Uncovering Caledonia

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An Introduction to Scottish Studies

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Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing

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This book first published 2018

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN (10): 1-5275-0801-3
ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-0801-9

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am very grateful to SUISS (Scottish Universities' Summer School) for awarding me the Saltire Scholarship in 2011 which gave me the opportunity to take up a course in Scottish literature and conduct research at the University of Edinburgh Library. I would like to express my deep gratitude to James Robertson for constructive and valuable comments on my Scottish Studies Syllabus and for his selfless book donation without which both the Scottish Studies course at the Faculty of Philosophy in Niš and this book would be inconceivable. His willingness to share both his knowledge and time so generously has been very much appreciated. Also I would like to thank the proofreader Sonja Stojanović and Saša Trenčić for his help with technical preparation of the manuscript. Finally, I owe special thanks to my husband and daughter for their love and support.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

A well-known Scottish poet, Hugh MacDiarmid, in his poem *Scotland Small?*, refers to the common misconception of Scotland as a country in which one can find "nothing but heather", regarding it as "marvellously descriptive", but, at the same time, "incomplete" (MacDiarmid 1987: 34). Completely aware of the strong impact of historical and nationalist "loose ends", requiring "great love" on the part of the poet to openly accept, name and identify with them, MacDiarmid sets himself on the quest of depicting his native land's wholeness:

> So I have gathered unto myself
> All the loose ends of Scotland,
> And by naming them and accepting them,
> Loving them and identifying myself with them,
> Attempt to express the whole. (MacDiarmid 1987: 41)

Uncovering Caledonia: An Introduction to Scottish Studies represents a similar cultural journey–an attempt on the part of a non-Scot to portray and illustrate the burning cultural issues of modern Scotland and, hopefully, uncover the myriad of Caledonian peculiarities from a non-native point of view. The idea has been lurking in my mind since I was awarded the prestigious Saltire Scholarship by the Scottish Universities' Summer School (SUISS) which gave me the opportunity to take up a course in Scottish literature and conduct research at the University of Edinburgh Library in 2011. The first step towards the complex work of uncovering Caledonia was to introduce a Scottish Studies course at my home university (the University of Niš, Faculty of Philosophy, Department of English Language and Literature). This academic course is the first of its kind at a Serbian university and currently has the status of an elective course for second year undergraduate students. Since the students' interest in Scottish Studies has been growing year after year, another Scottish course (Scottish Short Fiction) has been proposed at the MA level of studies.

Being primarily a literary scholar, my vision of having an introduction to Scottish Studies, both as a course and in a written manuscript form, has mostly (but not solely) been based on the country's literature. Other areas

of interest concern Scottish folk tales, legends and film. This approach is precisely what makes this book different from the majority of other studies in this academic field: instead of concentrating primarily on a factual approach to various historical and political queries of modern Scotland, the book offers an insight into these issues through the interpretation, analysis and comprehension of Scottish folk tales, legends, literature and film. The book is thus divided into five large chapters, each consisting of several segments, dealing with contemporary themes relevant for depicting and comprehending modern Scottish culture.

The first chapter entitled **Legends and Poetry: an Overview** starts with a segment dealing with **The Relevance of Monster Legends for the Scottish National Myth**. The aim of this segment is the analytical exploration of the local role and relevance, as well as the global popularity, of monster legends in the formation of the Scottish national myth. A critical survey of folk beliefs is combined with various literary and historical insights into this significant aspect of Scottish identity. This section focuses on the widespread folk chronicles of the most famous Scottish monsters (Morag the Monster, Fear Liath, the Loch Ness Monster, the Linton Worm). The contemporary perspective of this issue is provided by Riane Eisler *(The Chalice and the Blade,* 1987), Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (*Monster Theory: Reading Culture,* 1996) and Edwin Morgan (*The Loch Ness Monster's Song,* 1990). The mere fact that monsters occupy a remarkable place in both past folk records and present literary and cultural accounts testifies to an important influence of past folk beliefs in the creation of the contemporary Scottish national identity.

In the second segment, **Comprehension of National Identity by Reading the Landscape: An Example of Scotland**, the focus is on diverse artistic depictions of Scotland in order to pinpoint the evident connection between its main landscape features, on the one hand, and widespread stereotypical images influencing formation of the national identity, on the other. It was in the 19th century that Sir Walter Scott in his collection of ballads, *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Borders* (1802-1803), postulated a unifying national myth of Scotland as a country whose inhabitants' main features reflect the unified opposites of its landscape– being romantically stern and wild, picturesque and awe-inspiring, benevolent and dangerous. To Scott, Scotland was the land of "brown heath and shaggy wood", "the mountain and the flood", rustic, rural, harsh, unforgiving and unkind, but still a home, both literally and metaphorically. "The idea of dueling polarities within one entity" (Martin 2009: 84), generally known as "the Caledonian Antisyzygy" phenomenon, which denotes the unexpected merging of opposing or paradoxical cultural

viewpoints, is thus discussed from the perspective of the interrelatedness of the Scottish landscape and identity in the work of a variety of authors from different periods of history (Joe Corrie's *Scottish Pride*, Robert Burns' *Scots Wha Hae*, Irvine Welsh's *Ah Hate the Scots*, William Soutar's *Scotland*, etc.). Their creative insights into this issue are combined by the critical outline provided by Martin *(The Mighty Scot: Nation, Gender and the Nineteenth-Century of Mystique of Scottish Masculinity,* 2009) and Finlayson (*The Scots,* 1988).

The third segment, **Constructions of National and Cultural Identity in the Poetry of Scots Makars**, explores different ways in which national and cultural identity is constructed, relying on the theoretical insights of Anderson (1983), Smith (1991), McCrone (1998) and Devine (2006). This theoretical framework is applied to the poetry of Scots Makars (Burns, Morgan, Lochhead and Kay) in order to emphasize the role of the national poet in creating a distinctive Scottish identity. The common denominator in the poetry of the aforementioned Scots Makars is their insistence on the usage of Scots as a valid means of literary expression and glorification of the heroic Scottish past. It is also important to emphasize that the modern Scottish identity is shaped by new concerns reflecting current political, national, economic and cultural queries. Thus, Scots Makars also assert that the moulding of the modern Scottish national and cultural identity can represent a potential benefit and not a burdensome handicap for the nation only by a constant interchange between the past and present.

The fourth section deals with the use of Scots in institutional discourse and is focused on the work of several twentieth century Scottish poets (MacDiarmid, Leonard, Lochhead and Morgan) who regard creative writing and speaking in public as a political act. This idea is further exemplified in the research through the analysis of their selected poetry that deals with the presence of the Scots language, one of the most relevant features of Scottish national heritage, within institutional discourse (the form of expression used in institutional settings, e.g. the media, workplace, courtroom, academia). The common ground for these rather diverse artists is that Scots is being constantly neglected and discarded as a valid form of official public expression; unfortunately, it has remained reserved for unofficial and informal private events. The critical insights of these poets are combined with a theoretical framework provided by Scottish history and culture scholars Devine and Finlayson in order to emphasize their continuing concern with the relevance of Scots for the understanding of Scottish identity.

Finally, the last section in the first chapter of the book contemplates **Scottish Prospects for the Future**. This part explores the main postulates

of Scottish identity exemplified in the selected poetry of Walter Scott, Alexander Gray, Norman MacCaig, John Burnside, Alastair Reid, Edwin Muir and Hugh MacDiarmid. Their creative insights into the relationship between history and nationalism and its importance for the notion of Scottish sovereignty are combined with a factual outline provided by history scholar T. M. Devine (*The Scottish Nation 1700-2007*, 2006). The pros and cons of the current tendencies in Scottish politics, culminating in the Independence Referendum (that took place in September 2014), are discussed from the perspective of the omnipresent correlation between culture and politics, indicating a potent need for the rediscovery and redefinition of the Scottish national myth.

In the second chapter of the book entitled **Burning Issues in Short Fiction**, the first part is dedicated to the investigation of **Contemporary Scottish Urban Myths in Kennedy's and Hird's Short Stories**. This section focuses on the critical portrayal of a variety of dysfunctional male/female relationships experienced in unpalatable urban realities marked by abuse, addiction, bullying, alcoholism and social deprivation as explored by two contemporary Scottish women writers, A.L. Kennedy and Laura Hird. Kennedy and Hird thoughtfully investigate a vast spectrum of peculiar life situations that lead to the questioning of existing urban myths, as well as the creation of the new ones: from the reversal of gender expectations (the teenage girls who sexually humiliate their teachers as well as single, emancipated, financially independent women who willingly play the role of an unattainable prey and, to their utter disappointment, eventually end up alone) to the sincere portrayal of sadness, violence, hurt and terror experienced in marriage. Apart from the fact that both authors are skilled at representing a range of marginalized voices (male and female, old and young), they also frequently and unashamedly use vulgar, shocking and confrontational language as a means of involving and affecting their readers, in the manner of the in-yer-face-theatre literary style from the 1990s. The romantic possibility of the genuine redemption of love is singled out as a valid alternative to the futility of sporadic sexual affairs; however, whereas Kennedy sentimentally pleads for enormous human compassion in attaining this mythical ideal, Hird remains a dark, harsh, pessimistic, almost brutal observer of urban realities.

The second segment, **Quest for Scottish Independence in James Robertson's Short Fiction on the Eve of the Referendum**, focuses on a detailed analysis of Roberston's personal queries related to the issue of Scottish independence in two short stories, "Republic of the Mind" (first published in 1993) and "MacTaggart's Shed" (2012). Since there is a

conspicuous time span in-between the publication of these stories, my purpose is to track, explore and describe how Robertson's treatment of the same subject has changed over the years, particularly having in mind the references to the Devolution Referendum (1997) and Independence Referendum (2014) in these stories. Bearing in mind the idea of an artist as an active communal participant (Rich 1993), Robertson ostensibly favours the political cause of Scottish independence; however, his short stories depict his personal doubts about its realization in future practice, a stance that proved to be completely justified after the unsuccessful Independence Referendum (2014). The theoretical framework of this segment relies on the critical insights of Scottish scholars Campbell, Taylor, Thompson and Massie, as well as numerous contemporary journalist accounts of Scottish political analysts.

"Other Spaces are Still Possible": A Vision of Future Scotland in Andrew Crumey's "The Last Midgie on Earth" is the title of the third section that first draws on Marcuse's lecture "The End of Utopia" (1970) and then on his famous study *Eros and Civilization* (1966) whose common guiding principle is the "Great Refusal" of the imagination to accept "as final the limitations imposed upon freedom and happiness" (1966: 49). Marcuse's theory that artificially imposed limits to imagination represent mere mechanisms for maintaining the status quo of modern culture has lately been devoutly accepted by Jameson (2009), who applied it to the alienated way of life in the postmodern, capitalist and globalized society. By ruthless criticism of the currently popular lifestyle, Jameson suggests the contemplation of an alternative utopian world where "from time to time…we are reminded that Utopia exists and that other systems, other spaces, are still possible" (2009: 632). Relying on Marcuse's "end of utopia" and Jameson's "other spaces", Tally suggests a new theory of spatiality, whereby he perceives an author as a literary cartographer who is on a quest to develop new ways of mapping spaces. These theoretical insights are applied to Crumey's vision of future Scotland in "The Last Midgie on Earth". As a result of global warming, Crumey's Scotland has become a tourist paradise for etiolated dome-dwellers that view its natural beauty, lustiness and greenness as rare, almost extinct qualities in the post-modern world. The mere existence of such a revitalizing spatial unit in the predominantly apocalyptic global scenery confirms the validity of Marcuse's, Jameson's and Tally's theories which fervently suggest that new spaces of liberty may (and must) still be found nowadays.

The fourth segment, **Trans Issues in Liz Lochhead's "Not Changed"**, is divided into four sections. In the first section entitled "Introducing and Defining Trans (Issues)", the basic terms of transgender,

transvestite and transsexual are defined by relying on Stryker's *Transgender History* (2008). The second part of the research, "Trans Studies: In-Between Feminist and Queer Theory?", places transgender studies into an academic context by referring to the theoretical framework provided by trans theorists Stryker, Stone and Ranck, who unanimously claim that transgender studies should have a place of its own within the academy and that trans theory should solely be written by transsexuals. These ideas are applied in the interpretation of Lochhead's story "Not Changed" in the third segment of the article. The critical insights of Butler (*Gender Trouble*, 1990; *Undoing Gender*, 2004) are found to be most helpful in the interpretation of Lochhead's story about Michael who has willingly undergone Hormone Replacement Therapy to become transsexual Michele. Finally, in the concluding remarks, Lochhead's story is viewed as a trans woman manifesto, urging both non-transsexual and transsexual persons to embrace new beginnings in their relationship.

The third chapter of the book entitled **Expatriate Short Fiction Voices** contains two segments. Numerous elements of Scottish heritage are potently depicted in the work of Margaret Laurence, a Canadian author of Scottish origin: family history, nostalgia for the bygone times, oral tradition, clan loyalty, etc., in the first segment, **The Meaning of "The Caledonian Antisyzygy" Phenomenon in Margaret Laurence's "To Set Our House in Order".** The aim of this segment is a broad discussion of the ways in which Scotland is portrayed in Laurence's work and a specific examination of the importance of her Scottish heritage in "To Set Our House in Order" from the well-known short story collection *A Bird in the House* (1970). The theoretical framework of this section relies on a detailed exploration of "the Caledonian Antisyzygy" phenomenon: its meaning, function and role in the creation of Scottish identity. Originally coined by literary critic G. Gregory Smith, this phenomenon (nowadays usually referred to as the Scottish Antithetical Mind) denotes the unexpected merging of opposing or paradoxical cultural viewpoints. Although this national trait is not unique to the Scots, it is definitely among the Scots that this contradiction becomes apotheosized, claims Scottish culture scholar, Finlayson (1988). In Laurence's story analyzed here, the basic characteristics of "the Caledonian Antisyzygy" are demonstrated through a conflicting gap between Scottish traditional and Canadian modern tendencies.

In order to resist the destructive influences of modern culture, Fromm, Frye and Bond suggest that we are supposed to go back to our roots–to discover and relearn the art of loving, the way MacLeod's Archibald in *The Tuning of Perfection* (1986) does in the second segment entitled

Tradition VS. Modernity in Alistair MacLeod's "The Tuning of Perfection". Although the world around him gradually changes and technologically advances, Archibald remains loyal to his roots and traditional way of life. The memory of his late wife and the Gaelic songs they sang together represent a healing experience in the modern world whose values Archibald, an immigrant from Scotland to Canada, cannot and does not want to accept and live by, and simultaneously, also a connecting tissue with the vanishing tradition. Thus his ultimate refusal to shorten the lines of traditional Gaelic songs to make them more appealing to the wide audience in a mass-media competition signifies a single lonely voice against overall consumerism and emotional poverty. The aim of this segment is to stress that it is still vitally important to preserve traditional values, necessary for our further survival as a species, according to Frye and Bond.

The fourth chapter, **Insights into Modern Drama**, starts with a section dedicated to **(De)Falsification of Scottish History in John McGrath's *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil***. McGrath's purpose in staging a political play based on Scottish history was primarily to expose and de-falsify the destructive clearance pattern that had remorselessly been repeated in the previous three centuries, but was officially depicted as progressive and developmental for the Scottish region. Although the "brutal" methods of Highland clearances from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries definitely remained in the past, McGrath posed an important question of whether the phenomenon of clearances had actually been dispensed with in the twentieth century. The theoretical framework of this section relies on the acutely relevant critical insights of Rich, Dawson, Farber, Brown, Innes, as well as McGrath himself.

The second segment is entitled **"Twa Queens. Wan Green Island": Nationalist and Feminist Issues in Liz Lochhead's *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*.** From the very first description of the two kingdoms on an island in Lochhead's play, a striking difference between them is perceived: England is described in terms of the order established and prosperity granted by its intelligent monarch, Elizabeth, whereas the Scottish insecure and problematic position is epitomized through the personal characteristics of its ruler–a beautiful lady, a foreigner, most commonly perceived as the last Queen of an independent Scotland, making an effort to rule the divided country. Inclined towards Catholicism, politically inexperienced and unskilled, Mary fails to recognize the fact well known to her powerful Protestant cousin, Elizabeth–a proper queen has to rule the kingdom with her head, and not

with her heart. Written for the performance of the Communicado Theatre Company in 1987, as a tribute to the four-hundredth anniversary of Mary, Queen of Scots' death, Lochhead's play establishes the connection between the burning political issues in sixteenth and twentieth century Scotland. By relying on the critical insights of Finlayson, Greenblatt, Gonzales, Butler and Lochhead herself, the article examines the nationalist and feminist issues in the play, as well as their relevance for understanding the Scottish identity.

The third section is dedicated to **Gregory Burke's *Black Watch* (2006), as An Illustration of Post-Verbatim Theatre.** Gregory Burke's *Black Watch* (2006) is a documentary play based on the common soldiers' authentic accounts of the war in Iraq. Coinciding with the foundation of the National Theatre of Scotland, Burke's play was innovative in the sense that it "departed from the hyperrealist trend of verbatim plays of the post 9/11 era, infusing music, projection, movement and song to contextualize the accounts of local soldiers caught amidst a foreign policy disaster" (Beck 2013: 131). Taking into account the influence of political, in-yer-face and verbatim theatre whose main postulates are detected in Burke's play and illustrated in this section, the study focuses on Beck's claim that *Black Watch* represents a vivid example of a post-verbatim theatre, employed in the service of demystifying the prevalent Western imperialist and nationalist tendencies. Apart from Beck's inspiring analytical views, the theoretical framework of this part relies on acutely relevant critical insights from Cull, Hammond, Soans, Sierz and Rich, as well as Burke himself.

Finally, the last chapter of the book, **Educational Trends in Novel and Film**, deals with two subjects, **Education as Manipulation in Muriel Spark's *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*** and **Controversy in the Classroom: The Case of "Trainspotting"**. The first segment explores the difference between the public and private aspects of Miss Jean Brodie's teaching techniques: whereas according to the general public opinion she seems to be a free thinker and a radical rebel against the dominant patriarchal norms, in her private classes the readers recognize the repetition of the identical pattern of destructive patriarchal authorities ultimately resulting in the manipulation of her pupils. The theoretical framework of this segment relies on the critical discussion of the concepts of Louis Althusser's "interpellation" (1971), Alice Miller's "poisonous pedagogy" (1980) and Judith Butler's "appropriation of the male identity by women" (1990).

Since learning a language naturally entails the understanding of the cultural context in which it is used (Kramsch 1993), it goes without saying

that cultural awareness will be best acquired when students immerse themselves in the country of the target culture (Istanto 2008). The role of the teacher in nurturing cultural understanding is to "take on the role of culture educator and deliberately assist students with their process of cultural analysis." (Istanto 2009: 280) One of the ways to teach culture has definitely been to ask students to watch films from the target culture. The last section in the book deals with the classroom experiment of teaching "Trainspotting". The students were divided into two groups with the task of presenting and interpreting different aspects of the film for the sake of enhancing classroom communication, as well as introducing the prevalent concerns of contemporary Scottish society. The first (linguistic) group had to report on the usage of the authentic Scots in the film paying special attention to its title – to investigate the root and meaning of the word "trainspotting", and the second (cultural) group had quite a demanding task of discussing the issues of urban Scottish youth culture. Though dealing with rather controversial themes, the practical case of teaching "Trainspotting", based primarily on the interactive and communicative way of learning, definitely illustrates "how film can be used in an innovative way for teaching the target language and culture" (Istanto 2008:290).

In conclusion, it goes without saying that the complex domains of politics, arts and culture have inevitably been intertwined in the attempt to define, understand and accept the "loose ends" (MacDiarmid 1987: 41) of the Scottish "imagined community" (Anderson 1993: 6). However, whereas Anderson in his influential study, *Imagined Communities* (1993), focuses solely on the socio-political aspects in his vision of the nation, my insights into Scottish culture are based on a combination of both socio-political and cultural (predominantly literary) impacts, constantly bearing in mind the relevance of the wide-appealing idea that "what politics refused, literature and culture provided" (Stevenson, Wallace 1996: 5). In addition, my vision of representing Scottish culture coincides with Whyte's perceptive claim that "the task of representing the nation has been repeatedly devolved to its writers" (Whyte 1998: 284).

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CHAPTER ONE

LEGENDS AND POETRY: AN OVERVIEW

The Relevance of Monster Legends for the Scottish National Myth

1. From matriarchy to patriarchy: Shift from partnership to dominator norms

The modern world is to a great extent different from the world of the earliest civilizations. In an attempt to remind the modern audience of the existence of the matriarchal culture as the first mythological phase in the development of Western civilization, Donna Read states:

> Today we build monuments to what we call progress, a progress that threatens all life. Millions are made by it, millions live by it, and the conqueror has replaced the nurturer as a symbol to be respected. The natural world we once revered, we now destroy. We've long forgotten the spirit of the Earth Goddess. (Read 1989)

In her documentaries, *Signs Out of Time* (2004) and *Goddess Remembered* (1989), filmmaker Donna Read takes us back to the prehistoric times when people believed in the Goddess, the Great Mother, and **"**when the power to give and nurture was supreme" (Read 1989). Through this journey, with the help of archaeologist Marija Gimbutas, the matriarchal world of peaceful and closely connected cultures that lived on the territories of modern Europe is described, only to be succeeded by the violent world of male supremacy.

Signs Out of Time (2004) examines the life and work of world-renowned archaeologist Marija Gimbutas. Her archaeological research discovered that on the territories of modern Europe there were settlements made by nations that had extraordinary culture and art. No evidence of organized warfare was found. "All Europe was a peaceful culture without

weapons" (Read 2004). She tells us of a female-centred culture, not male-dominated, by describing the first egalitarian societies with neither male or female dominance. All people were considered to be equal and there were no differences between men and women in terms of their power and authority. This is why it is a common misconception nowadays to claim that these people were primitive; on the contrary, they had a very complex system of religious, existential and philosophical beliefs.

The religion of Old Europe changed radically towards the end of the third millennium. Peoples from the Russian steppes whom Marija Gimbutas called Kurgans, swept across Europe in three great waves of invasions over several thousand years and shattered the existent matriarchal utopia. This collision is reflected both in mythology and in language. From the very beginning these invaders had weapons. Hierarchical, male-ruled, they worshipped a sky god and brought a new religion in which nature was gradually demonized. New gods clashed with old traditions. This collision of cultures transformed the old myths and values and changed the heart of Old Europe.

A similar approach to the developmental phases of Western civilization is presented in *Goddess Remembered* (1989), the first part of a three-part series that includes *The Burning Times* (1990) and *Full Circle* (1993). This documentary features women from the Women's Spirituality Movement talking about the prehistoric period when people believed in the Great Mother. Through their conversations, they link the loss of goddess-worshipping societies with contemporary environmental, political, and even ethical crises.

In prehistoric times, the fertility of the mother was connected to the fertility of the Earth. People lived in accordance with nature and women were respected. Men and women were equal, living in cooperation and unity. However, there came the time of transition. According to this documentary, "around 10,000 BC people began to cultivate. The agricultural revolution changed everything. Especially the relationship we had to the Earth. No longer did people just accept what nature provided; now, we sought to control the awesome forces of the natural world" (Read 1989). One of the most successful methods of this control was a cunning projection of monstrosity and evil imposed on the natural world, now abounding in numerous perilous creatures that the society suffered from and, inevitably, had to be defended against.

Riane Eisler, in *The Chalice and the Blade* (1987), carried Marija Gimbutas' theories further, asserting that patriarchy is built on a particular symbol and the reversal of the system of values–the Great Mother Goddess, a primary symbol of the divine source of being, associated with

peace and compassion, is marginalized and then entirely discarded, while a masculine war god usurps her place.

Eisler uses the symbols of the chalice and the blade to represent two competing sets of values and models of society, as Christine Hoff Kreaemer suggests (2004: 1). The chalice represents a style of social structure that Eisler calls the partnership model, in which relations between the sexes are understood primarily in terms of partnership rather than hierarchy. The resulting society is egalitarian, peaceful, and matrifocal, centred on the nurturing values traditionally associated with mothers. Using a variety of archaeological studies, Eisler claims that such societies existed in Neolithic Europe from the beginning of the agricultural revolution until around 5,000–3,000 BC, when warlike invaders from the fringes of these regions conquered them. These invaders' social model, which Eisler calls the dominator model, is warlike, hierarchical, and organized around patterns of domination. Sex, race, class, and other characteristics are used to rank individuals in a social order, which is then maintained under the threat of violence. This model is generally associated with a male god and the glorification of the ability to take life, in contrast to the partnership model's sacralization of women's ability to give life through birth (Hoff Kreaemer 2004:1).

For Eisler, history is the keystone of the prevalent argument and, simultaneously, a valid proof that since partnership societies existed in the past, they might be constructed again in the future. Minoan Crete represents a valid illustration of a partnership society, Eisler concludes, and draws on archaeologists James Mellaart and Marija Gimbutas to argue that the worship of a single Great Goddess was the shared religion of all of Neolithic Europe. In her influential, but rather controversial study, Eisler turns to cultural and art history and examines the literature of the ancient Greeks and Hebrews to find myths suggesting remnants of usurped female power. The referent proof texts include the story of Adam and Eve, in which Eve is tempted to eat the fruit of knowledge by a serpent, a symbol associated with Goddess worship in several ancient cultures of the region, and the Greek *Oresteia,* in which the Furies are stripped of their power to punish the murder of a mother by a son when Athena sides with the gods against the goddesses. Logically, Eisler begins her book with these questions:

> Why do we hunt and persecute each other? Why is our world so full of man's infamous inhumanity to man–and to woman? How can human beings be so brutal to their own kind? What is it that chronically tilts us toward cruelty rather than kindness, toward war rather than peace, toward destruction rather than actualization? (Eisler 1987: xiii)

Eisler's controversial claim is that war and destruction do not represent a natural state; in order to support her argument, she uses evidence from the archaeology of prehistoric cultures. She points to the fact that the female figurines ("Venus" figurines), found in archaeological sites over a wide geographic area, represent a valid and powerful testimony of the admiration and awe that ancient peoples had for the powers that govern life and death, the powers which they associated with women. She identifies these figurines and many other feminine images with Goddess worship. Eisler also points out that Neolithic art does not portray scenes of battles, warriors, or "violence-based power" (Eisler 1987: 20); there are no heroic conquerors or indications of slavery.

> The Goddess-centered art we have been examining, with its striking absence of images of male domination or warfare, seems to have reflected a social order in which women, first as heads of clans and priestesses and later on in other important roles, played a central part, and in which both men and women worked together in equal partnership for the common good. (Eisler 1987: 20)

However, after centuries of peace and development, a great change occurred. Nomadic tribes, roaming the less desirable parts of the earth looking for grazing land, "grew in numbers and ferocity" (Eisler 1987:42). By the fifth millennium BC there began a pattern of destruction of Neolithic cultures by invasions and natural catastrophes, producing what Eisler refers to as a "mounting chaos" (Eisler 1987: 43). Other changes after the invasions that are apparent from the archaeological record include indications of slavery, oppression of women, warfare, weapons, chieftain burials (indicating social inequality), others buried with the chieftain (apparently killed for that purpose), appropriation of goddess symbols by powerful men:

> The one thing they [the invading cultures] all had in common was a dominator model of social organization: a social system in which male dominance, male violence, and a generally hierarchic and authoritarian social structure was the norm. Another commonality was that, in contrast to the societies that laid the foundations for Western civilization [the goddess-based societies], the way they characteristically acquired material wealth was not by developing technologies of production, but through ever more effective technologies of destruction. (Eisler 1987: 45)

Eisler's central thesis is that a calculated transition took place historically from earlier idyllic societies to more aggressive cultures. Her cultural

transformation theory proposes that the original direction of the evolution of society was toward the partnership model, but that the dominator model took over after "a period of chaos and almost total cultural disruption" (Eisler 1987: xvii). The chaos was caused by an invasion on the part of violent "peripheral" groups. The shift in social structure was apparently accompanied by a shift in the types of technologies developed by the society, from life-sustaining technologies to war-related technologies, from the chalice to the blade (now employed not only against other belligerent tribes, but also in dealing with demonized, monstrous nature for the sake of the protection of human community and establishment of its social cohesion). This theory also proposes that our society can be hopefully transformed back to the partnership model of society.

In the same vein, Erich Fromm in his influential study *The Forgotten Language* (1951) claims:

> Matriarchal culture is characterized by an emphasis on ties of blood, ties to the soil and a passive acceptance of all natural phenomena. Patriarchal society, in contrast, is characterized by respect for man-made law, by a predominance of rational thought, and by man's effort to change natural phenomena. (Fromm 1951: 207)

Fromm gives us an analysis of the Oedipus trilogy and its main theme– the struggle against paternal authority. The roots of that struggle go back to the ancient fight between the patriarchal and matriarchal systems of society. Then, we have the Babylonian myth of Creation where sons challenge the Great Mother and defeat her.

In the Oedipus trilogy, Oedipus, Haemon and Antigone are representatives of the matriarchal principle, whereas Laius and Creon represent the patriarchal one. The idea of the universal brotherhood is rooted in the matriarchal principle. Quite to the contrary, the patriarchal principle includes a hierarchical order in the society and obedience to the male figure. These are Creon's words:

> Yea, this, my son, should be thy heart's fixed law–in all things to obey thy father's will. 'Tis for this that men pray to see dutiful children grow up around them in their homes. (…) But disobedience is the worst of evils. (…) Therefore, we must support the cause of order and in no wise suffer a woman to worst us. Better to fall from power, if we must, by a man's hand; than we should be called weaker than a woman. (Fromm 1951: 224-225)

Fromm's study, which may also be defined as a spiritual precursor of Eisler's cultural theory, rests on the idea that the assertion of male

superiority continued to the period of Christianity as well–Eve was born from Adam's rib and a female turned out to be just a mere product of a male, the way Athena was born from Zeus's head. Matriarchy, once at its peak, was getting weaker and at the same time patriarchy was rising and asserting its role and supremacy.

2. Threatening elemental forces: Monsters as natural phenomena

As already discussed, with the introduction of patriarchal paganism as the second stage in the development of Western civilization, man found it necessary to separate himself from what was previously perceived as Mother Nature and to defend himself from it. Thus, the first man-made halls are represented as being potent signs of human success in most myths and legends, dominating in the surrounding elemental chaos of nature. Along with the man-made halls, the first instances of weaponry were created symbolizing a final dividing line between liquid chaotic natural forces and the newly dominant patriarchal order, thus pointing to an utterly destructive system of values based on violence, cruelty and aggression that Read and Eisler described and condemned in their respective works. Furthermore, the first instances of weaponry represented a symbolical attempt on the part of patriarchal authorities to deal (once and for all!!) with the threatening natural phenomena. In other words, in man's effort to change natural phenomena as Fromm suggested (Fromm 1951: 207), all that is evil and monstrous was projected onto the natural world and banished from the human community.

For instance, the first lover of the Great Goddess was a great serpent, assuming different identities in different mythologies, but always being subordinate to the Goddess in these early times. The copulation of the Goddess and her lovers symbolically referred to the strong bond between man and nature, mother and child. The Great Serpent was chosen for its ability to slough its skin and thus symbolically represented craving for the ability of natural renewal and regeneration. The worship of the Goddess entailed in itself nature worship, thus alluding to man's synchronization with the rhythm of nature and its cycles.

It is not surprising then that all the monsters from the phase of patriarchal paganism mostly resembled the Great Serpent, once the main symbol of the Goddess; a great number of Greek legends abound in killings of serpents and their look-alikes, dragons (the most famous and conspicuous example being the legend about brave Hercules), then in the Hebrew myth Jehovah kills the Leviathan, the sea monster, and the full

circle of monster slaying is finally completed in the Bible, referring to the third stage in the development of Western civilization, that of patriarchal monotheism, where the serpent is given a crucial role in tempting Eve to try the forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge, ultimately resulting in Adam's and Eve's Fall from the Garden of Eden.

In order to scientifically explain this shift from once sacred and worshipped natural creatures, the most relevant emblems of the matriarchal world, to demonized, evil, horrifying serpents and dragons, threatening to dissolve the stability of the forcefully imposed patriarchal society, Jeffrey Jerome Cohen dedicates a complete volume of essays to what he entitled "the Monster Theory". In his influential collections of essays *Monster Theory: Reading Culture* (1996), Cohen claims that monsters provide a key to understanding the culture that spawned them. Thus, the study of monsters should be seriously taken into consideration since it represents a valid means of examining our culture. Cohen uses the monster's body as a metaphor for the cultural body and concludes that monsters are supposed to be perceived as symbolic expressions of authentic human fears and desires that ultimately shape our collective behaviour.

In Cohen's essay *Monster Culture (Seven Theses)*, monsters are defined by seven different aspects related to their appearance, character, or representation. In the first thesis entitled *The Monster's Body is a Cultural Body*, Cohen emphasizes the fact that monsters are always symbols and representations of a culture, "an embodiment of a certain cultural moment" (Cohen 1996: 10). In the second thesis, *The Monster Always Escapes*, Cohen discusses the repetitive notion that monsters mostly get away. In case they are caught, they most probably return (sometimes even assuming different aspects). "When a monster is killed", claims Howard, "there is always some remnant, some talisman, of it left behind. If there is no physical element left behind, there is at least a small glimpse of the monster or footprints, something that makes people uncertain of its death and ultimate destruction" (Howard 2006: 1). In the third thesis, *The Monster is the Harbinger of Category Crisis*, Cohen explains that monsters cannot be associated with specific classifications of animals or people; they can be half human, half animal, or with a sort of deformity that prevents them from being categorized. In the fourth thesis, *The Monster Dwells at the Gates of Difference*, Cohen claims that the monster is usually perceived as the Other, that is, different in a cultural, sexual, racial, economic or political domain from standardized general conventions. In the fifth thesis, *The Monster Polices the Borders of the Possible*, Cohen argues that the task of monsters is to keep us away from

the unknown, from all the dangerous notions and ideas not to be explored by the majority. In the sixth thesis, *Fear of the Monster is Really a Kind of Desire,* Cohen claims that monsters reflect our hidden desires. In other words, the dominant culture creates them in order to explore what otherwise would be considered a taboo (for example, gender roles, sex, aggression, domination). As Howard (2006: 1) claims: "They can freely destruct and harm, and not feel repercussions or guilt from authority. Monsters enable us to play the role of things we would normally not claim as our identity, like small children dressing up in costumes of demons and witches for Halloween". Finally, in the seventh thesis entitled *The Monster Stands at the Threshold ... of becoming*, Cohen concludes that monsters invoke us to examine our culture, the assumptions made about other peoples. The task of monsters is to make people ponder why they create them, thus inviting them to explore their minds and discover their true beliefs. Bearing in mind Cohen's scientific insights about "the monster theory", as well as Read's and Eisler's arguments about the historical and archaeological evidence of the clash between the matriarchal and patriarchal system of values, the following part of the paper will be dedicated to the study of Scottish monsters, as a key to understanding Scottish history and, in general, reading Scottish culture.

3. Scottish monsters: Reading Scottish culture

Perhaps the most widely spread notions and images of Scottish monsters include the unknown, enigmatic creatures inhabiting the once inaccessible and unapproachable natural environment of the Scottish Highlands. Abounding in deep, mysterious lochs, crooked, almost belligerent, crags and steep, rugged cliffs, the Highlands have for centuries represented the humanly unattainable world of nature, a potent metaphor for both wild, untamed, even romantic insights on (human!) nature and its fearsome, threatening, horrifying aspects, better to be left untouched, undiscovered and unexplored. Thus, the most famous Scottish monsters nowadays basically represent remnants of the transitional period in the development of Western civilization, the historical shift from the matriarchal to the patriarchal system of values. After a peaceful, egalitarian period of the Great Goddess' reign, every natural creature associated with her and her sacred powers has become demonized and monstrous, as Read and Eisler knowingly indicated. It is no wonder then that strange creatures from impenetrable depths of numerous Scottish lochs have generally been connected with the power of the sacred female, who, being preserved in the collective consciousness through the presence of enigmatic monsters

and their strange powers, ultimately left a lasting mark on the formation of Scottish national identity.

It is interesting to note that loch monsters are mostly depicted as females in folk legends, mostly due to the fear from once sacred and later utterly demonized natural surroundings. For instance, Morag the Monster, generally perceived as a sister to the more widely-known Nessie, lives in Loch Morar, an inland loch around 70 miles to the southwest of Loch Ness. According to a folk legend, she is presented as a mermaid-like character with flowing hair, while another description paints her as a grim reaper whose sighting was viewed as a death omen. Numerous folk legends also depict Morag as a half-deity or even as a half-human, half-fish creature (which completely illustrates Cohen's comment on a monster's physical appearance, not easy to be specifically categorized), always seen before death, mostly by drowning, which is why she is greatly disliked and called by many uncomplimentary terms among the Scottish folk. The legend also goes that "Morag has often brought out of their houses at night the people living along the shores of the lake and in the neighbourhood of her haunts, causing much anxiety to the men and much sore weeping to the women" (BBC Com, News 2015: 1). Although oral accounts are mostly associated with the Morar family, whose defeat in battle or death of clan members Morag keeps bemoaning and wailing in great distress, more recent accounts, as well as sightings, have depicted Morag–whose home is only about 70 miles from Loch Ness–as a humped serpent-like creature similar to the more famous Nessie.

Dating from the 6th century, when St. Columba was returning from his mission to Christianize the Picts, the legend of the Loch Ness Monster has definitely earned Scotland enormous popularity and enriched its national myth. Although popular Nessie, famous for numerous appearances in the Loch Ness area, fled at the sign of the cross that St. Columba made, various sightings of this mysterious creature have been appearing ever since, which accounts for the fact that this monster has become extremely popular in the public imagination. As it is generally suggested nowadays, "perhaps the advent of tourism has something to do with it, or the increased use of media coverage so that what was once of purely local importance has become widely known…If there seems a lot of fuss generated about the possible existence of an unidentified animal in an otherwise obscure Scottish loch, maybe it is better to concentrate on something interesting, unimportant and romantic than on the relentless realities of the world" (The Loch Ness Monster, Scots clans 2015:1). Although some valid evidence has been produced on the Scottish monster hoax scheme, the fact still remains that there have been more than 10,000

sightings of Nessie since Columba's time, "it has been chased by motorcyclists and crossed the road in front of motorcars; it has been photographed and traced on sonar. It has been scoffed at by millions" (*The Loch Ness Monster*, Scots clans 2015:1). Popular Nessie represents a significant aspect of the Scottish national myth and thus is far too interesting to dismiss as a mere hoax. This is precisely the reason why Edwin Morgan, the first Scottish national poet, the Scots Makar, dedicated a special poem to the most famous Scottish monster:

> Sssnnnwhuffffll?
> Hnwhuffl hhnnwfl hnfl hfl?
> Gdroblboblhobngbl gbl gl g g g g glbgl.
> Drublhaflablhaflubhafgabhaflhafl fl fl –
> gm grawwwww grf grawf awfgm graw gm.
> Hovoplodok–doplodovok–plovodokot-doplodokosh?
> Splgraw fok fok splgrafhatchgabrlgabrl fok splfok!
> Zgra kra gka fok!
> Grof grawff gahf?
> Gombl mbl bl –
> blm plm,
> blm plm,
> blm plm,
> blp. (Morgan 1990: 43)

Although its meaning is quite difficult to be deciphered, since the language of the loch monster represents a specific variant of communication that humans are at a loss to follow, Morgan himself explains the peculiar story of popular Nessie. The lonely creature rises from the depths of Loch Ness and looks around for the companions of her youth, other prehistoric reptiles and animals that once were perceived as sacred followers of the Goddess of Complete Being, as Ted Hughes would put it (Hughes 1992), only to discover, to her utmost horror, that there is no one she knows to be found in the natural world of modern Scotland, and thus, mopingly, she descends again to the unexplored depths of her lake after a brief swearing session, or better to say, her curse on humankind for depriving her of her natural habitat.

Unlike these strange creatures who undoubtedly were on the hit list of various interested parties, but were never captured and subdued, and as such, their legend has survived to the present moment, there have been numerous accounts of monsters slayed and annihilated. One such enigmatic creature is most definitely the infamous Linton Worm. Its name is significant enough because it draws attention to the prehistoric matriarchal period. Namely, a 'worm' was a term mostly associated with a

dragon, but etymologically it is the ancient Norse word for serpent. From its lair located on the Northeast side of Linton hill, the Linton worm used to roam the land and slaughter every live creature that crossed its way. This land soon became barren and the locals were terrified of the creature. It seemed that no one could stop it, until a Scots laird John de Somerville, who investigated the creature for a while, decided to deal once and for all with the despicable creature himself by ordering a unique lance from a local blacksmith. The lance was longer than normal and had a wheel fitted about a foot from the end. This allowed the end of the lance to rotate on contact. "Somerville returned to the lair with his special lance. On the end he placed a large lump of peat covered in tar which was set alight. For some time he had practiced charging with the burning lance so his horse would get used to the smoke blowing in its face. Now came the time to strike. He rode up to the worm who predictably opened its huge mouth. Somerville plunged the lance deep into the creature's throat" (*The Linton Worm*, Scots clans 2015:1). It was the end of the worm, which eventually brought down the roof of the cave and disappeared without a trace. Sommerville was rewarded by being knighted and becoming a royal Falconer, as well as the first Baron of Linton. Although the Linton worm was eventually annihilated by Sommerville, the image that has been haunting the collective imagination of the people from the Wormington area is definitely the worm's escape from its eerie cave, which definitely accounts for Cohen's comment on the uncertainty that people feel about the monster's ultimate destruction and death–the monster has gone away for the time being, but who could be sure that it would not be coming back?

Another strange creature that can be connected with the Scottish prehistoric heritage is the Big Grey Man, Am Fear Lieath Mor. A noticeable number of scientists who found themselves on mountain-climbing expeditions in the area of Ben Macdui, in the Cairngorms, testify to the existence of this strange creature, popularly referred to as Scottish version of the Yeti and the Sasquatch. The stories continue to emerge even nowadays, and the theories about what lies behind them continue to multiply. Whereas the popular laymen's opinion rests on the acceptance of the existence of ten-foot-tall creatures covered in grey fur living somewhere on Ben Macdui, "rationalists have tried to explain the rare sightings of Am Fear Liath Mòr by pointing to Brocken Spectres, a phenomenon occasionally seen in mountains where a hugely magnified climber's shadow is cast on a lower level of cloud through a particular combination of atmospheric conditions" (*Am Fear Liath Mor*, Undiscovered Scotland, 2015:1). Apart from occasional photographs of footprints offering valid

support for Cohen's monster's existence theory, no concrete evidence has been proposed. However, some explanation is definitely needed, especially bearing in mind that a significant number of people have had very similar, or better to say, odd experiences at the top of Ben Macdui.

All in all, after enumerating the most (in)famous Scottish monsters, it should be noted that the mere fact that monsters occupy a remarkable place in both the past folk records and present literary and cultural accounts testifies to their relevance for the long-term process of generating the Scottish national myth, that is, it points to an important influence of the past folk beliefs in the creation of the contemporary Scottish national identity.

Concluding Remarks

In the foreword to his influential study *The White Goddess* (1993), Robert Graves discusses the question of the use and function of poetry (or arts in general) nowadays in comparison to its use and function in the prehistoric (matriarchal) period. Although Graves does not specifically deal with monsters in this passage, he does mention the sacred animal consorts and followers of the Goddess of All Living, as well as the Goddess herself and underlines their imposed monstrosity as a by-product of the dominant (contemporary) patriarchal culture. The passage is thus of great relevance for the theme of the paper and has to be quoted in full:

> [Poetry] was once a warning to man that he must keep in harmony with the family of living creatures among which he was born, by obedience to the wishes of the lady of the house; it is now a reminder that man has disregarded the warning...Nowadays is a civilization in which the prime emblems of poetry are dishonoured. In which serpent, lion and eagle belong to the circus-tent; ox, salmon and boar to the cannery; racehorse and greyhound to the betting ring; and the sacred grove to the saw-mill. In which the Moon is despised as a burned-out satellite of the Earth and woman reckoned as auxiliary state personnel. (Graves 1993: 14)

The sacred animals of the prehistoric period and woman as a matriarch have experienced a great cultural shift: once worshipped, feared and obeyed, they have gradually been demonized, turned into monsters and finally become completely marginalized and depreciated by modern culture. In the Scottish example, a good confirmation of this statement is definitely the constant preoccupation with the numerous accounts of mysterious monsters, ultimately sold out to lay and naive tourists caught on their expensive tourist adventures in the Scottish Highlands. In the