The Politicization of Scottish Dress: A Study of Highland Garb

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What began as an inexpensive dress for peasants and workers became a form of rebellion, and then the tool with which the Highlands became a modern industrialized society. This evolution was enhanced by the English, through the creation of the kilt, the institution of first the Act of Union and then a Hanoverian Government, and then the formulation of the manner with which the Highlands would use the economy to modernize. Within this paper I hope to argue that Scottish national identity was formed around Highland dress in the eighteenth century, and for their assimilation into the Greater British Isles.

From tribal conflicts between the Picts, Gaels and Britons to twenty-first century protests for dissolution of the Act of Union within Scotland, relations between Scotland and England have always been troubled. These conflicts are founded on a history of "mutual hatred, mistrust and armed conflict" between these two strongly defined nations, struggling not only for supremacy, but survival.[1] In this narrative of survival of the Scottish Nation, 1707 is a pivotal date in the history of Great Britain, it is the date of the Act of Union unifying Scotland, England and Wales under one monarch and one Government.[2] This controversial Act did not unite the peoples as Parliamentarians had hoped. Rather, the Act of Union, created in part to ensure acceptance of the succession of a Hanoverian ruler upon the death of Queen Anne, spurred Jacobite Rebels to action—most notably within Scotland. Jacobite rebels favoured Queen Anne's half-brother James as a Catholic option to succeed to the throne. It is the action of these Jacobite rebels most notably in 1715 and 1745, which caused the British Parliament to enact the Act of Prohibition in 1746 to quell rebel action within Scotland. Through an analysis of this Act, I argue that the role of Scottish dress and its evolution was integral to the creation of the modern Scottish national identity as well as the Scottish peoples' assimilation into the British state. In order to accomplish this I first discuss Scottish dress itself to include the invention of the kilt, and then undergo a discussion of the Jacobite rebellions including a discussion of the Act of Proscription and its effects, a brief discussion of sumptuary law and then a discussion of the fluid role of Scottish dress and culture within the British Isles.

In order to understand the evolution of Scottish dress, it is crucial to understand its meanings. The kilt and other elements of what we perceive to be Scottish dress in the twenty-first century have a long history of "intervention and deliberate reinvention" ever since their ancient beginnings.[3] Though the Scottish National dress as seen today is believed to originate from "a distant past and invented by remote ancestors," the articles of dress we see today are largely an invention of the eighteenth century.[4] That being said, these modern day reincarnations are loosely based on ancient dress. Notably, the basic plaid of which the kilt is made is part of an

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[1] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707- 1837* (London: Yale University Press, 1992), 117.
[2] Colley, *Britons*, 11.
[3] Andrew Bolton, *Bravehearts: Men in Skirts* (New York: V&A Publications, 2003), 94.
[4] Hugh Cheape, "Gheibhte breacain charnaid ('Scarlet tartans would be got…'): the Re-invention of Tradition," in *From Tartan to Tartanry*, ed. Ian Brown (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 16.

almost prehistoric tradition of weaving. The use of checks and stripes as a form of patterning is believed to be almost as old as the cloth itself, with the earliest piece of existent plaid being from the third century.[5] Yet Scottish history is inextricably tangled with that of Ireland and likewise so is their material culture.[6] Though Scotland is historically believed to be peopled by the Irish, recent archeological evidence has turned this belief on its head. However this discovery does not change historical perspectives, and the Scottish desire seek to not only differentiate their dress from the English, but also from the Irish in their search for identity and nationhood.[7] These are not the only dichotomies within the isles though; what we perceive as a national Scottish dress today indeed began only in the Highlands. In this sparsely populated region the people's identity coalesced not along state lines, but along geographic lines. Thus, Scottish Lowlanders never traditionally wore plaids.[8] As such, the dress to be discussed in this paper, prior to 1745 is not considered 'Scottish dress' but 'Highland dress'.

The aforementioned dress consists most notably of the 'belted plaid,' a precursor of today's kilt. Like the kilt, the belted plaid is made of a tartan fabric and worn with pleats, but unlike the kilt, the belted plaid is a sixteen foot long piece of fabric that was arranged in folds, and then belted to the body at the waist, with the excess to be worn over the shoulder and affixed with a brooch.[9] This mode of dress was traditional amongst the common people as noted in travel journals.[10] Not only was this dress convenient for peasants at work, but it was a "conveniently cheap" and multi-purpose garment, used both as daytime wear and in the evening was laid out as a sleeping blanket.[11]

Figure 1 Falkirk Plaid
"Record: Cloth (Fragment)," National Museums Scotland, accessed November 25, 2013, http://nms.scran.ac.uk/database/record.php?usi=000-100-036-743-C

The tartan itself, woven into the belted plaid or upon another garment holds much cultural value and meaning. Striped and checked cloth is common in other European countries, Asia, Africa and South America in which these stripes or checks are used not only for decoration but also for defining an individual or group's position within the society.[12] Though tartan is contemporarily seen as differentiating family groups, this is another eighteenth century conception. In fact, prior to 1745 it was common for a single person to wear a variety of tartans simultaneously.[13] Any differentiation of colour or pattern within the tartan was largely to differentiate between social class or geographic location, rather than clan.[14] This is

[5] Ibid. Please See Figure 1.
[6] Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger, eds. *The Invention of Tradition*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 16.
[7] John Telfer Dunbar, *History of Highland Dress* (London: Oliver & Boyd, 1962), 1.
[8] Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 15.
[9] Cheape, "Gheibhte breacain charnaid," 24.
[10] Hugh Cheape, *Tartan: The Highland Habit* (Edinburgh: the National Museums of Scotland, 1991), 19. Elites would wear plaid trousers as kilts could not be worn while riding horses.
[11] Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 22.
[12] Pastoureau, *The Devil's Cloth*, 29.
[13] Robin Nicholson, "From Ramsay's *Flora MacDonald* to Raeburn's *MacNab*: The Use of Tartan as a Symbol of Identity," *Textile History* 36 (2005): 149, accessed October 8, 2013.
[14] Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 23.

because – as Su Grierson notes in her study of dyes used within early tartan patterns, colours were largely determined through the ability to find and gather plants to produce the proper dies.[15] In this circumstance, red was a much more expensive colour as it was more difficult to find and produce. Thus, red would be worn by the elites that could afford the dye to display their status through their conspicuous consumption. In the same way certain geographic regions, because of their soil and climate, would grow plants which would make certain dyes available where others were not. Yet tartan is most notable for its ability to survive, whereas traditional checked patterns throughout Europe have "declined and disappeared… in Scotland" the tartan has survived, perhaps in part due to the events of the eighteenth century.[16]

The origins of the kilt itself are important for the inherent political implications in its invention. From a purely material point of view, the kilt is "the lower half of the belted plaid with the back pleats stitched up."[17] The story of the invention of the kilt is still entirely contentious, as it is the basis for Scottish Nationalism. [18] The generally accepted story[19] is that an English Quaker, Thomas Rawlinson, invented the kilt while on business in Scotland. [20] He was foreman of a mill and found many of the workers, local scots wearing belted plaids, were inconvenienced by their dress, and as such set out to "abridge the dress and make it handy and convenient."[21] Through this story of creation, we find that the kilt is in fact an English invention, and rather than an extension or evolution of a mode of traditional dress, was a tool of assimilation used to bring the 'barbarian' Scot into industrialized society to work productively.[22] Rawlinson merely sought to ease this transformation for his workers.[23] Thus, not only was the kilt invented by the English, but the widespread proliferation of the tartan and the kilt was a "pseudo-highland Scottish identity, factitiously imposed on a trousered nation" by such cultural commentators as Sir Walter Scott.[24] Yet it is an unavoidable fact that use of the kilt superseded the belted plaid,[25] and though it may not have begun so, became the "uniform of nationhood [and] nationality."[26]

Figure 2
First Instance of the Short Kilt in Portraiture
Bolton, *Bravehearts,* 97.

It is important to understand the concept of Jacobitism before we can study it in the microcosm of Scotland, but this is easier said than done.

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[15] Su Grierson, "Vegetable Dyes of Scotland," *Journal of the Society of Dyers & Colourists* 100 (1984): 209, accessed October 8, 2013.
[16] Cheape, *Tartan: The Highland Habit*, 7.
[17] Bolton, *Bravehearts,* 97.
[18] Viccy Coltman, "Party- Coloured Plaid? Portraits of Eighteenth - Century Scots in Tartan," *Textile History* 41 (2010): 187, accessed October 8, 2013.
[19] Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 22.
First recounted in 1768
[20] Bolton, *Bravehearts,* 97.
[21] Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 22.
[22] Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 22.
[23] Bolton, *Bravehearts,* 97.
[24] Murray Pittock, "Plaiding the Invention of Scotland," in *From Tartan to Tartanry*, ed. Ian Brown, 32-47 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 32.
[25] Nicholson, "From Ramsay's *Flora MacDonald* to Raeburn's *MacNab,"* 161.
[26] Cheape, "Gheibhte breacain charnaid," 28.

Many scholars today disagree on the motivations and prevalence of Jacobite movements within the British Isles. Some have even said that it is a "hidden stream of political subterfusion, a mysterious shadowy presence, too vague to grasp, to volatile to define,"[27] yet it is necessary to do so to continue this study. By the simplest definition, a Jacobite can be defined as a person who preferred the exiled Stuart line to the ruling monarch/dynasty – the Hanoverians[28] which had begun in 1688 with "James II's flight to France."[29] Though neither of these definitions gives a sense of the complexity of this movement, or any idea why Jacobitism was seen as "the most heinous form of treason" by the English.[30] In part, the reaction of the English was caused by the power and threat which the Jacobite movement encompassed. Far from a small band of disorganized rebels, the Jacobites can be said to demonstrate a "structured organization, strategic coherence or even ideological uniformity."[31] Furthermore, they were not isolated to Great Britain herself. The Jacobite movement drew support from the surrounding Catholic monarchies of Europe, and officials feared not only the internal insurrection, but foreign invasion treats on behalf of the Stuart monarchs from both France and Spain.[32] On an individual level, there were a myriad of motivations for supporting the Jacobite cause including: economic incentives of the old regime, supporting the Catholic Church, or belief in the Stuart monarchs themselves.[33] It was for many of these very reasons that they were vilified by the English: particularly for their absolutist, Roman Catholic beliefs.[34] Yet by its conservative supporters Jacobitism was seen as a corrective move of political, social, and commercial deviations from tradition which the government was enacting, solidified by the Act of Union in 1707, after which the most serious of the uprisings took place. Though the second attempt in 1715 was the most widespread, the third in 1745 launched an invasion which came within 140 miles of London.[35] Unfortunately, the failure of this movement is largely attributable to the leadership, which "failed to turn military action into political gains."[36]

Jacobite support within Scotland spanned over seven decades and held undeniable political substance.[37] At the beginning of the movement in the 1690's Scottish Jacobites indicted William of Orange, the new Hanoverian ruler, for "judicial, economic and political breaches of trust."[38] Tensions only became more prominent over time. However picking sides was not as easy as the motivations listed make it out to be; though Jacobitism was a popular, patriotic cause, in order to

Better is the proud plaid
Around my shoulder and put under my arm,
Better than though I would get a coat
Of the best cloth that comes from England.

My own little hero is the garb
That would require the belt to fix it on;
Putting the kilts into pleats,
After rising to go on a journey.

Cheape, "Gheibhte breacain charnaid," 19.

[27] Paul Kleber Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 1.
[28] *Ibid*., 4.
[29] *Ibid*., 4.
[30] *Ibid*., 2.
[31] Coltman, "Party- Coloured Plaid?" 182-183.
[32] Colley, *Britons*, 72.
[33] Sally Tuckett, "National Dress, Gender and Scotland: 1745-1822," *Textile History* 40 (2009): 143, accessed October 8, 2013.
[34] Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People*, 2.
[35] Colley, *Britons*, 72., 11
[36] Allan MacInnes, "Jacobitism in Scotland: Episodic Cause of National Movement?" *The Scottish Historical Review* 86 (2007): 251, accessed October 8, 2013.
[37] MacInnes, "Jacobitism in Scotland," 225.
[38] *Ibid*., 237.

preserve family holdings it was necessary to also show support for the ruling Hanoverians.[39] Thus, Jacobitism is seen as more than an "episodic and disruptive cause" but rather a sustained movement perpetrated through covert means: such as dress.[40] Over time, Lowland Scots had disassociated themselves from their Highland counterparts in order to increase trade with the vast English market, and before them the Romans. This happened to such a great extent that the Highlanders and Lowlanders differed not only in their dress and manner, but also in their language – the speech of the Highlanders being almost incomprehensible to the Lowlanders.[41] As Jacobite tensions increased, Lowlanders saw a need for the martial traits which they had seen to typify the Highlanders.[42] These martial traits were typified through covert means: the kilt. The kilt, and along with it tartan, became seen as the rebel Jacobite cloth,[43] a kind of uniform.[44] This is congruent with traditional perceptions of striped dress in general since the twelfth century as representing the demeaned, disaffected, pejorative, or malevolent section of society that wore it. Thus, the militant kilted Highlander became equated with the Jacobite movement.[45]

In 1745, the Jacobite movement demonstrated how dangerous they really were. Following the Battle of Culloden and the triumph of the English, the Act of Proscription, popularly dubbed the 'Diskilting Act' was passed. [46] Highland dress was singled out by its exoticness and for its association with the Jacobite movement, and as such was used as a tool to crush it.[47] The Proscribing Act legislated against many cultural facets of the Highlands, but most notably against the wearing of any part of Highland dress and the carrying of arms.[48] Yet, it is also notable that this Act only applied to Scotland itself – not throughout Britain or against all Scots.[49] It was hoped that this ban would disintegrate the Highland's distinct culture and way of life, and facilitate the assimilation of the Highlanders into the greater British society.[50] Much like the assimilation of the Indigenous people of North America, this Act was a systematic attempt to eradicate the culture of the Highlanders in the hope that this would also eradicate any further political opposition not quashed through military force.[51] Enforcing this Act and achieving the desired results, required severe punishments to discourage defiance.

> I… do swear, and as I shall have to answer to God at the Great day of Judgement, I have not nor shall have in my possession, any gun, sword, pistol or arm whatsoever; and never use any tartan, plaid, or any part of the highland garb; and if I do so, may I be cursed in my undertakings, family, and property – may I never see my wife and children, father, mother, and any relations – may I be killed in battle as a coward, and lie without Christian burial, in a strange land, far from the graves of my forefathers and kindred; -- may all this come across me if I break my oath.
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> Faiers, *Tartan*, 108.

The Act of Proscription was certainly given teeth. In addition to a multitude of punishments

[39] *Ibid.,* 247-248.
[40] *Ibid.,* 229.
[41] Coltman, "Party- Coloured Plaid?" 185.
[42] Matthew Dziennik, "Whig Tartan: Material Culture and its use in the Scottish Highlands, 1746-1815," *Past and Present* 217 (2012): 118, accessed October 8, 2013.
[43] Pittock, "Plaiding the Invention of Scotland," 35.
[44] Cheape, "Gheibhte breacain charnaid," 28.
[45] *Ibid*., 17.
[46] Bolton, *Bravehearts,* 99.
[47] Michel Pastoureau, *The Devil's Cloth: a History of Stripes and Striped Fabric,* Translated by Jody Gladding (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 11-12.
[48] Faiers, *Tartan*, 108.
[49] Nicholson, "From Ramsay's *Flora MacDonald* to Raeburn's *MacNab,"* 154.
[50] Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 21.
[51] Jonathan Faiers, *Tartan*, (Oxford: Berg in Association with the Victoria and Albert Museum, 2008), 22.

culminating in transportation to the colonies for a sentence of up to seven years, it was also necessary for those even suspected of wearing Tartan to swear an oath to God.[52] This equated the wearing of Highland dress to the wearing of "a gun, sword or pistol," and if the accused, lied to be cursed to die a coward without a Christian Burial.[53] The oath described is fascinating for a variety of reasons. Notably the wearing of Highland Dress is equated to the carrying of arms, in that punishment was the same for either offence, and as such we must assume it was seen to be just as reprehensible. Through outlawing this mode of dress the English authorities were acknowledging the power of clothing as a unifying and rebellious symbol,[54] and through the harshness of their punishments portrayed just how dangerous these symbols, and their accompanying beliefs were. Ultimately the Act of Proscription can be seen as a type of sumptuary law proscribing what cannot be worn by certain members of society. While such laws are traditionally based on ethical and economic grounds, in the case of this act the motivations were overwhelmingly ideological and social in origin.[55]

Though sumptuary laws in England were officially abolished by James I in 1604, representing the beginning of the end of such laws throughout Europe, this did not stop British Parliament from enacting the Act of Proscription within Scotland.[56] Sumptuary laws themselves are valuable for analysing both the culture that enacted them and the culture they are placed upon. As Alan Hunt states, the interest in sumptuary laws is when there is a shift in the national trajectory of different sumptuary regimes in order to study what happened and why it did,[57] which this paper hopes to explore as well. Sumptuary laws are enacted in times of change and turmoil within a society in order to "consolidate and reinforce" traditional power constructs and social relations.[58] As such, the critical period of 1745 was a time not only of political and military turmoil, but following the Act of Union from which officials were still attempting to establish a sense of British nationhood and identity, under which Scotland had to "accommodate and align itself."[59] In such a critical time, the Liberal government attempting to move forward hearkened back to traditional modes of social control – enacting sumptuary law.

A Short History of Sumptuary Law 29

Table 2.1 A quantification of sumptuary laws

Location \ *Date*	*12th c.*	*13th c.*	*14th c.*	*15th c.*	*16th c.*	*17th c.*	*18th c.*
France	1	4	5	6	13	19	1
England	1	0	5	4	20	1	—
Italian cities (except Florence & Venice)	2	7	16	24	12	17	1
Florence	—	2	13	10	7	21	—
Venice	—	1	8	11	17	28	2
Spain	—	7	7	2	16	4	2
Switzerland			3	0	3	3	2
Germany				3	7	7	2
Scotland				7	12	12	1
North America						9	1

Table 1

Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions*, 29.

Through its use as a social control, the Act of Proscription represents a traditional tool of government, but in its fashioning it was very untraditional.[60] Enacted over a century after the decline of sumptuary laws began, it is accepted by scholars today that modern forms of representative

[52] Please see inset.
[53] Faiers, *Tartan*, 108.
[54] *Ibid*., 107.
[55] Pastoureau, *The Devil's Cloth*, 14.
[56] Wilfrid Hooper, "The Tudor Sumptuary Laws," *The English Historical Review* 30 (1915): 448, accessed November 29, 2013.
[57] Alan Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 17.
[58] *Ibid*., 22.
[59] Nicholson, "From Ramsay's *Flora MacDonald* to Raeburn's *MacNab,"* 146.
[60] Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions*, 34.

government and industry make sumptuary laws outmoded; with these new societal constructs, it was nearly impossible to effectively enforce these laws when industry was expanding supply to such an extent, and the economy was likewise expanding so that it was possible for people to dress outside their station and break these laws. This did not seem to concern Harwicke's parliament. Sumptuary laws were in fact so out of mode that the Act of Proscription was the only sumptuary law in either England or Scotland.[61] In addition, as sumptuary laws became more popular, especially in Italy, there was a greater and greater concern for the dress of women as representing traditional values and the family center. The Act of Proscription specifically excludes women, in stating that: "no man or boy," shall wear any portion of highland dress, etc., with no mention to women – who, as such, continued to wear tartan for both fashion and political reasons.[62] This shows the Acts true motive, the demilitarization of Highland Culture – with the male at its epitome.

Figure 3 Soldier from one of the HIghland Regiments

Bolton, *Bravehearts,* 98.

Though this Act departed from traditional ones, it also departed in the fact that it was arguably successful: "physical and psychological damage wreaked by the '45 crippled Gaelic Society" to the point where it never truly recovered.[63] Though the material culture of rebellion still exists it lost all of its prior meaning and symbolism, and the Scottish people have largely integrated into larger British society.[64]

This survival of the material culture without its former meaning can be accounted for by the provisions and repercussions of the Act. Of the exclusions in the Act which did not apply to all was to those who were in the British military, in which there were Highland regiments in their requisite regalia.[65] Thus, a form of traditional clothing could be worn, but only in the service of the *British* crown. It is this exception though which is believed to have prevented the total extinction of Highland dress.[66] In addition, the military is also attributed with the formalization and codification of Highland dress, as being the dress of the working class it had previously been varied and simple in the extreme.[67] The uniform had begun with a belted plaid of the Black Watch, or Government tartan and a special military style short jacket, but it was discovered by the end of the eighteenth century that the belted plaid was inconvenient not only as a military uniform, but for maneuvers and was therefore replaced by the kilt.[68] Not only were the components of the uniform dictated and evolved through military use but so was the material. The codification of

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[61] Please see table 1.

[62] "The Act of Proscription," Electric Scotland, accessed November 29, 2013, http://www.electricscotland.com/history/other/proscription_1747.htm.

[63] Cheape, "Gheibhte breacain charnaid," 23.

[64] A poll on separation early this year suggesting that given the choice they would stay within the Union. "Scottish independence 'not likely' on current polls. Why?" Last Modified September 18, 2013, http://www.theweek.co.uk/uk-news/55184/scottish-independence-not-likely-current-polls-why.

[65] Please see figure 3.

[66] W.A. Thorburn, "Military Origins of Scottish National Dress," *Costume* 10 (1976): 31, accessed October 8, 2013.

[67] *Ibid*., 30.

[68] *Ibid*., 33.

In both cases it was indicated that the top portion of the belted plaid was cumbersome and would get in the way

tartans notably came out of the military, as it has been theorized that the "practice of differentiating tartan by clan" through the modification of tartan by regiment and then the naming of that tartan after their commanding officer.[69] It was in fact the commanding officers of each regiment who began to adjust the Black Watch pattern in order to differentiate their regiments from one another. This was not as one may expect for the purposes of practicality, but rather as an extended form of conspicuous consumption – each commanding officer would pick the newest, rarest, most expensive colours in the best quality they could afford to equip their regiments with.[70] As late as 1794, it was documented that only military regiments had fixed tartans.[71]

While the exclusion of military men impacted the outcome of the Act of Proscription, so did the exclusion of women. Women were still allowed to wear traditional Highland dress and many continued to – including those who could not afford other clothing, but also those wishing to make a political statement. According to one written source, "Jacobite ladies went in a 'rage for tartan' using it in gowns, riding clothes, bed and window curtains, shoes and pin cushions."[72] Though this may have increased resistance to the Act of Proscription and maintained some whispers of Jacobite sentiment, in 1782 the British Parliament felt comfortable enough in its strength and the success of this Act to repeal it, which says enough about the failure of these ladies to continue their cause. [73]

Figure 4 Flora MacDonald

"Flora Macdonald," Encyclopedia Britannica, accessed December 10, 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/354101/Flora-Macdonald.

The Highland Society, on the other hand did succeed. Founded in London in 1778 on the purpose of repealing the 'unclothing act,' [74] the Highland Society is an oft overlooked organization that greatly contributed to the documentation, maintenance and proliferation of Highland culture – unfortunately they were just misinformed about what exactly that was. Leaders in the Society encouraged conspicuous consumption of Highland garb, but in the tradition of costumed wear this was completed through members' use of kilts and unique tartans – not traditional to Highland culture.[75] This was in part because of the Highland Society's geographic location – which also dictated its success. The Highland Society was based in London, and "membership drawn from an extensive expatriate community," but supported by many outside that community as well. What is most detrimental about the actions of this Society is that as Highland culture had been fluid in its nature and previously uncodified, through the documentation and popularization of Highland culture through this Society five hundred miles from the cultural base, rather than document Highland culture itself, they began to intrusively refashion it.[76] This resulted in what has been termed "a process of 'internal colonization.'"[77] Though they were visibly protesting against interference with

[69] Bolton, *Bravehearts,* 99.
[70] Dziennik, "Whig Tartan," 125.
[71] Nicholson, "From Ramsay's *Flora MacDonald* to Raeburn's *MacNab,"* 162.
[72] Tuckett, "National Dress, Gender and Scotland," 22.
[73] Please see figure 4.
[74] Pittock, "Plaiding the Invention of Scotland," 40.
[75] Dziennik, "Whig Tartan," 136.
[76] Nicholson, "From Ramsay's *Flora MacDonald* to Raeburn's *MacNab,"* 160.
[77] Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism*, 43.

traditional Scottish culture, they "implicitly demanded political convergence with the south."[78] Living in London, the Society's members had acclimatized to an urban London culture and assimilated. Thus, when they began to define Highland culture, they did so within their own words and norms – creating what they wanted to see rather than what was there and then formulating a culture around those beliefs. The Highland Society ultimately assisted in the assimilation and redefinition of the Highland peoples which the English were endeavoring for, even as they were fighting to repeal the Act.

The success of the Act of Proscription is ultimately up for conjecture. In travel journals between 1747 and 1782, when the act was in place, it was noted that "even the authority of the parliament, was not sufficient to make [Highlanders] relinquish their ancient garb." Yet, at the same time, there were complaints in other journals about the lack of traditional dress. [79] Ultimately, whenever dealing with culture there are no simple answers. The vast amount of portraits displaying persons garbed in the Scottish style under the Act can be interpreted as the failure of the Act. Yet, these portraits are often painted outside of Scotland, where the act was not in effect, and are overwhelmingly of military men, in which case the Highland garb is antithetical to its previous meanings. This contrast between image and meaning is because a military man in Highland dress does not represent defiance of the Act. Furthermore, it represents a Highlander loyal to the British ruling elite as being in their military service.[80] Though it is believed that ancient Highland material culture has survived through to the present that is not true, it has been molded by forces exterior to the Highlands, or Scotland and the Jacobite symbolism associated with this traditional garb, has died the same as the Jacobite movement.

When the Act of Proscription was repealed in 1782, it was seen as a cultural victory for the Highlanders. Yet, the Act was only repealed because it had lost its cultural agency with rebellion and the Jacobites.[81] Highland dress had been "culturally relocated as a picturesque ensemble or as the clothing of a hardy and effective fighting force [of the British Isles]," not a symbol of disenfranchisement or rebellion.[82] In a poignant popular tale at the time, a Lieutenant of a Highland regiment, and former Jacobite, on return from the Siege of Quebec, was presented to King George III – and promptly offered him a pinch of snuff. This Highlander is seen to portray the loyalty, refinement, and commercial significance of the *new* Highlander.[83] He also represents the popularization of the Highland image, the importance of the Highlander within the economy.

The importance of the popularization of Highland culture cannot be overemphasized. Throughout the period of the Act of Proscription and beyond, the Highland dress "moved from the periphery to the very center, accompanied by all the processes of forgetting and imaginative recreation."[84] It is in these processes of forgetting and imaginative recreation in which the meaning of Highland garb was lost and diluted within the greater society. Through these processes over a twenty year period, "distrust of the Highlands became fascination."[85] This

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[78] Christopher Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics 1701-1994* (London: Routledge, 1977), 13-14.
[79] Cheape, *Tartan: The Highland Habit*, 34.
[80] Coltman, "Party- Coloured Plaid?" 189.
[81] Bolton, *Bravehearts,* 100.
[82] Nicholson, "From Ramsay's *Flora MacDonald* to Raeburn's *MacNab,"* 158.
[83] Dziennik, "Whig Tartan," 126.
[84] Bolton, *Bravehearts,* 100.
[85] Cheape, *Tartan: The Highland Habit*, 49.

process of imaginative recreation also encompasses the theory of *invented tradition*, in which it is necessary to create "continuity with a suitable historic past."[86] This continuity was completed in a variety of ways but most notably by art historians who have drawn parallels between the togas of ancient Romans and the plaids of the Scots.[87] Outside of academia, society itself proliferated this popularization; the elites of the Highland military brought its dress to Gentlemen's clubs, which then adopted it – endowing these garments with social prestige. As such, rather than regaining currency with the working classes who had previously worn belted plaids and kilts, it was the upper and middle classes "who had previously despised the 'servile' costume, who were now wearing it with enthusiasm."[88] The Elites were attracted to the anti-fashion of this previously servile costume, and as they increased their wear, so it declined as traditional everyday wear.[89] In a period of seventy years, a dress worn by an isolated minority became the dress of the nation.[90] Yet, it can be regrettably noted that this National dress bore little resemblance to traditional Highland dress – it was in fact an elaborate travesty.[91]

Figure 5 Comparison to Roman Togas

Coltman, "Party- Coloured Plaid?" 186.

Along with the extinction of the Jacobite movement and the popularization of Highland dress the third factor in the repealing of the Act of Prohibition was the key role the Highland and tartan began to play in the economy. The very repealing of the Act represents the increase in capitalism, as one of the primary indicators of a decrease in sumptuary legislation.[92] In the years following the 1745 rebellion, Highland elites successfully worked to disassociate Highland dress from its Jacobite associations as we have discussed. Additionally, they presented Highland dress "to a wider British polity as a symbol of the region's military prowess and commercial orientation," creating new markets for tartan in the Lowlands, England and the Colonies.[93] The popularization and assimilation of the Highland peoples coupled with the increased demand for tartan brought more industry to the area. The commercial production of textiles, in fact, was seen as a key objective in modernizing the Highlands.[94] The benefits were seen to be threefold: decreasing what was perceived to be the inherent idleness in the region, generating wealth through external markets, and preventing the emigration of Highlanders to the American Colonies.[95] The creation of a tartan industry in the Highlands was important not only for the internal good it would do within the region, and for external exportation, but also to help supply the ever growing Highland

[86] Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 1.
[87] Coltman, "Party- Coloured Plaid?" 185.
[88] Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 24.
[89] Thorburn, "Military Origins of Scottish National Dress," 33.
[90] Dunbar, *History of Highland Dress*, 3.
[91] Thorburn, "Military Origins of Scottish National Dress," 29.
[92] Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions*, 29.
[93] Dziennik, "Whig Tartan," 128-129.
[94] *Ibid*., 129.
[95] *Ibid*., 127.

regiments.[96] By the end of the Act of Proscription tartan had become "a commercial success" and was present on the fashion plates of London as well as Paris.[97] This caused an increased call for variety in colours and patterns, and as such an increase in the importation of dyes – which had been taking place in rural areas since 1745.[98] The Highlands were therefore further assisted in their road to modernization through the commercialization of tartan and the creation of an industry to support in within the Highlands.

What began as an inexpensive dress for peasants and workers became a form of rebellion, and then the tool with which the Highlands became a modern industrialized society. This evolution was all arguably enhanced by the English, through the creation of the kilt, the institution of first the Act of Union and then a Hanoverian Government, and then the formulation of the manner with which the Highlands would use the economy to modernize. There is much room for argument within this conclusion, for the role of agency and personal choice in dress, in the manner in which the Highlanders reacted to these exterior forces.[99] Ultimately I hope to have outlined, through this analysis, some of the diverse causes and motivations for the creation of Scottish national identity around Highland dress in the eighteenth century, and for their assimilation into the Greater British Isles.

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[96] Faiers, *Tartan*, 109.
[97] Cheape, *Tartan: The Highland Habit*, 49.
[98] Grierson, "Vegetable Dyes of Scotland," 210.
[99] Tuckett, "National Dress, Gender and Scotland," 149.

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