

BACK TO THE FUTURE



*Negotiating Scottish Sites
of Memory, 1707/2014*

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On September 18, 2014, Scottish residents went to the polls to determine the future of their nation. The pro-independence or “Yes” campaign, consisting of a coalition of groups led by the Scottish National Party, argued that political and economic decisions regarding Scotland should be decided by Scots alone and that Scotland had been dependent too long on a Westminster government that did not represent its interests. The unionist “Better Together” campaign, a cross-party organization championed by British Labour MP Alistair Darling, maintained that independence would ultimately be detrimental to Scotland, leaving it financially unstable and a minor player on the world stage.

“Should Scotland be an independent country?” The question that was chosen to appear on the referendum ballots was simple; the implications of the decision were complex, however, with consequences not just for Scotland and the UK, but for the rest of the British archipelago, the European Union, NATO, global financial networks, and groups in other geopolitical locations seeking to decouple from larger nation-states. Up until the final days of the campaign, the “Better Together” campaign was predicted to win, even though the “Yes” side had made substantial headway. But events heated up on September 6 when a YouGov poll indicated a lead for the “Yes” campaign for the first time.¹ Galvanized by this news, British Prime Minister David Cameron and the other Westminster political party leaders headed north as both “Yes” and “Better Together” supporters attempted to coax the substantial numbers of undecided voters over to their camps. Ultimately, arguably with the help of an impassioned speech by former Prime Minister Gordon Brown and last-minute promises by Westminster parliamentarians for further powers for the Scottish Parliament, on referendum day Scots weighed in on the side of staying in the Union by a margin of fifty-five to forty-five per cent.

In the deluge of campaign ads, commentary and debates leading up to the referendum, frequent reference was made to the event that created the United Kingdom in the first place: the 1707 Act of Union. Either by direct citation or by indirect allusion to the “307-year old relationship” between the two countries of Scotland and England, the Act of Union loomed large in the daily discourse. From the eighteenth century on, in fact, the Act of Union has served as an ambiguous *lieu de mémoire* in Pierre Nora’s terms,³ regarded through a variety of lenses ranging from James Thomson’s optimistic view of British “Wealth,” “Commerce,” “Liberty” and “Law” to Robert Burns’s more jaded perspective on the “parcel of rogues” who “bought and sold” their nation.³ What was surprising in the 2014 discussions, however, was the general lack of attention to the Act of Union, despite the fact that the question posed explicitly on the referendum ballot was the mirror image of the implicit question that was debated during the original negotiations for union when parliamentarians voted on whether to eliminate Scotland’s status as “an independent country.” In the discussions and debates in 2014, instead of serving as either a positive or negative site of memory in the campaigns, the Act of Union was more often than not relegated to being a mere place-marker on the timeline of the United Kingdom. In the aftermath of the referendum, as the “what ifs,” “what might have beens” and “what will be’s” are tallied, as “the ’45” (those who voted for independence) weigh their options for further action, and as the fate of the four nations that make up the UK is still very much to be determined, it is salutary to return to the contested time period of 1707 – to the “primal scene” of the Act of Union, as it were – in order to examine both how the earlier debates can illuminate our reading of the contemporary political situation, and, conversely, how the contemporary discussion might reanimate our understanding of 1707.

A Dynamic Relationship

In *My Scotland, Our Britain: A Future Worth Sharing*, published in 2014 before the referendum, former Prime Minister and “Better Together” campaigner Gordon Brown professes astonishment at the recent increase in the desire for political independence in Scotland: “The speed at which Scottish political nationalism has moved from

the fringes to the mainstream ... and now to threaten the very existence of Britain is extraordinary.” He muses further, “Why did we go for three hundred years without feeling the need to convert nationhood into statehood ...”⁴ In fact, the recent upsurge in the pro-independence perspective is more understandable if viewed within a longer time frame and within a more dynamic understanding of the union. Scotland and England have had a complex relationship stretching back much longer than just 307 years. In 1603, after centuries of conflict, the two nations were united under a shared monarch, James I of England and VI of Scotland, although they maintained separate parliaments. Both Scots and English shied away from a closer relationship at that point, however in 1651 they found themselves forcibly united, along with Ireland, under the Cromwellian Commonwealth. The Restoration effected the return of individual parliaments to both nations, and they continued as separate from each other – albeit more independent from the crown – after 1688, despite William of Orange’s interest in further unification. By 1702, however, circumstances had altered in such a way as to make a closer relationship more desirable for many on both sides of the Tweed. In England, the government of the new monarch, the childless Queen Anne, was eager for a union between the two nations in order to settle the succession on the Protestant Electress Sophia of Hanover and to secure the British Isles against the continuing Jacobite threat. For their part, having suffered through the devastating loss of the colonial project at Darien followed by years of crop failures at home, Scots were desperate to gain access to English markets and to eliminate the navigation acts that hampered their trading activity. Accordingly, negotiations for union began in earnest.⁵

Although union was now clearly in the sights of many of the two nations’ politicians, there were still numerous setbacks that might easily have scuttled further negotiations even at this point.⁶ Nevertheless, despite all odds, and thanks largely to the self-contradictory behavior on several key occasions of the professed leader of the anti-Union campaign, the Duke of Hamilton, the work of union continued. New commissioners appointed in 1706 went speedily to work crafting the twenty-five articles that formed the basis of the unification, and the subsequent Treaty of Union was presented for ratification by both national parliaments in October, 1706. In her letter to the Parliament

of Scotland dated July 31, 1706, Queen Anne indicates her hopes that the Treaty will find acceptance: “An intire and perfect Union will be the solid Foundation of lasting Peace; It will secure Your Religion, Liberty and Property, remove the Animosities amongst Your Selves, and the Jealousies and Differences betwixt Our Two Kingdoms: It must increase Your Strength, Riches and Trade, and by this Union the whole Island being joynd in Affection and free from all Apprehension of different Interests, will be enabled to Resist all its Enemies, support the Protestant Interest every where, and maintain the Liberties of *Europe*.” Anne suggests that the Union will be “the greatest Glory of our Reign” and would prove “the greatest Happiness of Our People.”⁷

Heated debates took place within the Scottish Parliament, anti-union petitions were presented from numerous shires and boroughs, and riots by mobs took place Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling and Dumfries.⁸ Ultimately, however, Anne got her wish. The Act of Union was passed by both parliaments, and on May 1, 1707, the united nation of Great Britain officially came into existence. Scotland maintained control over its legal and educational systems, and a separate act recognized Presbyterianism as Scotland’s state religion. In return, Scotland’s political representation in the combined parliament at Westminster was limited to forty-five members out of 558 in the House of Commons and sixteen members out of a total of 168 in the House of Lords.

The Union was far from popular even after its implementation. As Christopher Whatley points out, “Such was the level of disenchantment with the union in 1713 that it came within four votes of being dissolved,” and Colin Kidd suggests that, “the generality of the Scottish political nation appear to have been reluctant Britons for at least a couple of decades after the passage of incorporating union.”⁹ It was not until the mid-eighteenth century that Scotland began to reap the promised economic rewards of union, and not until after the Hanoverian succession and the failure of the two major Jacobite rebellions that the cultural memory of the Union began to be rewritten as an inevitability. When the structure of the united nation changed again with the inclusion of Ireland in 1801, the 1707 Act of Union was again reinvented, this time as a successful prototype for an incorporating union. But even during the height of the British empire, when many Scots benefited

from the Union, there were still attempts to reassert Scottish interests, as can be seen in such movements as the National Association for the Vindication of Scottish Rights (established 1853). Moreover, from the time of the First World War to the present, as Murray Pittock asserts, Scottish focus on renewed political power has grown as Scotland's interests have been eclipsed by policies aimed at promoting England.¹⁰ A 1979 referendum on devolution met with approval from a majority of voters, but it was declared invalid because the voter turnout meant that less than forty per cent of the eligible voting population were in favour. Finally, in 1999, Scotland gained back its own parliament, a result of the 1997 devolution vote that also saw assemblies granted to Wales and Northern Ireland.

What a glance back at the circumstances of 1707 suggests is that, rather than regarding the Union as a political inevitability, it is more realistic to view it as an anomalous success in a series of plans and attempts that had gone on for over a century earlier.¹¹ Moreover, despite Gordon Brown's professed surprise at the sudden Scottish desire to be independent, it is clear that the terms of the Act of Union have served as a target of debate and discussion both before and after their ratification, albeit viewed differently by Scots – and managed differently by the British government – in different eras. The 2014 referendum – and the resulting shape of the United Kingdom in the future – needs to be seen within this pattern of change, negotiation and adaptation.

Mediating Debate

Although there are of course crucial differences between events in 1707 and those in 2014, a comparison of the debates in the two eras suggests a number of productive parallels. One of the notable features of the 2014 referendum was the fact that it was the first decision of such national magnitude in Britain to be undertaken during the age of digital technology. When the 1997 devolution vote had taken place, for example, the World Wide Web and email were still at an early stage, but of course technology and access to technology changed astronomically over the ensuing seventeen years; the 2008 presidential election in the United States in particular suggested just how effective digital resources and social media could be in influencing voters.¹² The 2014 referendum played out across the net and social media. Facebook

pages were created and liked for both campaigns, blogs were constructed, Youtube clips were shared, memes were circulated. Reacting to the perception that traditional media were adopting a pro-Union bias, a number of new online resources sprung up like *Wings Over Scotland* and *Bella Caledonia*. At the same time, however, the case of the referendum also suggests the way in which new media work in a dynamic relationship with traditional media. The Scottish government's hefty white paper, *Scotland's Future*, for example, was made available for mobile devices, as a PDF for personal computers and in print form – by March, 2014, 100,000 copies of the 670-page plan had been printed and distributed (with a fourth printing ordered).¹³ The crucial debates between Alistair Darling and Alex Salmond were televised on BBC, then streamed and watched around the world, accompanied by a whirlwind of twitter messages. David Cameron and the other Westminster politicians published their pleas to Scotland to stay in the UK in the *Daily Mail*, a newspaper which is distributed both in paper and in digital form.¹⁴ The interplay of traditional and new media remind us of the way that, as Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin suggest, “A medium in our culture can never operate in isolation, because it must enter into relationships of respect and rivalry with other media.”¹⁵

Examining the mediation of the 2014 referendum causes us to reflect back on 1707 and to consider that the debates on the Union, too, took place during an era of media transition; the new medium in this earlier case, however, was print. As Michael Suarez and Michael Turner suggest, the early eighteenth century saw “the efflorescence of a comprehensive ‘print culture’ in Britain.”¹⁶ Bruce Levack comments on the number of printed works produced at the time of the Union: “The volume of recorded opinion on the union, in the form of speeches, letters, proclamations, and pamphlets, is truly astonishing. Between 1603 and 1707 there was no other issue in the history [of] either nation, with the one exception of the English civil war, which attracted more attention and created more controversy than the union.”¹⁷ In fact, the debate regarding the Union was the first extensive political debate that took place under new censorship laws. The Civil War printed debates that Levack mentions, as well as the pamphlet wars accompanying the Exclusion crisis and the Glorious Revolution, had all taken place during a time of governmental crisis when censorship administration was

temporarily disrupted. But in 1695, due to party conflict in the English Parliament, the Licensing Act was allowed to lapse in England, signaling the end of pre-publication censorship by government officials. In Scotland, printing restrictions had been imposed by the Privy Council not by a Licensing Act, but there was, as Karin Bowie notes, a corresponding lessening of state censorship north of the border, too, during this time period.¹⁸ Appearing at a time of fewer restrictions, the Union debates involved a wider subsection of the population not only in consumption but in the production of printed materials.

In the early years up to the negotiation of the 1706 Treaty of Union, it was anti-union commentators, many of whom were associated with Country party politicians, who dominated the printed conversation. From London, George Ridpath, the editor of the newspaper *The Flying Post*, and James Hodges, another journalist, wrote pamphlets against an incorporating Union. In Scotland, Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun, Member of Parliament for Haddingtonshire, published his parliamentary speeches as well as pamphlets on the Union controversy. For many commentators like the Presbyterian minister of Hamilton, Robert Wylie, author of *A speech without doors, concerning toleration* (Edinburgh, 1703), it was the fate of the Presbyterian Kirk that was the main issue. Pro-union commentators such as George Mackenzie also dipped their oar in the waters of the debate at this point, although to a much slighter degree, as Bowie notes.¹⁹ The growth in print culture also meant that readers had available to them not just persuasive argumentation, but also the materials on which many of the arguments were based. In addition to quoting from Thomas Craig's arguments written at the time of the Union of Crowns, for example, Ridpath also translated and printed his work.²⁰

Discussion in the press heated up as the Treaty of Union was brought before the Scottish parliament for ratification. The Queen's speech to the Scottish parliament and the speeches of the High Commissioner and Lord Chancellor were made available in print, as were the Articles of Union. Several other parliamentary speeches were also printed and circulated, the most famous of which was Lord Beilhaven's speech delivered on 2 November, 1706, representing a dystopic vision of the Scottish nation after Union. By this time, as Karin Bowie notes, the Court party had also begun to take further advantage of the uses

of print for propaganda purposes.²¹ Accordingly, William Seton of Pitmedden also published his speech delivered 2 November, arguing that the only successful way to ameliorate the “Languishing Condition of this Nation” was through a complete union. George Mackenzie, now Earl of Cromarty, published a host of new materials, including a periodical, *Triologus: A conference between Mr. Con, Mr. Pro, and Mr. Indifferent, Concerning the Union*, aimed at providing calmly reasoned “Information” in the midst of what he presents as an “Epidemick Phrenezie [sic]” of ignorance regarding the union debate.²² The pro-Union campaign also got an infusion of energy from the indefatigable pen of Daniel Defoe who travelled up to Edinburgh in the autumn of 1706 with a commission from Robert Harley, Queen Anne’s chief minister, to publish what he could in favour of the Union.²³

The Union debate was accompanied by an unprecedented amount of printed material. But, like the 2014 referendum debates, the 1707 debates also afford a view of the interaction between old and new media, suggesting, as Clifford Siskin and William Warner suggest, the way that “print” came to take “center stage” in the early eighteenth century only within an “already existing media ecology of voice, sound, image, and manuscript writing.”²⁴ The discourse on the Union demonstrates the dynamic relationship between print and embodied performance, for example. As the *Minuts [sic] of the Parliament of Scotland* indicate, there were a large number of printed petitions against the Union presented to Parliament from various burghs and guilds – these were all read aloud during the time of the discussion on the Treaty as well as printed for distribution. Bowie suggests that the printing of these petitions, along with pamphlets, sermons and speeches “brought awareness of the union treaty ... to many ordinary subjects in the Lowlands” and had the effect of attracting anti-Union rioters in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Stirling and Dumfries.²⁵ Printed accounts of the embodied actions of protest also served to encourage public perception of the opposition to Union. A copy of the Articles of Union was symbolically burnt at Dumfries, for example, a metaleptic symbol in print of the Union itself, then an account of the burning was also printed, further disseminating the protests of the people of Dumfries. Examining the referendum and the Union debates side by side provides a long-term perspective on the way in which newly dominant media work in relation to existing media.

The Issues

Scotland's Future lists three main points at the “heart of the case for independence”: political representation; control over resources and economic decisions; and control over social benefits.²⁶ Up until the final week before the referendum, the “Better Together” side focused primarily on the second of these issues in its campaign, arguing that an independent Scotland would mean a weaker Scotland both in terms of its finances and its global political voice. Alistair Darling’s famous question to Alex Salmond regarding what currency Scotland would use if they were not allowed to use the pound (“Where’s your Plan B?”) was considered to have won for him the first televised debate.²⁷ There are notable differences between the concerns in 2014 and those in 1707. In the earlier debates, the issue of the distribution of social benefits was naturally absent, for example.²⁸ However, the origins of contemporary concerns regarding political independence and economic power can also be discerned in the debates that took place three hundred years ago.

For George Ridpath, discussions on Union were intimately connected to the historical power imbalance between England and Scotland that dated from the time of the Union of Crowns, an imbalance that he argued had contributed most recently to the disaster at Darien.²⁹ James Hodges also considered the historical relationship between the two nations, concluding that Scotland “hath had so much sensible Experience of very great and almost innumerable Disadvantages in their National Rights and Interests, and of the unavoidable influence of *England* upon their Government Civil and Ecclesiastical, their Trade, and all other public Affairs” that they have “great [...] reason to be very cautious in putting themselves further in the Power of *England*.”³⁰ Echoing the sentiments of Ridpath and Hodges, Fletcher of Saltoun also maintained that Scotland’s political hands had been tied since 1603: “All our Affairs since the Union of Crowns, have been manag’d by the Advice of English Ministers, and the principal Offices of the Kingdom fill’d with such Men as the Court of England knew wou’d be subservient to their Designs: By which means they have had so visible an influence upon our whole Administration, that we have from that time appear’d to the rest of the World, more like a conquer’d Province, than a free and

independent People.”³¹ Ridpath, Hodges and Saltoun sought a federal union, an eighteenth-century equivalent of “devo-max” which would re-assert Scotland’s rights *vis a vis* England, rather than an incorporating union which would further erode Scottish “Liberties, Privileges, and Independency.”³² Ridpath’s reaction to the terms of the Treaty bluntly states the perspective of many who opposed an incorporating union: “*to deprive the Kingdom of Scotland of Our Parliament, and to allow us only 16 Lords, and 45 Commons, to join the Parliament of England, is a Subjection, and not a Union.*”³³

Pro-incorporating Union works, however, indicated the positive impact on trade that would result from incorporation and emphasized the threat to the security of both nations were such a Union not to proceed. In *Parainesis Pacifica*, which included separate arguments addressed to English and Scottish readers, George Mackenzie argued that “a perpetual Identifying One-ness ... will give a present contentment to all minds; a security against all apprehensions in our Selves, or hopes to our Adversaries of our dis-union or variance; it will strengthen *Brittain’s* force, Increase *Brittain’s* Trade, Facilitate all the Exercise of Government to the Sovereign; and so this *One* will more solidly, than any other Neighbour, pretend to be, *Non pluribus impar.*”³⁴ William Seton of Pitmedden, too, argued for that an incorporating union would help Scotland in a global economy: “this Nation by an entire Separation from England cannot extend it’s [sic] Trade, so as to raise its Power in Proportion to other trafficking Nations in Europe.”³⁵

In 2014, six years after the collapse of the global marketplace and in the midst of the growing power of Putin’s Russia and ISIS, “Better Together”’s arguments regarding the “Advantages in Commerce” and security in an incorporating union seem to have convinced a majority of Scots to vote against independence. In the current discussions regarding devolved powers to Scotland (and to other parts of the UK), however, it is worth considering the way that the representation of such issues also resonates with past formulations. In going forward, it is also important to call attention to paths that were not taken along the way, such as the federal system proposed by Ridpath and others, and to reflect on the influences behind the choices not to take those paths.

Imagining the Nation

The 2014 referendum campaigns featured a frenzy of competing images and slogans. A typical “Yes” advertisement depicts individuals following their goals – a woman who runs her own florist shop, a pensioner preparing for a date, a toddler learning to dress herself, a young man going off to university. “Independence; it’s what we all want,” intones the florist to the chords of inspiring and vaguely Celtic music, encouraging the nation to take the plunge.³⁶ Meanwhile, a “Better Together” campaign ad catches the comments of those who purport to present a more rational perspective: “We’re not in *Braveheart*, you know; there’s a lot of other things going on.”³⁷ “We can have the best of both worlds,” boasts a youth in a “Better Together” ad. A comparison of images of the Scottish nation in the 1706 debates and the 2014 referendum indicates differences in the ways in which the Scottish nation is represented, but it also suggests how symbols found in the earlier debates are re-inscribed in a contemporary situation.

In 1706, a fierce battle raged in print regarding the history of the Scottish nation, particularly after William Atwood published his *The Superiority and Direct Dominion of the Imperial Crown of England over the Crown and Kingdom of Scotland* (1704) in which he claimed that Scotland was a fiefdom of England, hence bound by the English Act of Settlement. Those opposing an incorporating union refuted Atwood and drew on the figures of William Wallace and Robert the Bruce as well as the National Covenant and the struggles of the Kirk in order to assert Scottish historical independence. George Ridpath also invoked the Declaration of Arbroath, suggesting the parallels between the original signatories and the current Parliament: “they would never suffer the Crown of *Scotland* to be subject to that of *England*, so long as there were one hundred Scotsmen alive: And we can’t suppose, but their Successors will shew as much Zeal for preserving the Liberty of the Kingdom, as their Ancestors did for saving the Independency of the Crown.”³⁸ In the work of Ridpath and others, Scotland’s ethnic purity was emphasized, as the nation was represented as a homogeneous population who had withstood the onslaughts of invaders. Lacking a parallel positive history of the connection between the two nations, pro-Unionist writers focused instead on future improvements

and security for the nation. Daniel Defoe mocked the fact that Scotland's reputation rested on "the Rubbish of her Ancient Fame" and sang the praises of the proposed "*Blest Conjunction*" of the Union as a Providential act.³⁹

In the contemporary discussions, however, it was the anti-Union campaigners who seemed to make an effort to avoid engaging with historic depictions of the nation, fearful perhaps of drawing forth accusations of ethnic nationalism and of being dismissed as *Braveheart* wannabes. *Scotland's Future* refers only briefly to "our ancient nation," promising to restore Scotland to its earlier status as "an independent country." Instead, the document focuses more on Scots as makers of modernity: "Scots have been at the forefront of the great moral, political and economic debates of our times as humanity has searched for progress in the modern age."⁴⁰ The "Better Together" campaign, on the other hand, eagerly drew on a history of united British efforts, capitalizing on the current memorialization of the First World War and depicting the common suffering and triumph involved in both world wars. (Mention of the common history of the British colonial period, however, which was actually the most beneficial post-Union era for many Scots, was carefully avoided.)

The media campaigns of both 1706 and 2014 drew on anthropomorphic representations of England and Scotland as individuals in a domestic relationship. The 1706 pamphlets abounded with gendered images of the Scottish nation as a courageous but helpless woman unable to resist the unwanted advances of a southern suitor. *The Comical History of the Marriage-Union Betwixt Fergusia and Heptarchus*, for characterizes the incorporating union as the literal consumption of the Scottish nation, as Fergusia complains that Heptarchus will not be satisfied until: "You'd devour Me, and burie Me in the midst of Your self, and I be turned into Your very Flesh and Blood."⁴¹ In *Scotland's Speech to Her Sons*, the "Old Mother" Scotland admonishes her "sons" to come to her "Relief" and save her "Reputation."⁴²

In 2014, it was primarily the "Better Together" campaign that utilized such gendered images of the nation. The "Woman Who Made Up Her Mind" ad, for example, visually reaffirms the idea of the union as a marriage with close-ups of the wedding ring of the main character's anxious hands.⁴³ David Cameron's uncharacteristically emotive plea

for the Scots to stay in the UK also reinforced the idea of affective familial bonds: “I would be heartbroken if this family of nations was torn apart.”⁴⁴ The official “Yes” campaign was again careful to avoid such representations, citing the relationships between individuals rather than invoking images of the nations as individuals: “England, Wales and Northern Ireland will always be our family, friends and closest neighbours.”⁴⁵ One of the most successful “Yes” advertisements, however, implicitly reinforced a gendered representation of the nation, opening with an image of a fetal ultrasound and featuring a narrator who explains: “My name’s Kirstie, and I’m going to be born on September 18, 2014, the very same day as the referendum on independence for Scotland. The question is what kind of country will I grow up in.”⁴⁶ At the same time, the reactivation of gendered representations of the nations also enabled a consciousness of the implications of their terms. The timely announcement of the Duchess of Cambridge’s pregnancy inspired a flurry of retweets (13.5 million of them) reimagining the alignments implicit in the earlier images of the nations as domestic partners: “Scotland: ‘I’m leaving you ...’ Britain: ‘You can’t!’ Scotland: ‘I’m leaving. It’s over.’ Britain: ‘... I’m pregnant!’”⁴⁷ In this reinscription of the “Fergusia/Heptarchus” dyad, it is Scotland which is gendered male and which is represented as the partner with the power.

Who speaks for Scotland?

In considering the 2014 referendum alongside the Act of Union, one cannot but be struck by the changes that have taken place in the process of political decision-making over the past three hundred years. In 1707, the decision to unite Scotland and England under the name of Great Britain was determined by the members of the three estates of the Parliament of Scotland and by the members of the House of Commons and House of Lords in the Parliament of England. In contrast, in 2014, the decision to keep or disband the union was put into the hands of all Scottish residents of voting age, including, for the first time, sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds. 4.7 million Scots registered to cast their votes on September 18; the turnout was eighty-five per cent, with ninety per cent of the population coming out in some locations. Despite the obvious differences in circumstances between the two moments, however, it is crucial to consider them in

“conjunction,” as Defoe would say. Most importantly, in this era of what Nora calls “historical sensibility,” such a comparison encourages us to see history not as a chronological and teleological unfolding but as a fluid process of meaning-making that works in multiple directions.⁴⁸ As Catherine Belsey suggests, “We remember the past not simply as it was, but as it is or, more precisely, as it will turn out to have been, in consequence of our remembering it.”⁴⁹ The exact nature of the 2014 referendum as a new *lieu de memoire* for the Scottish nation remains to be determined. What is clear, however, is in that going forward into the brave new world of Scotland in the future, there is much to be learned by going back.

Notes

- 1 yougov.co.uk/news/2014/09/06/latest-scottish-referendum-poll-yes-lead/
- 2 Pierre Nora defines a *lieu de memoire* as “any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community” (*Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past* Vol. 1 [New York: Columbia University Press, 1996], xvii).
- 3 James Thomson, “Spring,” in *The Seasons* (London, 1730), 42–43; Robert Burns, “Such a Parcel of Rogues” in *Burns Poems and Songs*, ed. James Kinsley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 512–13.
- 4 Gordon Brown, *My Scotland, Our Britain: A Future Worth Sharing*, ebook, nonpaginated.
- 5 For further information on the relationship between the two nations prior to 1707 and on the details of the 1707 Act of Union, see Alvin Jackson, *The Two Unions: Ireland, Scotland, and the Survival of the United Kingdom, 1707–2007* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), Colin Kidd, *Union and Unionism: Political Thought in Scotland, 1500–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) and Christopher Whatley, *The Scots and the Union* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).
- 6 In 1703 a meeting of representatives from both parliaments commissioned to settle the details of union was adjourned without coming to an agreement – largely over the issue of relative national debt. In 1704, the Scottish Parliament, dominated by the Country party and taking advantage the British government’s need for funds for the European war, passed the Act of Security stipulating that upon the death of Queen Anne, Scotland did not need to accept the same successor chosen by England. In response, the English Parliament passed the Alien Act in 1705. See Whatley for further details.
- 7 *Her Majesties most Gracious Letter to the Parliament of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1706), 2.
- 8 See Karin Bowie, *Scottish Public Opinion and the Anglo-Scottish Union, 1699–1707* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2007).

- 9 Whatley 16; Colin Kidd, "North Britishness and the Nature of Eighteenth-Century British Patriotisms," *The Historical Journal* 39/2 (1996), 361–82; 368.
- 10 See Murray Pittock, *The Road to Independence? Scotland in the Balance* (London: Reaktion Books and Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2014).
- 11 As Christopher Whatley notes, "As it happened, the outcome – eventually – was incorporating union, but the decade of crisis [leading up to 1707] might equally have produced a very different result" (*Scots and the Union*, 139).
- 12 The use of digital media by Barack Obama's campaign during the 2008 US election initiated a tidal wave of research into digital media and elections. See, for example, Holli A Semetko and Margaret Scammell, eds., *The SAGE Handbook of Political Communication* (London: SAGE Publications, 2012) and Brian McNair, ed., *An Introduction to Political Communication* (London: Routledge, 2011).
- 13 www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/scottish-independence/10691534/Alex-Salmonds-independence-blueprint-cost-Scottish-taxpayers-1.3m.html
- 14 www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2749959/DAVID-CAMERON-Our-union-precious-Don-t-tear-apart.html
- 15 Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 65.
- 16 Michael F. Suarez and Michael Turner, "Introduction," *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, Vol. 5: 1695–1830 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 2.
- 17 Bruce Levack, *The Formation of the British State. England, Scotland and the Union, 1603–1707* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 14.
- 18 Bowie, *Scottish Public Opinion*, 228–29.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 87–91.
- 20 *Scotland's Sovereignty [sic] Asserted* (London, 1695).
- 21 Bowie, *Scottish Public Opinion*, 103.
- 22 George Mackenzie, *Trialogus: A conference between Mr. Con, Mr. Pro, and Mr. Indifferent, Concerning the Union* (Edinburgh?, 1706).
- 23 George Harris Healey, ed. *Letters of Daniel Defoe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), 126.
- 24 Clifford Siskin and William Warner, Introduction, *This is Enlightenment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 10.
- 25 Bowie, *Scottish Public Opinion*, 138.
- 26 *Scotland's Future*, 3.
- 27 www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/scottish-independence/11015068/Alistair-Darling-whats-your-Plan-B-Mr-Salmond.html
- 28 Although there were discussions about how well off the population would be in general, questions regarding specific social benefits were confined to considerations of positions for Scottish aristocrats under a combined parliament.
- 29 *A Discourse Upon the Union of Scotland and England* (London, 1702).
- 30 *The Rights and Interests of the Two British Monarchies* (London, 1703), 8.
- 31 Andrew Fletcher, *Speeches by a Member of the Parliament, which began at Edinburgh the 6th. of May 1703* (Edinburgh, 1703), 6–7.
- 32 Hodges, *Rights and Interests*, 7.
- 33 George Ridpath, *Considerations upon the union of the two kingdoms* (Edinburgh 1706), v.
- 34 George Mackenzie, *Parainesis Pacifica* (London, 1702), 21.

- 35 William Seton, *A speech in the Parliament of Scotland. The second day of November, 1706* (London, 1706), 7.
- 36 www.youtube.com/watch?v=pO3Jm1XD8h8
- 37 www.youtube.com/watch?v=2uSJJKnFKQE
- 38 George Ridpath, *Considerations Upon the Union* (Edinburgh, 1706), 55.
- 39 Daniel Defoe, *Caledonia. A Poem in Honour of Scotland, and the Scots* (Edinburgh, 1706 and London, 1707), 39 and 19.
- 40 Alex Salmond, "Preface," *Scotland's Future*, viii.
- 41 William Wright, *The Comical History of the Marriage-Union Betwixt Fergusia and Heptarchus* (Edinburgh, 1706), 12.
- 42 James Clark, *Scotland's Speech to Her Sons* (Edinburgh, 1706).
- 43 This ad prompted an intense backlash for its portrayal of women as disengaged from politics: www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLAewTVmkAU
- 44 www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/reuters/article-2750329/British-PM-begs-Scots-Dont-rip-UK-family-apart-independence-vote.html
In contrast to the suggestion of the advantages of national purity, Mr. Cameron indicated that the best ideas come with miscegenation: "As individuals and as nations, we have done extraordinary things. This is the special alchemy of the UK – you mix together Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland and together we smash expectations"
www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2749933/Don-t-rip-family-apart-Cameron-gets-passionate-Union-highly-personal-article-Mail-warns-no-going-Yes-vote-wins.html
- 45 *Scotland's Future*, ix.
- 46 www.youtube.com/watch?v=pO3Jm1XD8h8
- 47 twitter.com/YesVoteScots/status/509011727078674432
- 48 Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les lieux de mémoire*," *Representations* 26 (1989), 7–25; 7.
- 49 Catherine Belsey, "Remembering as Re-Inscription – With a Difference," in *Literature, Literary History and Cultural Memory*, Herbert Graves, ed. (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag (2005), 3–17; 4.

Leith Davis is Professor of English at Simon Fraser University, and director of the Centre for Scottish Studies there. She is the author of *Acts of Union: Scotland and the Negotiation of the British Nation, 1707–1830* (Stanford University Press, 1999) and co-editor of *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism* (Cambridge University Press, 2004). She is currently at work on a book on *Media and Cultural Memory in Britain, 1688–1745*.

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