

# Exploring Sir Walter Scott's Notions of Scottish Identity in the Context of Brexit and Scottish Independence

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## Abstract

Numerous studies have investigated the concept of the nation and Scottish identity in the prose fiction of Sir Walter Scott. These studies have traditionally highlighted Scott's role in reshaping public perceptions of the Scottish Highlands, their culture, and the suffering of the Highlanders under the British Empire, through his detailed knowledge of Scottish history and culture. However, it is essential to reconsider this issue in light of recent historical and political developments in Scotland after Brexit and the calls for independence by various Scottish thinkers, writers, and political leaders, aiming to join the European Union. This study revisits Scott's concept of the Scottish nation and identity in his two texts, "The Highland Widow" and "The Two Drovers". The findings suggest that the nationalist sentiment in Scott's writings is relevant to the social and political changes occurring in Scotland, Europe, and globally. It can be argued that much of the contemporary discourse on Scottish independence can be traced back to Scott's works, indicating a recurring historical pattern. Scott expressed concern for the loss of Scottish national identity and the right of self-determination. His texts vividly demonstrate the interconnection of past and present events, embodying both historical and contemporary perspectives.

**Keywords:** Brexit, independence, Highlanders, identity, nation, Scotland, Sir William Scott

## 1. Introduction

The case of the British nation is unique in the sense that it was formed of several nations with significant differences between them. The British nation comprises several major ethnic groups, namely the Welsh, the Scots, and the Irish. Scotland was united with England after the Act of Union was passed in the British parliament in 1707. After this unification, there was a feeling that England was richer, and Scotland was poorer, especially the highlands of Scotland (Brown, 2008; Bucholz & Key, 2019). There was a division in Scotland between the lowlands and the highlands, which were separated by language and economic differences (Withers, 2015). Although they are part of the same nation, creating a cohesive national identity in such a situation poses many challenges.

Thus, according to Linda Colley (1992), in the eighteenth century, a sense of British national identity was forged, and the manner in which it was forged has shaped the nature of nationhood and belonging in Britain ever since. After 1707, they defined themselves as a single people, as a reaction to others beyond their shores. Despite this new feeling of Britishness in the eighteenth century, the Welsh, Scottish, and English remain in many ways distinct peoples in cultural terms. Colley (1992, p. 12) states that, "The act of union was a piece of cultural and political imperialism foisted on the helpless Scots by their stronger southern neighbour." This act of unification only led to the dominance of English culture over the Scottish people.

Due to the language differences within the British islands, literature has played a significant role in presenting the culture and struggles of those in the colonized nations in the union (Bell, 2004). Scottish literature has played a significant role in shaping Scottish national identity and reinforcing the idea of Scotland as a distinct cultural entity. The work of Scottish writers such as Sir Walter Scott and Robert Burns, who celebrated Scotland's natural beauty, folklore, and traditions, helped to create a sense of shared Scottish identity. In particular, Scottish culture and the suffering of the Highlanders after the Act of Union in 1707 were preserved and presented in the works of Sir Walter Scott, particularly his two short stories "The Highland Widow" and "The Two Drovers" first published in his collection of short stories titled *Chronicles of the Canongate* in 1827.

According to Susan Oliver (2021), Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) was one of the first writers to emphasize the relationship between characters and their immediate environment and developed it with great care. In his works, he blended realism, local colour, and romance, taking great care to investigate the nature of the time periods he depicted, leaving a significant impact on the literature of the nineteenth century. Since his childhood, he had been fond of stories and the oral heritage of Scotland, narrated by adults in his family, which provided him with ample historical material that he utilized in his later writings (Robertson, 2012).

Thanks to Walter Scott, the historical novel developed as a distinct genre. Scott was passionate about exploring the corners of history, as reflected in the Waverley novels published anonymously between 1814 and 1832. According to Overton (1986), Scott's works reflect his knowledge of Scottish history and culture, embodying the discourse, rhetoric, and traditions of his native country and representing various levels of Scottish society. In many ways, Crawford (2009) argues, Scott is the pioneer and true voice of the Scottish nationalist discourse, building the Scottish nation and developing a sense of Scottish nationalism. In this regard, Brown (2016) stresses that Scott's prose fiction holds not only artistic value but also serves as a valuable historical document, offering profound insights into the beliefs, practices, and social structures of the Scottish people and their surroundings. Consequently, his works offer a unique opportunity to comprehend the cultural and historical backdrop in which they were created, granting us a glimpse into the lives of both the authors and readers of that era.

In light of this argument, this paper explores the nationalist discourse in Sir Walter Scott's two texts, "The Highland Widow" and "The Two Drovers", in light of the historical changes taking place in Scotland since the Brexit referendum. Brexit has opened the gate for extensive debates on the national identity of Scotland, leading many Scots to ask whether they are British or European. In this regard, the paper re-considers the concept of the nation in Scott's texts, considering the impact of historical changes on Scottish national identity. The premise is that the Scottish identity as expressed and represented in the Scottish Literature in general and the works of Sir Walter Scott, has had significant political implications, particularly in the context of Brexit and Scottish independence from the United Kingdom.

In the Brexit referendum in 2016, Scotland voted overwhelmingly to remain in the EU, with many Scots viewing the vote as a rejection of their European identity and an attack on Scottish autonomy. In the years since the Brexit referendum, the Scottish government has called for a second independence referendum, citing the desire of the Scottish people to protect their European identity and maintain their autonomy. Thus, the issue of Scottish independence remains deeply divisive, with many Scots concerned about the economic implications of leaving the UK and the potential impact on trade and international relations. Despite these concerns, the Scottish government has continued to push for a second independence referendum, arguing that it is necessary to protect Scotland's national identity and ensure its place in the world.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

The concepts of nation, nationality, and nationalism are complex and challenging to define. Anderson (1991, p. 25) provides a definition of a nation in his book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, stating that "a nation is an imagined political community and is imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign." He uses the word "imagined" because it is impossible for a member of a certain nation to know all their fellow members and their political perspectives. Politics plays a significant role in creating nations.

Watson (1977, p. 1), on the other hand, defines the nation differently: "A nation is a community of people whose members are bound together by a sense of solidarity, a common culture, and a national consciousness." For Watson, the sense of unity that binds the nation together is what defines it. However, this definition is not always accurate, as in many cases, a nation consists of different cultures and ethnic groups. The most powerful group may oppress so-called "minorities" and control the supposed united nation. Therefore, the definition of a nation should be understood in a nuanced and contextual manner.

Anderson (2018) argues that nationhood is shaped by certain political ideologies. In the past, societies were organized vertically, with God at the top, followed by a monarch, then nobles, the gentry, and finally the peasantry. However, modern society is organized horizontally, where each member of society is equal. When we take this horizontal view of society, borders become important, and as a result, these lands create a bond between the people living in those designated spaces and give meaning to the nation as a unit. From a vertical perspective, lands are not very important, and loyalty is paid to the ruler, not to the land in which people live. This is why the sense of a nation is stronger now than in the past, as people were once loyal to their political authorities but now tend to feel a connection to the land they inhabit. As a result, the monarchy changes, becoming an expression of nationhood.

In one sense, a border separates two things that are different, which can weaken a sense of similarity and create tensions. Ideas of loyalty to a nation are also questionable, as many nations were formed due to economic and political reasons, often ignoring the fact that they contain different cultures and races (Anderson, 2013). It is important to differentiate between states and nations, as Watson (1977, p. 1) notes that different states can exist without a nation or within several nations. He defines the state as "a legal and political organization with the power to require obedience and loyalty from its citizens".

The concept of nation has always been confusing for many Scots due to the unique history and identity of Scotland. Scotland has a distinct culture, language, and history that sets it apart from the rest of the United Kingdom. The Scottish people have a strong sense of national pride and identity, which has often conflicted with their status as part of the UK.

For many Scots, Miller (2013) argues, the idea of being part of a larger nation has often been at odds with their sense of national identity. He adds that this tension has been exacerbated by historical events such as the Jacobite uprisings, which sought to restore the Scottish Stuart monarchy, and the Act of Union in 1707, which merged the Scottish and English parliaments.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, according to Collins (2016), the tension between Scottish national identity and their status as part of the UK continued to be a central issue. The Act of Union in 1707, which merged the Scottish and English parliaments, had significant economic implications for Scotland, as it opened up trade opportunities with England and the British colonies. However, the Act of Union also led to a loss of Scottish autonomy and the merging of Scottish institutions with those of England. This loss of autonomy fuelled resentment among many Scots, leading to a series of Jacobite uprisings in the 18th century that sought to restore the Scottish Stuart monarchy.

Despite the unsuccessful Jacobite uprisings, Scottish national identity thrived throughout the 18th and 19th centuries. According to Brown (2006), the Scottish Enlightenment played a pivotal role in shaping this identity, characterized by its emphasis on reason, science, and individual liberty. Despite Scotland's continued inclusion within England and its subjection to British rule, the sense of Scottish national identity grew stronger. This was further reinforced by the emergence of Scottish romanticism, a cultural movement that celebrated Scotland's natural beauty, folklore, and traditions. This movement, as a reflection of Scottish society and culture, encompassed the history, traditions, beliefs, and struggles of the Scottish people.

The rich and diverse literary heritage of Scotland encompasses a wide range of genres, from epic poetry to contemporary fiction. This literature has been influenced by various factors, including Scottish history, language, religion, and politics. It reflects the diversity of the Scottish landscape and its people. Renowned writers such as Robert Burns and Sir Walter Scott, and many others have contributed to the literary tapestry of Scotland.

Davidson (2000) indicates that the work of writers such as Sir Walter Scott and Robert Burns played a significant role in promoting Scottish national identity and reinforcing the idea of Scotland as a distinct cultural entity. Pittock (2011) agrees that Scotland has a long and distinguished literary tradition that has explored the theme of identity in a variety of ways. In particular, Scottish novelists and prose writers have been concerned with the question of what it means to be Scottish, exploring the complex and often contradictory dimensions of Scottish identity.

One of the most persistent themes in Scottish literature is the relationship between Scotland and England. For centuries, Sassi (2005) argues, Scotland has been seen as the "other" in relation to England, and this sense of difference has been a key factor in the construction of Scottish identity. Buchan et al. (2014) adds that Scottish writers have explored this theme in a variety of ways, depicting the historical conflicts between the two countries, as well as the cultural and social differences that have emerged over time. In novels such as Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley* and James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, the tension between Scottish and English identity is a central concern.

Another important theme in Scottish literature is the relationship between individual and collective identity. For instance, Scottish writers have often depicted characters who struggle to reconcile their own sense of self with the demands of their community or nation. In the novel *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, Muriel Spark explores the tension between individual freedom and the constraints of tradition and social expectation, depicting a character who is torn between her own desires and the demands of the collective (Brown, 2006). Similarly, in Irvine Welsh's *Trainspotting*, the characters struggle to reconcile their own sense of identity with the pressures of poverty, addiction, and social marginalization (Schoene, 2010).

A third theme in Scottish literature is the relationship between identity and history. Scotland has a rich and complex history, and Scottish writers have often explored the ways in which historical narratives shape individual and collective identity. In the novel *The Heart of Midlothian*, Sir Walter Scott depicts a community struggling to come to terms with a traumatic event from the past, showing how historical memory can shape the present (Rigney, 2012). Similarly, in James Robertson's *And the Land Lay Still*, the characters grapple with the legacy of Scotland's past, reflecting on the role of history in shaping contemporary identity (Robertson, 2010).

Finally, Scottish literature has often explored the relationship between identity and place. Scotland has a distinctive landscape, and Scottish writers have often used the natural world to explore issues of identity. In Nan Shepherd's *The Living Mountain*, for example, the author reflects on her own identity in relation to the Scottish landscape, showing how the natural world can shape our sense of self (Shepherd, 2008). Similarly, in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Kidnapped*, the landscape of the Scottish Highlands is a central part of the novel's identity, reflecting the importance of place in shaping our sense of who we are (Buckton, 2007).

The premise is that Scottish novelists and prose writers have made important contributions to the exploration of identity in literature. Whether through depictions of history, landscape, or the tension between individual and collective identity, Scottish writers have provided valuable insights into the complex and multifaceted nature of Scottish identity.

Despite the extensive body of literature exploring the concept of national identity in Scottish literature, with particular emphasis on Sir Walter Scott's novels, the issue has become increasingly prominent in recent years. This can be attributed to the ongoing tension between Scottish national identity and their position as part of the United Kingdom. It is evident that this dynamic will continue to be a central concern in Scottish politics, literature, and society for generations to come. In light of this argument, this paper aims to reconsider the exploration of Sir Walter Scott's ideas regarding Scottish identity within the context of Brexit and Scottish independence.

### 3. The Highland Widow

In "The Highland Widow", Scott (1896) reflects on the idea of nationhood and the consequences for individuals when politicians decide to unite two nations. This tragic story, which represents the suffering of the Highlanders in Scotland after the union with England, is presented through the relationship of Young Hamish and his mother. This short story plays a significant role in preserving the culture and stories of suffering of the Highlanders. The timeline of the story is in the eighteenth century, after the Highlander rebellion as a reaction to the union. At that time, well-educated people went to the Highlands because of an interest in exploring mountainous regions. Through the persona of a tourist traveller, the story is narrated, and Scottish history is preserved, narrowing it down to a narrative for travellers. It is interesting how Scott tells the story through the perspective of a tourist traveller. Donald, the tourist guide, explains the status of the old woman to the tourist, saying that she is not mad but that "she would be happier than she is; though when she thinks on what she has done, and caused to be done,

rather than yield up a hair-breadth of her ain wicked will, it is not likely she can be very well settled." It is significant that the traveller chooses a tourist guide who is well acquainted with the history of the Highlands and the life of its people. So, without the tourist guide telling us the story of this widow, how would we know about the story of this family? In fact, without that, the whole story of this family would have disappeared.

According to Lamont (2003), this representation of the remains of earlier societies after defeat to tourists is significant, and the landscape previously described as dangerous is now presented as sublime and beautiful. Thus, Scottish history is narrowed down to a narrative for the travellers, ultimately preserving it from being forgotten. She adds that "The Highland Widow" is a significant work of Scottish literature that reflects on the consequences of political decisions on individuals and their culture. It is a reflection of the struggle of the Highlanders after the union with England and the preservation of their culture and stories of suffering. The representation of Scottish history to tourists through literature ultimately preserves it from being forgotten, and Scottish literature as a whole reflects the rich and diverse heritage of Scottish society and culture.

"The Highland Widow" highlights the challenges that arise when two nations with different economic statuses are united. The story portrays the suffering of the Highlanders in Scotland after the union with England through the tragic story of Young Hamish and his mother. The Highlanders were living a basic life before the union, but after comparing their lifestyle to that of the English, they realized their poverty and the need for money. This forced some Highlanders, like Young Hamish, to join the army or drive their cattle to London to sell. While some joined the army out of economic pressure, the British government also encouraged them to do so to end the rebellion in the Highlands after the Act of Union.

In this regard, Colley (1992) argues that patriotism was not the only reason why Scots joined the British army. For the Highlanders, it was a good opportunity to gain money to improve their lives, which was not needed before the union. In the story, Hamish sends his friend to tell his mother that he joined the army and sends her a small purse containing four or five dollars. It is evident from this that Hamish's main motive for joining the army was to improve their financial situation.

Lamont (2003, p. xv) notes that "The Highland Widow" is a tragic story of human will, with Elspat, the mother, defending the values of an older generation against her son's desire for a new life. Elspat still clings to the past and wants her son to follow in his father's footsteps as a freebooter, refusing to accept that the world around her has changed. When her son decides to return to the army, she gives him a strong drink to make him sleep, hoping to prevent him from leaving and avoiding the flogging that he would face for being late. This highlights the generational conflict and the struggle between tradition and progress.

In the story, there is a clear generational conflict between the older and younger generations, with the older generation unable to adapt to the new social and political changes, unlike the younger generation. The older generation is often nostalgic, while the younger generation is more forward-looking. According to Cooney (1974), "The Highland Widow" is not only a study of individual psychology, particularly excessive mother love, but also an exploration of the impact of social and political change on those whose ways of life become obsolete. It highlights the generational conflicts that arise during times of social and political change. Cooney's interpretation of the story as a conflict between old and new is supported by the characterizations of Elspat and young Hamish. Elspat represents the old way of life, unwilling to adapt to the changes brought about by the Union, while young Hamish is more forward-looking and realizes that the old ways are no longer feasible. However, Hamish is torn between his loyalty to his mother and his duty to the army, and he finds himself isolated and without support as he navigates this difficult situation.

In many ways, "The Highland Widow" illustrates the difficulties of unifying different groups into one nation and the importance of understanding and respecting cultural differences. According to Lincoln (2007), the story highlights how the poor people were the victims of unification, as their poverty increased, and having a sense of loyalty to their nation became ever more difficult. The union did not consider the economic and cultural differences between the two nations and only benefited the English, leaving the Highlanders to suffer. McNeil (2007) adds that "The Highland Widow" represents the suffering of the Highlanders and preserves some of their cultures and stories of suffering. It reflects the difficulties faced by the Highlanders during this period of unification. The story highlights the suffering of the Highlanders and the loss of their culture and traditions. The story also shows how unification can lead to the suppression of the weaker group's culture and way of life.

In this text, Scott implies that the formation of the union between Scotland and England was not an easy process, as it involved the unification of two different cultures, religions, languages, and ways of life. For Scott, the issue of language was a significant cultural difference that made unification difficult. The Highlander's native language was Gaelic, while the English language was English. There were language barriers that caused communication problems and made it difficult to integrate the two cultures. In "The Highland Widow", Scott portrays the language barrier when Elspat, who speaks only Gaelic, cannot communicate with the English tourist. The English tourist must rely on a Highland guide to interpret for him. The language barrier was one of the reasons why the government made efforts to suppress the Gaelic language, which was seen as a hindrance to unification. This suppression of Gaelic, along with other cultural aspects of the Highlanders, led to a decline in Highland culture and traditions.

Another cultural difference was the Highlanders' traditional way of life, which was different from that of the English. Highlanders lived in clans, which were led by chiefs who had their own rules and regulations. According to Weiner (2013), the clan system was based on loyalty, and the chief's authority was respected and followed. The clan system was also based on land ownership, which was communal rather than individualistic. This way of life was seen as a threat to English laws, which were based on individual rights and land ownership. As a result,

the government made efforts to suppress the clan system and break up the communal land ownership. The Highland Clearances, which began in the late 18th century, were a result of this effort. The Clearances forced Highlanders off their communal land and replaced them with sheep farming, which was seen as more profitable by the English landlords.

"The Highland Widow" portrays a distinct cultural contrast concerning the Highlanders' values, particularly their strong emphasis on self-respect and the reverence they hold for their bodies, a perspective that was not acknowledged or understood by the English counterparts. This is a common issue in situations where a dominant group does not acknowledge or respect the cultural uniqueness of another group. In the story, young Hamish expresses horror about army floggings and how this punishment is applied to all soldiers who come late. This punishment is especially harsh for the Highlanders, who have a strong sense of dignity and honour. Hamish describes the punishment as "a shame and disgrace to men" and wonders how the English could treat their own people in such a way. This illustrates the cultural gap between the two nations and how it creates difficulties when trying to unite them. The English cannot understand the Highlanders' cultural values and traditions, and this leads to conflict and resentment.

"I cannot, mother—I cannot," said Hamish, mournfully. "I saw them punish a Sassenach for deserting, as they called it, his banner. He was scourged—like a hound who has offended an imperious master. I was sick at the sight—I own it. But the punishment of dogs is only for men worse than dogs, who know not how to keep their faith.

Furthermore, the Highlanders' respect for the body is also demonstrated when Elspat refuses to allow her husband's body to be taken away for dissection. In the eyes of the Highlanders, dissection is a sacrilegious act that violates the dignity of the dead. This belief is not shared by the English, who use bodies for scientific research and medical training. The clash of cultural values is evident in this scene, and it highlights the challenges of creating a unified nation where different cultures are forced to coexist. The story shows how difficult it is to reconcile these differences and how the weaker group can lose some of its cultural identity in the process.

Young Hamish's horror at army floggings and his view of men who don't keep their word as worse than dogs reflects the Highlanders' sense of self-respect and respect for the body, which was not always recognized by the English. While the Highlanders were allowed to wear tartan in the army as a link to their culture, the English government did not always fully understand or respect the deeper cultural values and traditions of the Highlanders.

Despite these difficulties, Scott insists that unity between weaker and stronger groups can lead to both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, being part of a strong nation can provide economic benefits and job opportunities that may not be available otherwise. This is particularly important for the younger generation, but also for the older one. However, the downside of this unity is the potential loss of the culture of the previous nation, in this case, the Highlands' culture. Elspat longs for her husband's lifestyle, which is impossible for her son to follow, as she says, "'Your father's foot,' she answered, 'was free as the wind on the heath—it was in vain to say to him where goest thou, as to ask that viewless driver of the clouds, wherefore blowest thou?'" This loss of cultural identity can be particularly painful for those who are nostalgic for the past, like Elspat, and may lead to a sense of cultural isolation for younger generations who may feel torn between loyalty to their ethnic group and loyalty to the larger nation. It is a delicate balance, and one that requires careful consideration.

Scott, through this story, conveys a message to the English: the formation of a successful union necessitates a comprehensive understanding and appreciation of the various ethnic groups and minorities involved, along with their cultural values and traditions. Without such understanding and respect, the cultures and identities of the weaker groups become vulnerable to being disregarded or lost, resulting in tensions and conflicts within the union. In this context, the issue of loyalty becomes a real problem, as it is challenging to determine where one's loyalty should lie - either to their original ethnic group or to the larger, newly forged nation.

Young Hamish's loyalty to his British nationality comes at the expense of his loyalty to his ethnic group and its culture. This is why forging a nation through the exercise of power without recognizing cultural and economic differences and attempting to find solutions to them means that a new nation has not truly been created. Hamish is torn between two forces, his loyalty to his mother and his indigenous culture and his loyalty to the British army. He tells his mother, "Mother, give me my bonnet – I must kiss you and be gone – yet it seems as if my feet are nailed to the floor," illustrating his inner turmoil. Hamish's dilemma is that he can avoid one form of desertion only by committing the other, and he struggles to reconcile his conflicting loyalties. The story thus highlights the challenges of cultural isolation, particularly for those caught between different social and cultural patterns. Without guidance or support, individuals may find themselves torn apart by conflicting loyalties, ultimately leading to their destruction.

#### **4. The Two Drovers**

As in "The Highland Widow", economic problems are also highlighted in "The Two Drovers". Scott (1896) portrays the problems and advantages of unity highlighting the complexities and challenges involved in achieving harmony and understanding between different cultures, particularly in the context of historical conflicts and societal hierarchies. Scott insists that having a poorer group is always an obstacle to unity, as a fair distribution of wealth is necessary for it to be achieved.

The main character, Robert, is droving cattle to England in order to earn money to improve his life, despite the dangerous and difficult nature of the job. He is described as the best drover among the highlanders, "and was entrusted by the best farmers in the Highlands, in preference to any other drover in the district". Robert's character in "The Two Drovers" shows that the younger generation is more willing to adapt to new situations and accept the outcomes of a changing society. This is evident in his friendship with Henry Wakefield, an English drover, with whom he sets out to drive cattle together. Scott describes Henry as "well known at every northern market," implying that he is

experienced in the business and is respected among drovers. Robert's ability to form a friendship with someone from a different culture and background demonstrates his openness and willingness to accept the new era of unity and cultural integration.

Furthermore, Robert's experience as a drover highlights the economic benefits that can be achieved through unity. Despite the dangerous and difficult nature of the job, Robert chooses to driving cattle to England in order to earn money to improve his life. This shows that being part of a larger nation can bring economic advantages and job opportunities that were not available before, as well as the potential for cultural exchange and friendships.

Overall, while unity between weaker and stronger groups can generate problems, it can also have advantages, particularly for the younger generation who may be more willing to adapt to new situations and form friendships with those from different backgrounds. However, a fair distribution of wealth and responsible authorities are necessary for unity to be successful.

In "The Two Drovers", the different cultures are clearly juxtaposed through the different ways of quarrelling between Robert and Henry. The scene where the two young men quarrel is an example of the weakness of the unity achieved by the politicians, as even the slightest breakdown in friendship between the English and the Highlander leads to a fight. This fight occurs when both Robert and Henry choose the same piece of land for their cattle by mistake. Henry and his English friends start a quarrel that ends with Robert suggesting they have a boxing match to determine who keeps this space: "I'll be d-d if I hurt thee - I'll put on the gloves gin thou like. Come stand forward like a man". This boxing match is considered a part of manhood by Henry, while Robert resents the whole idea because of his respect for the human body. He says to Henry, "To be beaten like a dog," and Robin says; "Is there any reason in that?" Thus, boxing is considered inhuman to Robert and a way to express manhood to Henry.

A cultural distinction also arises when Robert dismisses the idea of settling the dispute through boxing and instead proposes a duel, demonstrating his desire to resolve the conflict in a more honorable and dignified manner. He says, "I would fight with broadswords, and sink point on the first blood drawn - like gentlemen." However, Robert is unaware that dueling had been outlawed in England for a long time, as civilized society solves disputes through the legal system, which the Highlanders find unfamiliar. In fact, Cooney (1978) argues that our freedom is significantly constrained by culturally-determined norms.

In Highland culture, prophecy and superstition were an important part of life. Many believed in the power of seers and soothsayers who could predict the future and provide guidance. In "The Two Drovers", Robert's aunt embodies this belief and warns him of the consequences of shedding English blood. She believes that the blood of the Gael is superior to that of the English, and therefore, the killing of an Englishman is a grave sin that will bring about tragic consequences.

Robert, who is deeply rooted in his cultural traditions, takes his aunt's prophecy seriously and seeks to prevent it from coming true. He gives his dagger to his English companion, Henry, hoping to avoid shedding any more blood. This act shows Robert's loyalty to his culture and his desire to uphold its values, even in a time of change and uncertainty.

Moreover, Robert's willingness to listen to his aunt's prophecy also highlights the importance of family and community in Highland culture. The wisdom of elders and the advice of family members are highly valued, and their guidance is often heeded. Robert's aunt represents the wisdom and experience of the older generation, and her prophecy serves as a reminder of the importance of tradition and heritage in the face of new challenges.

Robert's pride and self-respect are indeed significant factors in his character, and they are closely tied to his identity as a Highlander. He comes from a society with a strong sense of honour and a history of clan loyalty, and his sense of self-worth is linked to his position within that society.

However, his pride and self-respect also put him in a difficult position when he feels that his honour has been challenged. As a Highlander, he is expected to defend his honour and seek revenge when he feels that he has been wronged. This is a deeply ingrained cultural norm that is difficult for him to ignore.

In the case of his conflict with Henry, Robert feels that his honour has been challenged when Henry refuses to fight a duel and instead suggests that they settle their dispute with a boxing match. To Robert, this is an insult, and he feels that he must take action to defend his honour.

While Robert's actions are certainly influenced by his cultural background, they are also a reflection of his personal sense of pride and self-worth. He is unwilling to be humiliated or to let an insult go unanswered, and this ultimately leads him to take drastic action.

The conflict between the codes of the English and the Highlanders is a central theme in "The Two Drovers". The English judge, who represents the English legal system, is not able to understand the cultural context of Robert's actions, as he is not familiar with the Highlanders' way of life, customs and traditions. His ignorance and lack of understanding lead to a harsh and unjust sentence, which results in Robert's death.

On the other hand, Robert's actions are driven by his strong sense of self-respect and pride, which are deeply rooted in the Highlander culture. For him, the insult he received from Henry was a direct attack on his dignity, and he felt he had to take revenge to restore his honour. However, the English legal system does not take into account these cultural values, and instead judges Robert based on its own codes of conduct.

Thus, the tragedy of this story is not only the death of Robert, but also the clash between two different cultures and their codes of conduct.

The story highlights the importance of understanding and respecting cultural differences and the danger of judging others based on one's own cultural values and beliefs.

Indeed, the conflict between the Highlanders and the English in "The Two Drovers" reflects a larger problem of cultural domination and assimilation. The English judge represents the dominant culture and legal system, which is seen as superior and just, while the Highlander culture is seen as primitive and backward. The death sentence imposed on Robert is a warning to other Highlanders to abandon their traditional cultural practices and adopt the dominant culture to avoid similar consequences.

This theme is not unique to "The Two Drovers", but is a common motif in literature and history. The submersion of one culture into another supported by force and the assumption of rightness has been the fate of many small societies in their relation to imperial power. The loss of culture and identity is a tragedy that has been repeated throughout history, from the colonization of the Americas and Africa, to the suppression of indigenous cultures around the world.

Therefore, "The Two Drovers" can be seen as a cautionary tale about the dangers of cultural domination and the importance of preserving one's cultural identity. The tragic ending of Robert's story serves as a warning to other Highlanders to resist the pressure to assimilate and maintain their cultural heritage, despite the challenges and risks involved.

The underlying hatred between the Highlanders and the English in "The Two Drovers" highlights the difficulty of achieving true unity and harmony between different cultures. This hatred is a result of long-standing historical conflicts, differences in language and culture, and societal perceptions of each other. It is evident that the English view the Highlanders as inferior and savage, while the Highlanders resent the English for their interference in their way of life.

However, there are also some advantages to unity that Scott portrays in the story. For instance, trade and commerce between the two cultures could bring about economic benefits to the Highlanders, as they could sell their cattle to the English and benefit from the larger market. Moreover, the Highlanders could learn from the English and adopt some of their more advanced agricultural practices, which could improve their way of life.

Nonetheless, Scott suggests that these advantages are limited and overshadowed by the deep-seated animosity between the two cultures. The loss of cultural identity and pride that results from conforming to the dominant culture is also a major issue that Scott explores. Robert's fate illustrates the tragic consequences that can result from trying to hold on to one's culture and dignity in the face of a dominant power that seeks to suppress it.

### **5. Implications for Modern Politics**

Sir Walter Scott's concept of nation in "The Highland Widow" and "The Two Drovers" presents a complex and nuanced view of the relationship between Highlanders and the English. On the one hand, Scott depicts the Highlanders as a proud and noble people with their own distinct culture and traditions. On the other hand, he also acknowledges the power and dominance of the English, and the difficulties that the Highlanders face in preserving their way of life in the face of English hegemony.

In terms of modern politics and proposals for Scotland's exit from Great Britain, Scott's work raises important questions about the relationship between national identity, culture, and political power. Scotland has a long history of struggle with English domination, and the legacy of this history continues to shape Scottish identity and political consciousness.

It can be claimed that Sir Walter Scott's texts, "The Highland Widow" and "The Two Drovers" hold significant implications for modern politics in Scotland, particularly in relation to economic problems, political independence, conflicts between generations after Brexit, and Scotland's desire to join the European Union.

Economic problems feature prominently in Scott's works. "The Highland Widow" portrays the economic disparities between the wealthier English and the comparatively poorer Scots, with a particular emphasis on the Highlands. This depiction reflects contemporary discussions about Scotland's economic situation within the United Kingdom. It raises questions about the potential impact of independence on Scotland's economic stability and the ongoing debates surrounding Scotland's financial prospects in a post-Brexit landscape.

In terms of political independence, Scott's texts provide historical and cultural contexts that resonate with contemporary debates. They capture the struggles and tensions surrounding Scotland's union with England, paralleling the ongoing quest for political autonomy and self-governance in modern Scottish politics. The themes of national identity, self-determination, and the desire for sovereignty explored in Scott's works align with the discussions and movements advocating for Scottish independence.

The conflict between generations in the aftermath of Brexit and Scotland's desire to join the European Union is another area of relevance. Scott's stories delve into intergenerational conflicts, highlighting the clash between different cultural and political identities within Scotland itself. Similarly, the Brexit referendum has created divisions among different age groups, with younger generations in Scotland more inclined to support remaining in the European Union. The themes of generational tensions and conflicts explored in Scott's works resonate with the contemporary political landscape, where younger generations in Scotland often express a stronger desire to maintain ties with the EU.

It can be concluded that "The Highland Widow" and "The Two Drovers" offer valuable insights into the economic challenges, aspirations for political independence, and generational conflicts that shape modern Scottish politics. They provide a historical and cultural foundation that continues to influence discussions surrounding Scotland's economic prospects, constitutional future, and relationship with the European

Union. By exploring these themes, Scott's works contribute to the ongoing dialogue about Scotland's place within the United Kingdom and its role on the international stage.

Finally, Scott's work offers a complex and nuanced perspective on the relationship between national identity and political power, and raises important questions for modern Scotland as it navigates its own path forward. Can Scotland maintain its own distinct cultural identity in the face of continued English domination? What are the risks and benefits of breaking away from the larger political entity of Great Britain? How can Scotland maintain its own unique identity while still engaging in productive relationships with other nations and cultures?

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the works of Sir Walter Scott, particularly his short stories "The Highland Widow" and "The Two Drovers", have had a profound influence on modern Scottish politics and culture. Scott's portrayal of the Scottish Highlands and the unique customs and struggles of its people played a significant role in reshaping public perceptions and establishing the Scottish literary canon and national identity. His emphasis on language and its authenticity reflects the broader Scottish literary tradition's concern for preserving and celebrating the Scots language, which continues to be integral to Scottish literature and identity.

Scott's vision of Scotland as a distinct cultural and historical entity has been instrumental in the movement for Scottish independence. Through his novels, he depicted the rich history, traditions, and struggles of the Highlanders, contributing to the development of a strong Scottish national consciousness. The notion of Scottish nationhood promoted in Scott's works has been a driving force in the debates surrounding independence.

Moreover, Scott's influence extends beyond literature. His emphasis on the importance of Scottish language and culture has contributed to the revitalization of Gaelic language and culture in Scotland. Additionally, his writings have resonated with the Scottish people, fostering a sense of national pride and identity.

In contemporary politics, the calls for Scottish independence and the desire to remain in the European Union by the Scottish National Party align with the themes and ideas found in Scott's writing. These debates center around questions of national identity, history, and cultural heritage, which are central themes in Scott's works.

In summary, Sir Walter Scott's exploration of Scottish identity in the context of Brexit and Scottish independence, particularly through his short stories "The Highland Widow" and "The Two Drovers" continues to have a profound impact on Scottish national identity and political discourse. His depiction of Scottish culture and history has shaped public perception, while his emphasis on language and authenticity has influenced the revival of Gaelic language and culture. Scott's works remain relevant in ongoing debates about Scotland's place in the world, reflecting the enduring power of his literary contributions to Scottish identity.

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