaelic songs, by and large, relate to past events like Jacobite rising and the Highland clearances in a rather sad and gloomy one. The reason why Gaelic songs' melodies are sung in this sorrowful tone lies not only in reminiscing about the Gaelic language, yet also in lamenting their dying culture. After a few Gaelic songs are sung, M.C. steps in and makes direct references to the acts which regulated the central educational system across the UK.

> M.C. It's no good singing in Gaelic any more—there's an awful lot of people here won't understand a word of it.
> SINGER. And why not?
> *Drum: 2 chords on guitar. Company members come on stage to answer this question.*
> M.C. 1. In the 18th century speaking the Gaelic language was forbidden by law.
> *Chords.*
> M.C.2. In the 19th century children caught speaking Gaelic in the playground were flogged.
> *Chords.*
> M.C.1. In the 20th century the children were taught to deride their own language.
> *Chords.*
> Because English is the language of the ruling class. Because English is the language of the people who own the highland and control the highlands and invest in the highlands – (McGrath, 1981: 51-52).

Having become lawful tools to privilege the use of English over the Gaelic and Scots, those regulations suppressed the local languages in a way that almost forced them to be in danger of extinction (see also, Brown, 2005: 97-98). What was once the language of public and the ruling-class in the Highlands for about a millennium—Gaelic— was to be replaced by English as the common language, for "the people who spoke Gaelic … had to learn the language of their masters" (McGrath, 1981: 52) from then on. Those owners of the lands were systematically driven to become estranged from their cultural traits that defined them. When the play was performed in the 1970s very few Scottish audiences throughout Scotland could understand Gaelic. There were some Highlanders who could understand Gaelic and joined the songs, yet those who did not know the language were implicitly encouraged to learn it. "With the exception of the very last Gaelic tune, the lyrics are not translated in the Methuen edition. Part of their function is to evoke curiosity and desire to retrieve what has been lost" (Winkler, 1990: 296). In this respect, the use of Gaelic which consolidates the traditional values pertinent to Scotland in the play functions not merely as a triggering instrument to revive the dying culture, but it is also designated to be a weapon in the cultural resistance and struggle against domineering English culture for the past two centuries.

In addition to ban on Gaelic language, "wearing the plaid was forbidden" (McGrath, 1981: 2) as well. Scottish identity was ignored as in the case of Ghillie MacPherson, who is called each time with a

different name as MacDonald, MacAlister and Mackenzie" by Lord Crask, who "never understand[s] a word she says" (McGrath, 1981: 44). This humiliating act of indifference to a Scottish peasant shows that Scottish individuals are not that important in the eyes of aristocrats and functionaries of the state. Lord Crask, who expresses his "love to dress as Highland lads in [his] tartans, kilts and plaids" (McGrath, 1981: 42), each of which is a national emblem representing Scotland, is actually a double-dealing aristocrat who seeks his mere economic interests. He collaborates with other aristocrats and does not hesitate to threaten to kill local people who may think of showing any resistance to the policies they have been conducting on behalf of Queen Victoria.

> *They become more serious. They turn their guns on the audience*
> LORD CRASK. But although we think you're quaint,
> Don't forget to pay your rent,
> And if you should want your land,
> We'll cut off your grasping hand. (McGrath, 1981: 43)

The playwright deliberately includes Lord Crask and his alikes in order to draw attention to the fact that those who have exploited natural resources of Scotland and who have done harm to its cultural identity and legacy to a great extent are not only confined to non-Scottish and international corporations. Along with aristocrats like Lord Crask, the play introduces some other historical figures like James Loch and Patrick Sellar—factor and under-factor to the Sutherland estates— who came up with the pretext that what the monarchy was planning to do in the Highlands would bring "wealth, civilisation, comfort, industry, virtue and happiness" (McGrath, 1981: 7) to the region. Even though they were themselves Gaelic-speaking Highlanders, these figures, who served in full-fledged obedience to ruling-class landowners, played active roles in cultural destruction and economic exploitation of Scotland for the sake of their own interests. Besides, some scenes in which a local minister and judge at Inverness High Court—as the representative of religion and law— use their official positions either to deter potential Scottish resistance to evictions and displacements or to acquit those who were charged with numerous crimes including murdering, using disproportionate force and exerting violence on peasants become a clear indicative of how the state apparatuses can be used as manipulative forces of the state power.

Another issue that is of paramount importance in spreading national awareness among Scottish communities is the use of local historical accounts of resistance and thereby drawing parallels between past and contemporary events. As far as historical events are concerned, the play starts with the introduction of the sheep and the Highland clearances with their social, economic and cultural outcomes in everyday life of public. Accordingly, functionaries like Sellar and Loch evicted the tenants by force and even burnt their houses. What the Dukes of Sutherland had in mind was to make more profit out of sheep rather than local people. Landowners such as Lord Crask sold their estates and fields, forcing local people to make a living on fishery, about which they had almost no idea. Under such harsh circumstances, a good number of indigenous people had almost no room to survive and, as a matter of fact, were driven to emigrate to overseas, leaving their lands to be used in the interests of capitalists. The play also presents a Sturdy Highlander, who draws direct similarities between the Scottish and other minorities like Red Indians, Australian aborigines and indigenous African communities so as to point out possible fate of Scotland and its nation.

> STURDY HIGHLANDER (*out of character*). But we came, more and more of us, from all over Europe, in the interests of a trade war between two lots of shareholders, and in time, the Red Indians were reduced to the same state as our fathers after Culloden—defeated, hunted, treated like scum of the earth, their culture polluted and torn out with slow deliberation and their land no longer their own. (McGrath, 1981: 43)

Whereas a portrait of a pessimistic atmosphere is drawn with references to international examples, the play also includes those who resisted to these maltreatments exerted by the state power and its subsidiaries, which are projected through "READERS from the Company, who stand in their places and read from books" (McGrath, 1981: 11). Among the local resisters are those who preferred dying in their homeland to emigrating to other countries, who burnt the eviction orders, who fought against police officers in some regions and towns as Sutherland, Argyll, Ross-shire, Skye, the Island of Rum and Inverness-shire among others. On the one hand, the juxtaposed ideas in the play are conveyed in order to implicitly warn audiences against the imminent threat that may result in disappearance of Scottishness; unless Scottish communities unite immediately and raise their voice against the capitalist policies of central government, they may experience the same fate as Red Indians, aborigines and African communities whose cultures were driven to extinct. On the other hand, acts of resistance help to keep hopes alive for future that these local people still have the opportunity to survive their traditions and keep them alive if they get together. Thus a political activism should be started in order to prevent the Scottish culture from a complete obliteration or any changes in the direction of the dominant culture (McGrath, 2003: 156). Otherwise, having already commenced to lose part of its influence on young generations, Scottish culture may gradually confront with vanishing its authenticity under English or other cultures.

National issues within contemporary context

The show has presented a theatrical platform for the Scottish nation to express their anger at the English policies and paved the way for more discussions about the future of Scotland. Before reaching thousands of audiences around Scotland, the play was first performed at a conference in Edinburgh among whom were people from almost all segments of society such as politicians, union men, writers, social and community workers, academics and ordinary people to discuss 'What kind of Scotland?' they wanted in the future. The playwright himself states the response they received after the performance as below:

> The audience at the end rose to its feet and cheered, then poured out advice, corrections, support, suggestions of great practical value, facts, figures, books, sources, and above all enthusiasm. Not because we'd been 'good' or 'clever'—but because what we were struggling to say was what they, and masses of people in Scotland wanted said (McGrath, 1981: V).

Happy to hear the Gaelic songs accompanied with fiddle and the very issues concerning Scotland and Scottish nation being raised, the Scottish intelligentsia as well as ordinary people were quite contented to see a cultural experience and political activism on the stage. By means of this show, the social and cultural pains that Scottish communities had been suffering since the clearances became one of the central items on the agenda for the Scottish people and impelled them to reassess the relations between Scotland and England in the 1970s.

The systematic oppression on local people and their resistance to such events have been used to refresh the minds of Scottish audiences about their past and to warn them against another forthcoming threat; the discovery of the North Sea Oil and its benefits to be shared among English and international oil companies. Scotland has been granted the power to determine its internal policies; legal, educational and religious ones since the Act of Union in 1707, yet still it could not withstand being culturally destroyed due to economic and educational policies adopted by the British Parliament. In theory, Scotland has been free in national politics, in practice, part of Scottish cultural characteristics—Scottishness—have been directly or indirectly diverted and re-shaped by the dominant

culture, though. Considering that the play was staged at a time when political and cultural inquiries were made about national belonging and identity as well as self-governing, the ideas that "the people must own … [and] control the land [and that] … must control what goes in it, and what gets taken out of it" (McGrath, 1981: 65) rather than international oil companies were warmly welcomed by the Scottish audiences. The impact of the show was so prodigious that it could have made direct contributions to the elections held in 1974, which won success for Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP) (see more, DiCenzo, 1996: 161) with *It's Scotland's Oil* campaign according to which they would be in commitment to make most of the oil revenues and other natural resources in the interests of Scotland. Along with political influence on public, the show "helped to create pressure within the Labour Party from all over Scotland for some measures to reform estate-ownership and land use in the Highlands" (McGrath, 1989: 71), which directly made cultural and social impacts in Scotland.

Besides its short-term impact, the show had its fruits in the long run, too. Increasing political support for SNP in the 1970s and 1980s motivated the party to speak out the inclinations of more political rights for a more independent Scotland. The quest for full-independence resulted in devolution in 1998; the re-establishment of Scottish Parliament, which enabled Scotland to have more legislative powers in domestic relations. The gradual progress in gaining more freedom with respect to the state affairs between Scotland and England added more fuel to the belief that

> Scotland-which is and has always been a nation—there's no reason for that federation to be dominated by, or even related to the United Kingdom, or England. Scotland should be able to relate to England as part of a federated Europe, but still have the means to control certain areas of its own life and development (McGrath, 2003:156).

Conclusion

Not having lost its political relevance to contemporary Scotland, the play concurrently started to be staged in parts of Scotland after the failed independence referendum in 2014 for supporters[2]. Since the Brexit referendum which ended in the UK's decision to withdraw from the European Union, there has been a major increase in the number of people who maintain that it is high time for Scotland to determine its own future. Some of them even suggest that after separation from the UK, they should remain in the EU and grow more economic ties and affairs with the EU members. As of 2020, Scotland is officially still part of the UK, yet the number of full-independence supporters is increasing day by day. The play which puts special emphasis on ideological identity and sense of belonging as well as traits of Scottishness serves as a theatrical instrument to radicalize the Scottish communities and stimulates them to raise louder voice against the UK, whose policies have been practised to the detriment of Scotland. In addition, the fact that *The Cheviot* is in the repertoire of the National Theatre of Scotland makes it convenient to be used as a propagandist means in the referendum campaign.

Having activated memories and feelings about discrepancies, injustices and degenerations in cultural identity along with the sense of belonging, the play has planted seeds of hope for Scottish people that there is still a chance to reclaim their cultural loss and reanimate their traditions. It has also enhanced the faith that Scotland as a self-sufficient state could seek its national interests and manage its own future regardless of the UK.

[2] Dundee Rep Theatre staged the play in Dundee in 2015. They went on to perform at other theatrical venues such as Royal Lyceum Theatre in Edinburgh, His Majesty's Theatre in Aberdeen, Eden Court Theatre in Inverness and the Citizens Theatre in Glasgow in 2016. The play took place in the repertoire of National Theatre of Scotland in 2019 and has been performed since then.

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