

**“TWA QUEENS. WAN GREEN ISLAND”:  
NATIONALIST AND FEMINIST ISSUES IN LIZ LOCHHEAD’S  
MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS HAD HER HEAD CHOPPED OFF**

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**Abstract.** *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 Comunicado Theatre Company in 1987, as a tribute to the fourth hundred anniversary of Mary, Queen of Scots’ death, Lochhead’s play establishes the connection between the burning political issues in XVI and XX century Scotland. By relying on the critical insights of Finlayson, Greenblatt, Gonzales, Butler and Lochhead herself, the paper examines the nationalist and feminist issues in the play, as well as their relevance for the understanding of the Scottish identity.*

**Key words:** *nationalism, feminism, stereotype, Reformation, Protestantism, Catholicism*

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND AIMS

Stereotypes represent a very good starting point for intercultural study – these images, ideas or issues of a particular nation, bearing no individual or personal characteristics, have gradually become fixed or standardized in a conventional form. Although they seem to be rather useful from the perspective of associating a nation’s positive features with its cultural propaganda, the dangers and traps of stereotyping have been quite difficult to avoid. For instance, the main stereotypical trait of the Scottish identity has usually been determined through its connection to the English/British idiom. According to the most

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popular and wide-spread stereotypes nowadays, the Scottish identity is generally recognized in its fervent opposition to the English history, politics, economy and life style. The fact of vital importance to the majority of Scots is that they may admit to being British, but will certainly never openly state that they are English; moreover, they would even be insulted at the thought of someone categorizing them as English. Though an issue of consuming relevance to the majority of Scots, it seems to be a matter of perfect indifference to the English.

The Scots are generally perceived to be, as Iain Finlayson claims, “a prideful, poor, prejudiced and xenophobic people who continue traditions that are mostly alien to those of the English. They are mainly concerned to resist being annihilated into an English culture.” (Finlayson 1988: 16) Being a Scot himself, Finlayson offers a description of his countrymen characterized with utter sincerity and strictness; however, besides the negative traits, he reinforces other, more appealing, features of the Scottish identity, the most important of them being an inevitable sense of national and personal pride: “However much that pride may appear ridiculous, petty or arrogant, it is just as often worthy, self-sacrificing, noble, and touching. Always, it rests firmly on the past, a past that is endlessly and energetically debated by the Scots who seek truth, morality, instruction, or support from it. It deeply influences and partly forms the national consciousness, and is ingrained in individual, personal awareness.” (Finlayson 1988: 16)

The awareness of the glories of the past and nostalgia for the heroic bygone times are generally perceived as the typical traits determining the Scottish identity. Finlayson states that the Scots are beset by the Scottish history; however, he also claims that, paradoxically, “they cherish it, but have no use for it.” (Finlayson 1988: 16) Although quite proud of being products of a vivid history and culture, the Scots are not only traditionalists, but also a forward-looking nation, capable of inventing, developing and advancing the arts and sciences of the modern civilization usually taken for granted nowadays. As Finlayson observes, “they love to wallow in the glories and bewail the catastrophes of the past while dealing with a difficult present and problematical future. The Scots readily and ably assimilate the new while they busily and meticulously embellish the old.” (Finlayson 1988: 16) Thus, the interpretation of the past represents a subject that animates the Scottish as no other nation, whereby the personal element becomes subsumed in a collective glorification and defense of their patriotic myths and national prejudices.

It comes as no surprise then that Liz Lochhead, named the second Scots Macar, or national poet, in January 2011 (succeeding at this position Edwin Morgan who had died the previous year), decided to investigate the actual story of one of the most intriguing Scottish historical figures, Mary, Queen of Scots, and to offer it in a modern dramatic version, while raising questions relevant for the current state of affairs in the UK. While doing her research for the play, Lochhead became aware of the relevance of the never-ending dialogue between the past and the present for the Scottish people in particular. Furthermore, Lochhead even suggested that her play would be a “metaphor for the Scots today” (Varty 1993: 162), whereby the audience would find out more “about Scotland, more about the present than the past, how these myths of the past have carried on into the present malaise of Scotland today.” (Wilson 1990: 9)

Lochhead’s point of view that, while reading a chronicle or a history play we could never evade the present moment, corresponds to the main credo of a, recently, rather influential literary critical school, presentism. In their preface to *Presentist Shakespeares* (2007), the major representatives of this critical stance, Hugh Grady and Terence Hawkes, dwelled on the subject of the inevitability of the past-present interconnection: “And if it’s

always and only the present that makes the past speak, it speaks always and only to – and about – ourselves. It follows that the first duty of a credible presentist criticism must be to acknowledge that the questions we ask of any literary text will inevitably be shaped by our own concerns, even when these include what we call ‘the past’. The irony which that situation generates constitutes a fruitful, necessary and inescapable aspect of any text’s being.” (Grady, Hawkes 2007: 5)

Although the previous statement mostly refers to the literary canon of the greatest English Renaissance bard, William Shakespeare, one of Lochhead’s literary role models, it also represents an issue of essential importance for *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*. Namely, the play was first performed in 1987, at the moment of the four hundredth anniversary of Mary’s decapitation at the hands of her cousin Elizabeth. The mere fact that it was the anniversary of Mary’s death rather than her birth that the Scots and Britons celebrated created a fertile ground for the beginning of an interesting story, according to Liz Lochhead and Gerry Mulgrew, the first director of the play.<sup>1</sup> The play actually represents a modern attempt at rewriting the official history in the context of a “current debate about the then current state of affairs between Scotland and England.” (Lochhead 2009: x) In June 1987, for the third time Margaret Thatcher got back into power, which was an unbearable fact for the majority of the Scottish population that had voted resoundingly against the Tories, Lochhead included. In her *Introduction* to a revised edition of the play (2009), Lochhead notices: “Margaret Thatcher is not Queen Elizabeth the First, but the question of women and power– and how to hold on to it– are always there as we consider either icon. There was at that time a real sense of frustration in Scotland, a need for us all to tell our own stories and find our own language to tell it in.” (Lochhead 2009: x)

This contemporary perspective offers a glimpse into the first significant issue the plays deals with – nationalism, simply unavoidable in the discussions related to the previously mentioned Scottish patriotic pride in their history. Historically speaking, in the second half of XVI century, Mary Stuart claimed the right to the English throne as the granddaughter of Henry VII. In her attempt to take over the English crown, Mary, being a devout Catholic herself, was supported by the French Catholics, whose aspiration was to convert Protestant England back to Catholicism. On the other hand, as Vesna Lopicic claims, “Mary was also an extraordinary beautiful woman prone to sexual transgressions which finally turned the Scots people against her.” (Lopicic 2005: 130) Indeed, Mary had been married three times, outlived all her husbands and it was even speculated that she was involved in the lethal plot against her second husband, the unlucky Henry Stuart, the father of the future king James VI of Scotland. Queen Elizabeth, as a close relative, gave Mary shelter when she was deposed and arrested for misconduct after eight years of her troublesome reign in Scotland. However, during the nineteen years of Elizabeth’s unwilling hospitality, she never visited Queen Mary, the unwelcome guest, held under house arrest all the time. Mary never stopped plotting against her powerful cousin and thus practically forced Elizabeth to accuse her of treason in 1587 and finally behead her. However, “her overwhelming beauty and dignified conduct at the gallows gave rise to the legends of Mary, Queen of Scots.” (Lopicic 2005: 130)

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<sup>1</sup> Lochhead’s play *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off* was first performed by Communicado Theatre Company at the Lyceum Studio Theatre, Edinburgh, directed by Gerry Mulgrew in 1987. Afterwards, it was published in 1989, and was broadcast as a radio play directed by Marilyn Imrie by BBC Radio 4 in 2001. The play has more recently been revived on stage by the National Theatre of Scotland in 2011.

Finally, after Elizabeth's death, England got its first Scottish king. Namely, Mary's son, James VI of Scotland, immediately became James I of England, being the closest one in the royal lineage to the Tudor dynasty, though nobody in England was enthusiastic about the new ruler bearing in mind the ancient Scottish/English animosity. Nevertheless, at that moment, James I, who openly and publicly declared his loyalty and respect for the ideas of Elizabethan Protestantism, represented the best option for the new English monarch since the country was endangered by the rising Machiavellian ambitions of the Catholic king of Spain, Philip.

The historical framework of Queen Mary's rule that gradually evolved into a Scottish national myth represents a good example of what the literary critic G. Gregory Smith termed "The Caledonian Antyzyzygy", or the Scottish Antithetical Mind, the term based on the merging of opposing or paradoxical viewpoints. Although this national trait is not unique to the Scots, it is definitely among the Scots that this contradiction becomes apotheosized, Finlayson notices and quotes from Smith:

Perhaps in the very combination of the opposites, "the Caledonian Antyzyzygy", we have a reflection of the contrasts which the Scot show at every turn, in his political and ecclesiastical history, in his polemical restlessness, in his adaptability which is another way of saying that he has made allowance for new conditions, in his practical judgment, which is the admission that two sides of the matter have been considered. If therefore Scottish history and life are, as an old northern writer said of something else, 'varied with a clear contrair spirit', we need not be surprised to find that in his literature the Scot presents two aspects which appear contradictory. Oxymoron was ever the bravest figure, and we must not forget that the disorderly order is order, after all. (Finlayson 1988: 22)

Liz Lochhead was definitely aware of the fact that the national myth of Mary, Queen of Scots, represented a cultural expression of the popular belief in the antithetical and paradoxical features characterizing the wide-spread Scottish stereotype. This paradox could even be glimpsed in the two different versions of the same myth that existed in the mind of the first director of the play, Gerry Mulgrew, a Scot of Irish-Catholic descent, and Lochhead herself, a Scot of Lowland Presbyterian origin. The Catholic Mary is perceived as a martyr, almost a saint, whereas the Proddy version of Mary oscillates between "the limp victim and politically inept nymphomaniac devil-woman who almost scuppered the Scottish Glorious Reformation." (Lochhead 2009: vii) The Scottish Glorious Reformation is usually linked to the historical figure of John Knox, its leading militant leader, remembered for his constant conflict with the Roman Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots. Considering the matter of the Reformation, the common belief is that Mary was historically wrong but romantic, while Knox was right but repulsive, which is the key element in Lochhead's play as well. Lochhead claims that, naturally, both Mulgrew and herself were at war with their own cultural biases while dealing with the myth of Mary: she was much appalled by the misogyny of John Knox and his enduring anti-feminist and anti-feminine legacy in the Scottish society, while Mulgrew was attracted to Knox's practice of teaching the people to read so that they could read the Bible for themselves, his Protestant ideal of a direct relationship to God, with no clerical institutional mediators. While working together on the play, Lochhead frankly states, aware of the implicit paradox of the situation, "we were both republican and anti-royalists" (Lochhead 2009: vii), thus directly epitomizing and putting into practice the previously mentioned notion of the Caledonian Antyzyzygy.

Lochhead’s play opens with an introduction in the manner of the Greek plays; however, instead of the chorus, whose main role in the traditional Greek theatre was to serve as the voice of the people and to offer an insight into the social, moral and political community standards, the playwright presents us with the character of La Corbie (the crow), “an interesting, ragged and ambiguous creature” (Lochhead 2009: 5), whose subjective, and thus unreliable, comments we have to depend on during Lochhead’s historical tour through Scotland. As a matter of fact, it is La Corbie’s view of Scotland that we have presented at the very beginning of the play:

Ah dinna ken whit your Scotland is. Here is mine.  
 National flower: the thistle.  
 National pastime: nostalgia.  
 National weather: smirr, haar, drizzle, snaw!  
 National bird: the crow, the corbie, la corbeille, le corbeau, moi!  
 (Lochhead 2009: 5)

All stereotypical images of Scotland converge in the national bird, the female narrator, who voices herself in three languages relevant not only for the life and reign of Queen Mary, but also for the future of the country itself – English, Scots and French. The main heroines are then introduced - on the one hand, Mary, speaking in Scots, but with a French accent, and, on the other, Elizabeth, speaking in a robust and very patrician RP.<sup>2</sup> The Scottish/English rivalry has been ascertained through the conflict between their monarchs thus making the play a modern Scottish classic:

La Corbie: Once upon a time there were *twa queens* on the wan green island, and the wan green island was split inty twa kingdoms. But no equal kingdoms, naebody in their richtmind would insist on that. For the northern kingdom was cauld and sma.’ And the people were low-statured and ignorant and feart o’ their lords and poor! They were starving.’ And their queen was beautiful and tall and fair and ... Frenchified. The other kingdom in the island was large, and prosperous (...) and, at the mouth of her greatest river, a great port, a glistening city that sucked all its wealth to its centre which was a palace and a court of a queen. She was a cousin, a clever cousin a wee bit aulder, and mibbe no sae braw as the other queen, but a queen nevertheless. Queen o’ a country wi’ an army, an’ a navy and dominion over many lands. (Lochhead 2009: 6)

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<sup>2</sup> Lochhead has always insisted on the idea of creative writing and speaking in public as a political act, so through her works she actually gives the voice to the marginalized groups – her language is female-coloured as well as Scottish-coloured. For instance, ‘Kisspoem/Bairnsang’ in her 2003 collection *Colour of Black and White* exposes Lochhead’s continuing concern with the presence and importance of the Scots language as one of the most relevant facets of her country’s national heritage. However, Scots is constantly being neglected and discarded as the valid form of written expression – unfortunately, it has remained unofficially reserved only for the informal, spoken events:

Oh saying it was one thing  
 But when it came to writing it  
 In black and white  
 The way it had to be said  
 Was as if you were posh, grown-up, male, English and dead.  
 (see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00mr8yj/profiles/liz-lochhead>)

From the very first description of the two kingdoms on an island, 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. Following the death of her husband, the Dauphin of France, Mary returns to Scotland, the country she does not like or understand. 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.

It is precisely this “dissociation of sensibility” (Eliot 1921: 64, 66) that results in the authoritatively imposed absence of the private sphere in the life of a monarch that Lochhead focuses on in order to distinguish between the royal cousins: unlike Mary, Elizabeth is well acquainted with the ruthless Machiavellian strategies of survival and political plotting imposed on the absolute ruler. In Mary’s case, this dissociation becomes obvious in the scene of her death that carries a potent symbolic significance – her head is literally severed from her body as a sort of punishment for her making unwise political decisions, giving primacy to her emotions and not to her reason in state affairs, her naïve belief that she can choose the husband her body and soul, and not the aristocratic and religious representatives of her country, desire.

Thus, apart from its nationalistic perspective, Lochhead’s play also focuses on the ways that femininity was constructed in XVI century – on various expectations and restrictions that women in power were confronted with then. The play becomes Lochhead’s unique “herstory”<sup>3</sup> research: whereas her Elizabeth purposefully appropriates masculine behaviour (even wears men’s clothes on stage), thus epitomizing the corruption of the female principle in the cruel Machiavellian games of power and treacherous world of political scheming, her Mary embodies a more conventional feminine conduct, relying solely on her emotional vulnerability and unrestrained sexuality as a rather inefficient means of remaining on the Scottish throne.

However, these extremes in the confronted queens’ conduct just point to their fruitless attempts to escape the dominant patriarchal ideology they are immersed in from the moment of their birth. Although Lochhead never confronts her queens on stage (thus repeating the actual historical version of their relationship), the mood that permeates the play is that of an unnecessary and forced conflict between the English and Scottish queens. Indeed, it is Elizabeth herself who claims that: “Methinks they do try to play me and my Scotch cousin off against each other” (Lochhead 2009: 9); while Mary, in a similar fashion contemplates the impossible options of solving the conflict: “I wish that Elizabeth was a man and I would willingly marry her! And wouldn’t that make an end of all debates?” (Lochhead 2009: 11)

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<sup>3</sup> Herstory is a neologism coined in the late 1960s as part of a feminist critique of conventional historiography. In feminist discourse the term refers to history (ironically restated as “his story”) written from the feminist perspective, emphasizing the role of women, or told from a woman’s point of view. The word has been used in feminist literature since its inception. The Oxford English Dictionary credits Robin Morgan with coining the term in her 1970 book *Sisterhood is Powerful*. At present, “Herstory” is considered an “economical way” to describe feminist efforts against a male-centered canon. In other words, the purpose of this movement is to emphasize that women’s lives, deeds, and participation in human affairs have been neglected or undervalued in standard histories (see [www.wikipedia/herstory](http://www.wikipedia/herstory)).

It seems that the impact of the dominant patriarchal figures is too strong for the queens to annihilate: they are both excluded from and corrupted by the masculine institutions of power. In Elizabeth's case, the most conspicuous influence is that of her late father, King Henry VIII, whose image frequently haunts her in her nightmarish dreams. Namely, the nightmare that is repeated when Elizabeth's royal guard is off constantly involves an image of a doll whose head is severed from its body, that symbolically represents the tragic destiny of her mother Anne Boleyn, beheaded for treason by her father Henry VIII. The king himself appears in Elizabeth's dream: he steals the doll's crown away, which is probably Lochhead's allusion to Henry VIII's excessive life style characterized with numerous marriages and growing dissatisfaction with his queens, two of whom were ultimately accused of treason and beheaded. The act of stealing the crown, the ultimate symbol of secular power, represents the climactic moment in Elizabeth's nightmares – she screams in utter terror, reflecting her own fear of helplessness in case the throne is taken away from her; so, in order to avoid the tragic destiny of politically weak queens, her mother included, Elizabeth, widely awake, enacts the identical destructive behaviour her patriarchal role model had already exemplified on her Scottish rival.

Judith Butler in her study *Gender Trouble* (1990) argued that women can be as “masculine” as men, by willingly appropriating traditional ‘male’ roles, out of fear and obedience to dominant cultural codes. (Butler 1990: 70) Lochhead's Elizabeth represents a perfect example of Butler's idea: she gets completely absorbed in the destructive masculine prototype, even reinforcing its cruelty by practicing cunning political opportunism she gradually takes pleasure in. In the introduction to *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (1980), Greenblatt claims that all subjects are ideologically determined: religion, education, law and the family are the institutions that shape all individuals. Their subjectivities are constructed in accord with the cultural codes that suppress and control them. The only way of escape from cultural omnipotence is, according to Greenblatt, “the will to play” (Greenblatt 1980: 193, 201) – to embrace what the culture finds loathsome and frightening and, although aware of one's own inevitable fall, to glorify it for the sake of sheer anarchy which is in itself subversive. It is precisely this new historicists' method that Elizabeth appropriates, conspicuously perceived in her relationship with Robert Leicester, an English noble she is desperately in love with. Unlike Mary, Elizabeth is quite aware of the fact that as a queen she has to give primacy to her patriotic duty towards the country and not to the wishes of her heart, so she starts playing with her lover, thus transforming him into a simple pawn in the destructive political games of power, the way her notorious father, king Henry VIII, played with his queens. Being immersed in the political plot of choosing a proper husband for Mary, one who would not endanger the protestant future of her nation, Elizabeth even considers her own lover Leicester as a proper man for the job. However, once she settles for the unfortunate Henry Darnley, she ironically states: “And it does let my Lord Leicester off the hook. Pity, really. There were no more *piquant* nights than those ones he were never sure if he were off to the *Tower* or *Scotland* in the morning.” (Lochhead 2009: 37)

On the other hand, Mary, Queen of Scots represents a totally different way of dealing with the patriarchal authorities, traditionally more expected from women: Mary puts into practice the conventional Christian role model of a sinful woman, prone to sexual transgressions and forbidden and unrestrained lusts of the flesh. By satisfying her own passions and not being ready to resist bodily temptations, in the eyes of a zealous religious reformer, John Knox, she becomes the embodiment of the dangers of the sinful

body lurking in all of us if not kept under strict discipline of the intellect. Knox views Mary, and women in general, as dangerous, sexually potent and potentially subversive creatures, unfit for spiritual or political leadership. Thus, he unconsciously embraces the “cultural codes of male dominance” (Butler 1990: 70) and takes them for granted, being himself a perfect product of the dominant, and utterly destructive, patriarchal culture.

However, Lochhead exposes the real motives for Knox’s misogyny in the scene entitled *Mary Queen of Scots’ Progress and John Knox’s Shame*. Using the dramatic method of role interchange, the actresses playing Elizabeth and Mary in this scene become two beggars who witness, along with Knox, one of Mary’s royal processions on the streets of Edinburgh.<sup>4</sup> John Knox cannot conceal his repressed sexual desire towards one of the beggars Mairn, whom he, quite symbolically, identifies with the queen herself. It appears that the roots of anti-feminism in the Scottish Church originate in the same sinful bodily urges that the religious male authorities assign exclusively to women, thus making Lochhead’s sharp criticism of the notion of the Christian Original Sin, of sinful Eve in the Garden of Eden tempting naïve Adam to try the forbidden fruit from the Tree of Knowledge, more than obvious.

As a matter of fact, Lochhead even goes a step further in her criticism of the imposed female guilt from the previously mentioned Christian perspective usually taken for granted, so she recreates another Biblical story, the murder of John the Baptist, with a significant gender role interchange in order to point to the possibility of a different interpretation of the Christian mythology. The female responsibility for the murder of the prophet is discarded during Lochhead’s process of destabilizing and inverting the gender roles; namely, Mary’s husband, Darnley, plays Salome, thus illustrating spiteful masculine conduct that diminishes his wife’s political power, whereas Mary plays Herod himself, who though a just man according to the Biblical version of the story, could not avoid his wife’s destructive impact in the scheme of killing John the Baptist. The prophet in Lochhead’s version becomes Riccio, Mary’s favourite Catholic adviser, seen as a foreign obstacle on the path of national advancement by the Scottish aristocrats, symbolically called the Mummers in Lochhead’s successful recreation of a Shakespearean play within a play. Belonging to the impersonal group of the Mummers, the Scottish nobles attempt at hiding their proper identity and individuality, thus assuming only collective guilt for various political crimes, justified from the point of view of maintaining the destructive dominant system itself. However, in Lochhead’s reconstruction of this historical event, La Corbie, the female narrator, does not hesitate to enumerate the names all the Scottish nobles who participated in the vicious act of killing the queen’s advisor, thus trying to, at least partially, correct the historical injustice towards their victim:

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<sup>4</sup> Lochhead uses this method quite frequently in the play (especially in the scenes in which the queens get transformed into their rivals’ maids), thus presenting the contemporary audience with the postmodern idea of the lack of any stable meaning, both of the dramatic text and the official chronicle. As Gonzales remarks: “In this respect, the way the characters – and the actresses – interchange roles is essential to understand the construction of both queens, and also a clear method to underline the performative character of identities, a strategy that Jan McDonald and Jennifer Harvie (1993) consider of great relevance to destabilise empathic alliances between the audience and one of the characters, widening the scope of identifications... suggesting that the process of creating meaning may be more significant than any stable meaning Besides, the only opportunity for the two queens to meet –an episode that never happened in “real” history - will be their transformation into their rival’s maid.” (Gonzales 2004: 149)

La Corbie: There’s Ruthven and Morton and Lindsay and Lethington  
 Ormiston, Brunstane, Haughton and Lochlinnie  
 There’s Kerr o’ Fa’donside, Scott, and Yair and Elphinstone  
 There’s Ballantin’ and Douglas  
 There’s Ruthven and Morton ... (Lochhead 2009: 61)

This is exactly why the scene is entitled *Mummers and Murderers*. The Mummers, the Scottish nobles, are exposed for what they really represent, the Murderers, and through their accentuated collectivity Lochhead also reveals the harmful consequences of the dominant system that imposes the loss of individuality in order to defend the existing destructive hierarchical structures. The only reason why the Mummers save the queen’s life this time is because of her symbolic monarchical role as the mother of the nation (she is pregnant and about to give birth to James VI of Scotland, the future Scottish monarch); however, they do not fail to warn her about the identical destiny that awaits her if she transgresses the rules of the dominant patriarchal system. In this way, Scottish powerful patriarchal representatives, both from the spiritual and the secular sphere, are revealed for being identical in their destructive attempts at annihilating the female influence in the state affairs.

In the last scene of the play, Lochhead investigates the nationalist and feminist issues that she exposed in the historical XVI century event of Mary’s decapitation through the transformation of all the characters in the play as XX century children. Though presented from the modern perspective, it seems that these children on the playground keep repeating the identical harmful patterns the official history bequeathed to them. The games they are involved in are based on violence, aggression, bigotry, hatred, hostility and fear. The dominant figure on the playground is that of Wee Betty, who singles out Marie and organizes a collective pursuit of her. All the other children from the playground become enthusiastic about the game of bullying the weakest link in the group, simultaneously showing relief for not being singled out themselves for this cruel game. This scene, as Gonzales claims, is illustrative of “the influence of English discourse in the fragmentation of Scottish identity, as well as asymmetrical discursive relations between England and Scotland. Wee Bettie is hence a symbol of the internalization of English supremacy and Marie’s pursuit acts as a metaphor for the atrocities Scottish society has committed against itself, transcending victimizing depictions of English oppression.” (Gonzales 2004: 152) Bearing in mind this modern reading of the play, one cannot fail to notice Lochhead’s purposeful identification between Wee Betty and Margaret Thatcher, that is, as Gonzales states, “an interpretation that can be easily read in Wee Betty’s dialogue with Marie” (Gonzales 2004: 152):

Wee Betty: Marie? Whit school do you go to?  
 James Hepburn: She means urr ye a left-fitter?  
 Haw, stranger, d.’you eat fish oan a Friday?  
 Wee Betty: You a Tim?  
 James Hepburn: You a Fenian?  
 Wee Betty: Are you a Pape?  
 Marie: I.’m a Catholic. Ih-hih.  
 Wee Betty: Ih-hih? How you mean, mmhmm?  
 Marie: Just.  
 (Pause)  
 Wee Betty: (*Very savage*) Well, away and get converted!  
 Go an’ get born again. (Lochhead 2009: 74)

The scene is now reserved for James Hepburn, Mary's third husband, who, at one point becomes Marie's childlike protector; however, when faced with the growing collective dissatisfaction he changes his role and transforms into "an axeman" (Lochhead 2009: 76), a symbolic executioner of the female individual who dares transgress the rules and norms of the dominant system of power. Thus, James Hepburn ultimately acts as one of the representatives of the submissive, obedient majority, who does not have the capacity and courage to question the powerful voice of the authority in order to remain true to the personal appeals of conscience. The scene ends with the depiction of Wee Betty's cruelty towards Marie: "And eftir you're deid, we'll share oot yir froaks and pu' a' the stones oot yir brooches and gie yir golden slippers a' away to the Salvation Army, and we'll gie the Saint Vincent de Paul." (Lochhead 2009: 77)

Finally, the last comment in the play belongs to la Corbie, the female narrator, who illustrates the action taking place on the stage through a repetitive children's song, alluding to the idea that the play started with – the never-ending dialogue between the past and present, and, unfortunately, the occurrence of the same harmful repetitive patterns that continue the destructive impact of the violent political practices: "Mary Queen of Scots got her head chopped off/ Mary Queen of Scots got her ... head ... chopped ... off." (Lochhead 2009: 77) Lochhead uses this children's song in order to emphasize the necessary need for change as a warning to the future generations not to repeat the same dangerous mistakes of their ancestors, to learn a lesson that would help them to partake in the creation of a proper Scottish identity and redefine its negative traits in the relation to the dominant English/British idiom. If we take into consideration the announced Scottish Referendum for Independence due to occur in 2014, a highly relevant political event for the survival of the United Kingdom, the nationalistic issues Lochhead raises in this play definitely expose their crucial importance for the future of the Scottish/British nation.

On the other hand, viewed from the feminist perspective, Lochhead states that the play raises important questions that will remain the burning issues for the generations to come: "When I look at it now it is fundamentally about Mary and Elizabeth, the passion of these women to have sex and love and marriage – or not – for can they, without losing power? How do you have a full life as a woman and your full independence? All these things women are still struggling with. It's not as if these issues have been solved or ever could be. It is, as it seems to me, an eternal conflict. And so it remains a great story." (Lochhead 2009: xi)

Finally, since the play has been perceived as a modern Scottish classic, it goes without saying that its modern and classic traits are wisely yoked together for the sake of maintaining and alluding to Lochhead's previously mentioned idea of "eternal conflict" (Lochhead 2009: xi): its diverse open-ended questions will continue to probe the imposed certainties of the dominant system, these universal issues will, again and again, find new social contexts to be raised in.

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### **„DVE KRALJICE. JEDNO ZELENO OSTRVO”: NACIONALISTIČKA I FEMINISTIČKA PITANJA U DRAMI LIZ LOHID MERI, KRALJICI ŠKOTSKOJ JE ODRUBLJENA GLAVA**

*Već u prvom opisu dva kraljevstva na jednom ostrvu u drami Liz Lohid do izražaja dolazi upečatljiva razlika koja ih karakteriše: Engleska je opisana kao zemlja u kojoj je ustanovljen red, a prosperitet zagarantovan zahvaljujući vladavini inteligentne kraljice Elizabete Tjudor, dok je nesigurni i problematični politički položaj Škotske na ostrvu simbolično predstavljen kroz lične karakteristike njihove vladarke – prelepe žene, strankinje, poslednje kraljice nezavisne Škotske, koja ulaže ogroman napor da vlada svojom podeljenom zemljom. Naklonjena katoličanstvu, politički neiskusna i nevešta, Meri ne uspeva da na vreme shvati činjenicu sa kojom je protestantska kraljica Elizabeta dobro upoznata – prava kraljica treba da se rukovodi razumom, a ne srcem u upravljanju kraljevstvom. Budući da je komad napisan za prvo izvođenje 1987. godine, kada se zapravo obeležavalo četiri stotine godine od smrti Meri Stjuart, namera Liz Lohid bila je da uspostavi vezu između ključnih političkih pitanja Škotske iz XVI i XX veka. Oslanjajući se na kritičke uvide Finlejsona, Grinblata, Gonzalesove, Batlerove i same autorke Liz Lohid, ovaj rad se bavi proučavanjem nacionalističkih i feminističkih pitanja u komadu, kao i njihovog značaja za razumevanje škotskog identiteta.*

Ključne reči: *nacionalizam, feminizam, stereotip, reformacija, protestantizam, katoličanstvo*