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# **The Haunted Landscape of the Uncanny North: Scott Graham's *Shell* (2012) and Gordon Napier's *1745* (2017)**

**Monica Germanà**

## **Abstract**

Focussing on the spatial dimension of historical haunting, this article analyses the depiction of northern scenery in contemporary Scottish cinema, to highlight a shift from the romanticised landscape of historical figurations of Scottish identity to a territory haunted both by the nation's past traumas and its dark secrets. I examine Scott Graham's film *Shell* (2012) and Gordon Napier's *1745: An Untold Story of Slavery* (2017) to demonstrate how, while they reference the sublime aesthetics and identity politics conventionally attached to the representation of the north and the cultural construction of the Scottish Highlands, these films also interrogate the relationship between history and landscape. *Shell* and *1745* consequently point to an ambivalent definition of belonging, made more complicated by the specific historical and political references rooted in the landscape. The Scottish north is unveiled as an uncanny territory, where a sense of belonging based on established national history narratives is replaced by the subversive (re)possession of the landscape by the less visible stories that continue to haunt it: the contemporary legacy of Highland Clearances in *Shell* and Scotland's involvement in Empire and slavery in *1745*.

**Keywords:** Contemporary Scottish cinema, Scott Graham, haunted landscape, Gordon Napier, Scotland and slavery, Scottish Highlands, Scottish north

[G]hosts haunt particular *places* by frequenting them. In their haunting – that is, in their persistent affective return to certain places [...], ghosts render those places eerie, uncanny, and at time even uninhabitable. This haunting is thus not merely the consequence of a temporal rupture; it has also to do with *location*, both in the sense

of social, cultural, and visual place. Haunting, in other words, has to do with landscape.<sup>1</sup>

Patricia M. Keller, *Ghostly Landscapes* (2017)

Alongside tartan and bagpipes, Scotland's hills and glens veiled in spectral mist are among the most recognisable visual icons of Scotland. Ghostly and sublime, the north still tends to be a visual synecdoche for Scotland., while it also continues to be framed, in Kirsty Macdonald's words, as 'a more primitive location where conventional rules do not apply', and which the historical past continues to haunt.<sup>2</sup> Such imaginings of the Scottish north as geographically and culturally remote and removed from the more civilised south, are reflected in a distinctive cinematic strand including films as diverse as *The Brothers* (1947), *The Wicker Man* (1973) – both set in the Western Isles – *Skyfall* (2012) and *Under the Skin* (2013) – partly set in the Highlands – where the strange and otherworldly primitiveness of the scenery is witness to the films' darker moments.<sup>3</sup> Far from new or even contemporary, this Gothic reading of the Scottish north can be traced back to the sublime scenery of James MacPherson's *Ossian* (1760) and Ann Radcliffe's *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne: A Highland Story* (1789).

In spite of its popular appeal and perpetuated use both in and outside Scotland, the cultural framing of the Scottish north and, in particular, the Gaelic-speaking western region north of the Highland Boundary Fault known as the 'Highlands',<sup>4</sup> point to a complicated relationship between landscape and national identity. 'Scottishness was at first territorial', Murray Pittock notes, and to the multi-ethnic, and multi-lingual people of Scotland, territorial boundaries contributed more to the historical development of Scottish identity than the shared language or ethnicity of other national identity narratives.<sup>5</sup> As a dependent nation, however, Scottish national identity is arguably more acutely defined by a perceived sense of territorial *loss* and *dispossession*, rather than ownership and control. Hence, because of its geographical and cultural distinctiveness, the north has become the landscape around which Scottish identity is shaped not in terms of *belonging*, but rather as a form of perpetual *longing* – or even mourning – for lost independence.<sup>6</sup>

When it comes to figurations of national identity, therefore, Scotland's northern landscape is both present and absent, owned and desired, familiar and alien, while its monuments and ruins, David Punter observes, 'point us toward the "uncanny", in that they speak always of history, but of a history that is constantly under the threat of erasure'.<sup>7</sup> The coexistence of multiple narratives inscribed in landscape across time further complicates the

triangulation of landscape, identity and national history: '[l]andscape is a record of time', Patricia M. Keller explains, 'it holds history and "remembers" it materially'.<sup>8</sup> To advance Angela Wright's claim that '[g]raves, castles, manuscripts and inscriptions are all warmly contested sites of authenticity and authority' in *Scottish Gothic*,<sup>9</sup> therefore, I would argue that the north is, aesthetically as well as politically, the disputed territory of Scotland's identity narratives. Beyond the mourning for a nation's territory by its (dispossessed) people, Scotland's northern regions are host to Other invisible histories, which, rather than being 'under the threat of erasure', actively threaten to possess, or even repossess, the landscape that has concealed them. In other words, the Scottish north remains a quintessentially haunted landscape.

While traces of the traditional sublime aesthetics can be visible in Scott Graham's *Shell* (2012) and Gordon Napier's *1745: An Untold Story of Slavery* (2017), in both films landscape is 'a subjective and lived space',<sup>10</sup> affectively haunted both by the problematic legacy of Scotland's well-known historical traumas *and* the repressed memories of the more secretive past. The films' landscape is simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar, homely and hostile, own and Other; invested with an ambiguous sense of (be)longing, as experienced by locals and forced 'incomers' respectively, it remains elusively 'uncanny' and 'frightening', as Sigmund Freud would argue, because it 'leads back to what is known of old and long familiar'.<sup>11</sup>

In *Shell*, which explores the complicated intimacy between Pete (Joseph Mawle) and his daughter Shell (Chloe Pirrie), the claustrophobic locale of the isolated Highland petrol station, which doubles as a home to the characters, foregrounds the film's investigation of their problematic belonging. The setting produces an unresolved tension between the Highland landscape's openness and the characters' paradoxical entrapment within the land's seemingly uncontainable vastness: 'We felt claustrophobic while we were there, although it was this massive space', notes Graham of the filming on site. The film's photography of the exteriors, shot through 'a lot of wides but in quite a static way so that they would feel almost like postcards you can't quite get out of' emphasises the landscape's uncanny affect on those who are imprisoned within it, it also reveals his intention to both engage with and critique traditional Highland aesthetics.<sup>12</sup>

The publication of James MacPherson's *Ossian* poems in 1760 arguably marked the start of 'Highlandism', the cultural revival of Gaelic culture, which simultaneously popularised Scotland's northern scenery as a spectacle of sublime remoteness, and accelerated the changes that would affect the region's cultural, social and economic future.<sup>13</sup> Embodying the

dark, moody, vast and rugged features which Edmund Burke associated with the sublime in nature, which was soon to become the Romantic favourite landscape aesthetic,<sup>14</sup> the eerie appeal of the Scottish north captivated the imagination of the increasing numbers of visitors fascinated by the ghost-filled locations of the glorious past featured in *Ossian's* poems. In a prescient way, *Ossian* foreshadowed the changing perception of the 'strangeness' of the Scottish north throughout the eighteenth century:

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Gaelic-speaking people of northern Scotland were a mystery to the rest of the population of the island, though their periodical descents to prey on the Lowlanders made them a feared mystery. At the end of the eighteenth century they were a different kind of mystery: a culture whose strange ways were a subject of great curiosity – mystery made into a cultural commodity, and a culture that was rapidly disappearing into the legends of history.<sup>15</sup>

The social and economic reforms which led to the region's radical changes, ran under the umbrella term of 'improvement', a concept implying a paradoxical attitude to the Highlands' natural environment, as Peter Womack explains: 'To "improve" it [...] is both to supplement its value by changing it and to elicit its immanent value by acting in accordance with its natural imperatives'.<sup>16</sup> The collapse of the clan system, the Highland Clearances and the start of a new economic exploitation of the Highlands based on intensive sheep breeding and deer hunting resulted in profound – and long-lasting – transformations in the social fabric and territory of the Scottish Highlands.

*Shell's* petrol station, in its attempt to make the most remote areas of Scotland more accessible to travellers, embodies the haunting of a landscape, constructed as unfamiliar and remote, by the perpetual cycle of 'improvements' that continuously attempt to bring the Highlands into closer aesthetic, geographic and commercial relationships with the 'familiar' south. The film renders the electric lights of the petrol station, and the noise produced by the lorries speeding by the road, as spectral intrusions on a dark and quiet landscape. As there was no existing out-of-use petrol station that fulfilled the director's vision, the structure shown in the film was built from scratch and dismantled after filming: a process that could be seen as appropriate to *Shell's* positioning of improvements as other-worldly (and often ephemeral) visitations. The filmmakers' search for suitable locations revealed the extent to which service stations across the Highlands no longer serve their 'civilising' functions, leaving ruins, 'signs that there used to be a garage there'.<sup>17</sup> In a more complicated fashion than in films such as

Alexander MacKendrick's *The Maggie* (1959) and Bill Forsyth's *Local Hero* (1983), which, as many critics have suggested, 'represent Scotland and Scottish people in the regressive terms of tartanry and kailyardism',<sup>18</sup> *Shell*'s unsentimental depiction of landscape does not reproduce a version of the Highlands' romanticised resistance to modernity. Instead, the film's aesthetic tension between the raw barrenness of natural landscape and the dubious success of human efforts to 'civilise' it and exploit its resources – symbolised by the petrol station – constructs the Highlands as an uncanny territory where there is no easy way of belonging, and the boundaries between homely and unhomely, tame and wild, traditional and modern are not fixed.

Within this context, the film positions the 'civilised' space of the petrol station in a relationship of mutual haunting with the deer as an ambivalent symbol of both the Highlands' 'wildness' and the historical traumas of dispossession, depopulation and commercial exploitation. Commenting on the changing aesthetics in nineteenth-century Highland landscape painting, exemplified by the barren landscape and majestic wildlife of Horatio McCulloch (1805–67)'s works, John Morrison reminds us that:

Central to that change were animals, in particular sheep and deer. Sheep were introduced to the Highlands in massive numbers as landlords turned existing occupied farmland into vast grazing areas, heavily depopulating the region in the process. [...] [Deer were introduced subsequently] 'to allow the very rich to indulge in a fantasy of hunting in a "natural" landscape'.<sup>19</sup>

Paradoxically, then, the pictorial use animals to symbolise the region's unspoilt nature and traditional values, is in fact a reminder of the traumas of dispossession and depopulation, which simultaneously marked the end of the Highland clan system and its commercialisation to outside visitors and tourists.

In *Shell*, the deer's treatment as sacrificial victim cements the characters' problematic sense of belonging in, and ambiguous identification with, the Highlands. After a collision with a car driven by southern visitors Claire (Kate Dickie) and Robert (Paul Thomas Hickie), Pete puts a deer out of its misery by slashing its throat with his knife: the act – and its symbolic connotation – is both humane and primitive. The deer subsequently turns – as Robert cynically notes – into venison, although the process – which occupies one of the most important sequences in the film – is far from unproblematic. The visceral visuals of the slaughtering scene speak of 'the world of the nightmare and the scapegoat, of bondage and

pain and confusion', which Northrop Frye identifies as features of archetypal demonic symbolism: 'The imagery of cannibalism usually includes, not only images of torture and mutilation, but of what is technically known as *sparagmos* or the tearing apart of the sacrificial body'.<sup>20</sup> The film conveys the sacrificial character of the scene through Pete's actions, the cutting of the deer's throat first and, after butchering the animal's carcass, the ritualistic cleansing of his hands in water.

The film also produces a more unsettling notion of self-sacrifice whereby Shell and Pete both identify with the deer. Shell's nausea whilst handling the animal's flesh is evocative of abjection, the kind of repulsion, which, according to Julia Kristeva, blurs the lines between the subject and object of horror. The scene is pivotal in breaking down the human/animal, killer/victim distinctions,<sup>21</sup> but Shell's self-identification with the animal runs throughout the film,<sup>22</sup> as there is visual continuity, for instance, between the deer's blood and Shell's menstrual cycle, as her period starts concurrently with the animal's *sparagmos*. Later, when the venison is cooked into a stew, Shell hardly touches the meat: 'It's like eating my own flesh', she tells Pete. The implied (self)-cannibalism creates further uncanny reverberations with Pete's own desire for 'his own' flesh and blood, in a hallucination following an epileptic fit, '*the morbus sacer*' which to Ernst Jentsch and Freud exemplifies the blurring of archetypal human/demonic boundaries.<sup>23</sup> After a passionate embrace with Shell, mistaken for his wife, Pete poignantly replaces the sacrificial deer as he throws himself under the wheels of a truck.

The deer re-appears – revenant-like – outside Shell's window the morning after the fatal accident, evoking Edwin Landseer's 1851 iconic painting of *The Monarch of the Glen*, and, implicitly, the Highlands' cultural past, as does Shell's final escape on board of a southbound timber truck – another symboliser of ongoing deforestation and Highland improvement. Rather than celebrating, nostalgically, the Highlands 'way of life', *Shell* departs from the straightforward adoption of sublime Highlandism and interrogates simplistic Highland-based visual narratives of Scottish identity, home and belonging. Both haunting and haunted, the film positions the Highlands and its human inhabitants as simultaneously resisting, and falling victim, to each other.

A very different kind of escape, that of two enslaved women from the Highland mansion of a Master David Andrews (Clive Russell), is the starting point of *1745*, the screenplay for which was inspired by an advert in a historical Scottish newspaper:

RUN away on the 7th Instant from Dr. Gustavus Brown's Lodgings in Glasgow, a Negro Woman, named Ann, being about 18 Years of Age, with a green Gown and a Brass Collar about her Neck, on which are engraved these Words ["Gustavus Brown in Dalkieth his Negro, 1726."] Whoever apprehends her, so as she may be recovered, shall have two Guineas Reward, and necessary Charges allowed by Laurance Dinwiddie Junior Merchant in Glasgow, or by James Mitchelson, Jeweller in Edinburgh.<sup>24</sup>

Scottish Nigerian Morayo Akandé's fictionalised screenplay re-imagines this story as the dramatic ordeal of sisters Rebecca and Emma Atkin, respectively played by real-life sisters Morayo and Moyo Akandé, who, at the start of the film, appear dressed in voluminous eighteenth-century tartan dresses as they run for their freedom through the Highland wilderness.

As in *Shell*, whilst referencing the sublime imagery conventionally associated with Highland scenery, the landscape's affect is central to *1745*'s complex treatment of territorial haunting.<sup>25</sup> As '[t]he sisters [...] must survive the wilderness whilst being chased by their master',<sup>26</sup> the film's *mise-en-scène* does not romanticise the harshness of this untamed environment, but rather references a pictorial representation of the north, not yet informed by a sublime sensibility: 'The landscape was important because we wanted to capture not only the beauty, but the harshness of the Highlands', confirms Morayo Akandé, 'Nature is a character in the film, and it is captivating, but unforgiving'.<sup>27</sup> Simultaneously 'captivating' and 'unforgiving', the film's use of the Highlands landscape unveils its hidden ghosts whilst it hearkens back to the cultural history and aesthetics attached to the region.

Later romanticised and popularised under the joint influences of Ossian/MacPherson and Sir Walter Scott, up until the late eighteenth century the north was only the site of occasional visitors, who 'did not report what they saw in romantic terms', were 'little inclined to go into raptures over Highland scenery', and 'tended to speak of the country almost with horror, as a black howling wilderness, full of bogs and boulders, mostly treeless, and nearly unfit for human habitation'.<sup>28</sup> One such visitor was Edward Burt, whose eighteenth-century travel account is exemplary of the unspeakable 'horror' the Highland landscape generated: 'how to describe them [the Highlands] to you, as to give you any tolerable idea of such as rugged Country, – to you, I say, who have never been out of the South of England – is, I fear, a Task altogether impracticable', he laments apologetically. Self-conscious of the limitations of language in doing justice to the unfamiliar scenery of Scotland's northern regions, Burt's

detailed descriptions of the 'Heathscape', do not hold back from expressing anxiety, disquiet and even dread at the sight of the 'monstrous' mountains and 'horrid prospects' the Highlands present him with.<sup>29</sup>

More specifically, *1745* references the year of the failed Jacobite uprising which led to defeat of the Stuarts' rebel army against the government's Hanoverian troops at Culloden in 1746. A 'place of collective memory',<sup>30</sup> to many Scottish visitors Culloden remains, in Ali Smith's words, 'frightening and laden with spirit and haunted sadness', and a reminder that 'landscape holds the spirit of what happened to it: the beauty of the landscape isn't going to let you forget its history'.<sup>31</sup> While previous cinematic representations of Culloden such as Anthony Kimmin's 1948 *Bonnie Prince Charlie* and Hans Nieter's 1959 *A Song for Prince Charlie* have significantly displayed 'the transformation of Jacobitism from a political to a predominantly romantic movement', Napier's *1745* sits ideologically closer to the more critical reading of the Jacobite uprising of Peter Watkins's 1964 *Culloden*, where landscape becomes 'a place of slaughter, where a brief battle gave way to a killing field', and, significantly, '[t]he moor was scarred by the futility of war, not sanctified as a memorial to the cause for which the Jacobites died'.<sup>32</sup> Rather than constructing Culloden – and the Jacobite uprising – within the context of Scotland's quest for separation from England, multiple references throughout *1745*, such as the body of a man hanging from a tree, and the white flower, symbol of the Jacobites, which the master gifts to Rebecca, are reminders of the divisive traits of the insurgence, reminiscent of films such as Graham Holloway's *Chasing the Deer* (1994), where Culloden is more the site of 'a civil war than a battle for national destiny'.<sup>33</sup>

In exposing the limits of collective memory, *1745* highlights the problematic conflation of Scotland's historical palimpsest into one single-layer national narrative, making visible the invisible Other stories that haunt the landscape of Culloden and the Highlands. As Moyo Akandé explains:

The reason we decided to call the film *1745* was because this was the most important year in Scottish history in regard to fighting for our freedom – the Jacobite rebellion [...]. That is what many Scots associate the year 1745 with. But what isn't mentioned in the history books or taught in the Scottish school curriculum is that there were also other people – people of colour – fighting for their freedom at the same time.<sup>34</sup>

Whilst drawing attention to one of the most iconic moments in Scottish history, the film also defamiliarizes the event and the cultural associations of the landscape that accommodates the familiar narrative of Scottish identity. The focus on the two black women, who, as the story progresses occupy a large part of the screen instead of being absent from or dwarfed by the landscape, subverts pre-conceptions both about the romantic aesthetics and identity politics embedded in that landscape.

Foreshadowing the 1746 Highland dress ban for men and boys, the fine tartan fabric of the cumbersome dresses simultaneously brings to the fore the question of 'belonging', both in relation to place and people; whilst exposing the African women's problematic *belonging* within the same landscape romantically associated with Scottish nationalism, of which tartan is a most recognisable symbol, the costumes are also a poignant reminder that the two women *belong* to a Scottish master: 'You are my property', he claims, as he attempts to strangle Emma, his hands doubling the yoke of the brass shackle, marked with his name and locked around her neck.<sup>35</sup> Yet, in spite of the colonial connotations of tartan and seeming hostility of the harsh environment, the presence of the two women disrupts the aesthetic conventions of Highland landscape, the blue and red of their dresses opening a new wound, and inflicting a new bruise against the muted colours of the moorland. These are Scotland's concealed scars, the forgotten history of Scottish's deep involvement with slavery. Thus ruptured, the landscape moves away from the sublime static beauty of the Highland pictorial tradition, to create a dissonant effect, and an uncanny landscape where the familiar scene is disrupted by the unfamiliar 'intruders'.

Haunted by Scotland's involvement in slavery, the region's association with national pride and the idealisation of the clan system is also called into question by the film's visualisation of the Highlands' invisible – and untold – narrative. An important aspect of the Highlands' myth was the notion of social egalitarianism which was – and continues to be – ambiguously associated with the defunct clan system: 'Highland society as presented was founded on bonds of kinship and of community', Morrison notes, 'It was classless and was fiercely loyal'.<sup>36</sup> In reality, however, many tenants lived in a perpetual state of abject poverty, as noted in Burt's travel journal, which compares the living conditions of indigent Highlanders to those of the enslaved Black Africans:

Let those who deride the dirtiness and idleness of these poor creatures, which my countrymen are too apt to do, [...] consider what inclination they can have to recommend themselves? What emulation can there proceed from mere despair?

Cleanliness is too expensive for their small wages; *and what inducement can they have, in such a station, to be diligent and obliging to those who use them more like negroes than natives of Britain?*<sup>37</sup>

In spite of Burt's criticism of the inequalities of the clan system, the implied binary opposition between the 'negroes' and the 'natives of Britain' highlights a hierarchy of status which is revealing of the Other, parallel story, occurring in 18th century Scotland, and which 1745 inscribes in the same landscape that accommodates the grand narrative of Scottish independence.

The relationship between the Highlands and the Caribbean was further complicated when, as a consequence of the Jacobite loss at Culloden, the depopulation of the Highlands led to the subsequent migration to the Caribbean within Britain's wider imperial project. As Karly Kehoe argues:

Far from being passive bystanders or mere victims during a period of acute socio-economic upheaval at home, many Highlanders demonstrated significant agency by their willingness to engage in a deeply exploitative, slave-based economy that would lead to an expanded culture of enterprise and prosperity in the Highlands.<sup>38</sup>

The depopulated Highlands, therefore, accommodate not one, but the multiple hauntings of Scottish history; if, as a place associated with collective national mourning, Culloden represents the quintessential *lieu de memoire*, on the other hand, as a wider region, it is also as a site of 'collective amnesia',<sup>39</sup> as Carla Sassi argues, both with regards to Scotland's involvement with the slave trade and the existence of enslaved people on Scottish soil.<sup>40</sup> The desire to 'decolonise' the representation of the Scottish Highlands informs the film-making of *1745*, as does the intention to haunt the landscape with those whose stories have been made invisible, as Morayo Akandé confirms:

If it's not recorded, we won't be aware someone actually existed as a slave, because they had no voice, and the accounts are usually through the eyes of the merchant or slave master. The lack of records has made it a 'forgotten' part of Scotland's history.<sup>41</sup>

The particular kind of haunting that this act of rewriting history echoes with the peculiar case of Archibald McLauchlan's 1767 Glassford family portrait (Fig. 1), which depicts the

affluent tobacco lord's household, two figures of which 'lurked in the shadows' until conservation treatment was carried out on the painting at Glasgow's Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum in 2007. After unveiling the contour of another woman, identified as Glassford's second wife, Anne Nesbitt (Fig. 2), painted over with Glassford's third wife, Lady Margaret Mackenzie, the restored portrait revealed the profile of a black man, a servant brought back to Scotland from one of Glassford's profitable plantations in Virginia and Maryland, standing on the far left, behind Glassford's gilded chair (Fig. 3). While the temporary disappearance of the black man from the portrait has been attributed to ageing, the partial inclusion of the figure and its positioning so close to the margins speak of the ambiguous representational intentions behind it.<sup>42</sup> Unlike other paintings, such as Peter Lely's 1651 portrait of Elizabeth Murray, which uses the motif of an elegantly dressed black servant as a manifest display of luxury,<sup>43</sup> the hierarchical configuration of Glassford's family portrait, which places the white family in the centre and pushes the black manservant to the edge of the portrait, simultaneously displays the 'exotic perks' of the plantation economy *and* conceals Scotland's involvement in the slave trade. Such network of conflicted desires, racial anxieties and moral concerns similarly haunt James Robertson's historical novel *Joseph Knight* (2003), which recounts the story of a black African enslaved man's fight for freedom against John Wedderburn, his Scottish master, in 1769. Here, too, the covered-up shadow of the black man in a colonial painting hanging in the library of Wedderburn's Scottish mansion, conveys the haunting of Knight's ghost, simultaneously 'there and not there'.<sup>44</sup>

To return to 1745, the move of the marginalised black servants out of stately-home custody and into the open landscape subverts the archetypal narrative of Scottish national identity as it points to the Highlands, an uncanny territory haunted by memories other than those of the Jacobite rising, and by a different set of identity politics. A brief flashback scene of the women's childhood in Africa, and their violent abduction from their native land, superimposes the Other landscape of memory – Africa – on the women's present location in the Scottish Highlands. The fact that the African scene was, in fact, shot at Gullane Bents in Scotland, further reinforces, through the visual overlap, the notion of territorial 'repossession' of the landscape through the memories of the Other.<sup>45</sup> Continuity between the African past and the Highland present persists in the film's closing music track, a Yoruba song about reincarnation, sung first by Emma to console Rebecca, and then by her mother, whose voice travels, ghost-like, from the African past into the Scottish present. In the final sequence, when the master's body, fatally hit by a rock from Rebecca's hand, is followed by the camera along a swift mountain stream and down a waterfall, the sublime elements of the scenery appear

to collude with the women's quest for freedom, of which the landscape's openness may ultimately be the bearer. The extradiegetic sound of the Yoruba song returns to intimate that, having sought revenge on the people who took her children away to enslave them, the mother's spirit haunts the glen and watches over the women who pursue their escape through the moors.<sup>46</sup>

Although both *Shell* and *1745* evoke the sublime scenery of previous pictorial and cinematic representations of the Highlands, the films' depictions of landscape signal, in fact, an affective shift to a notion of uncanny 'territoriality', where, as Lefevbre contends, 'the "possessive" character of territory [...] contrasts with the experience that one can make of space in terms of aesthetic contemplation'.<sup>47</sup> Moving away from a sublimely romanticised view of the north, both films produce, instead, the haunting of a landscape that teases out the scenery's familiar/foreign, homely/hostile dichotomies of traditional readings of Scottish Highland cultural history and geography: '[a] haunted landscape deconstructs itself', notes Ruth Heholt, '[b]oundaries, borders and spaces themselves dissolve in fluid reconfigurations as that which haunts moves in *and* out, here *and* there, in-between *and* nowhere'.<sup>48</sup> By (re)'possessing' the landscape associated with Scotland's independence, identity, and freedom, the main characters' escapes into and out of the Highlands resist, in their dynamic visuals, the 'static' unchangeability of scenery, and, in regaining their own agency, they draw attention to the multiple hauntings of Scotland's uncanny north.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Patricia M. Keller, *Ghostly Landscapes: Film, Photography, and the Aesthetics of Haunting in Contemporary Spanish Culture*. (University of Toronto Press, 2016), p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Kirsty Macdonald, "'This Desolate and Appalling Landscape": The Journey North in Contemporary Scottish Gothic', *Gothic Studies* 13:2 (2011), pp. 37-48 (37).

<sup>3</sup> See Duncan Petrie, 'Where the land meets the sea: liminality, identity, and rural landscape in contemporary Scottish cinema', in *British Rural Landscapes on Film*, ed. by Paul Newland (Manchester: MUP, 2016), pp. 119-1; see also Duncan Petrie, 'Scottish Gothic and The Moving Image: A Tale of Two Traditions', in *Scottish Gothic: A Companion*, edited by Carol Margaret Davison and Monica Germanà (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), pp. 181-194.

<sup>4</sup> See A. J. Youngson (ed.), *Beyond the Highland Line: Three Journals of Travel in Eighteenth Century Scotland: Burt, Pennant, Thornton* (London: Collins, 1974), p. 13-16.

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<sup>5</sup> Murray Pittock, *The Road to Independence? Scotland since the Sixties* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008), p. 25.

<sup>6</sup> It is no coincidence that the longing for a lost landscape is a recurrent image in Roy Williamson's 'Flower of Scotland' (1967), Scotland's unofficial national anthem, where the desire for future glory - 'When will we see your like again? / That fought and died for / Your wee bit Hill and Glen', and a present lack of independence - 'The Hills are bare now / And Autumn leaves lie thick and still / O'er land that is lost now' – are both captured by references to a recognisable Highland landscape. See Robert Crawford, *Bannockburns: Scottish Independence and the Literary Imagination, 1314-2014* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), p. 233.

<sup>7</sup> David Punter, 'Scottish and Irish Gothic', in Jerrold Hogle (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 105-124 (105).

<sup>8</sup> Keller, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> Angela Wright, 'Scottish Gothic', in *The Routledge Companion to Gothic*, ed. by Catherine Spooner and Emma McEvoy (London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 73-82, 76.

<sup>10</sup> Martin Lefebvre, 'Between Setting and Landscape in Cinema', in Martin Lefebvre (ed.), *Landscape and Film* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 19-60 (p. 53). Scott Graham (dir.), *Shell*, (Brocken Spectre, 2012); Gordon Napier (dir.), *1745: An Untold Story of Slavery* (Compact Pictures, 2017) is available at: <https://vimeo.com/218687244>. Accessed on 1 August 2021.

<sup>11</sup> Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny' [1919], *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. by James Strachey, (London: Hogarth Press, 1953), vol. XVII (1917-1919), pp. 218-253, p. 220.

<sup>12</sup> Alan Bett, 'Role Play: Scott Graham on *Shell*', *The Skinny*, 4 March 2013. Available at <https://www.theskinny.co.uk/film/interviews/role-play-scott-graham-on-shell-feature>. Accessed on 25 November 2020.

<sup>13</sup> For an analysis of Ossian's influence on landscape aesthetics, see Henry Okun, 'Ossian in Painting', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 30 (1967), pp. 327-356. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2307/750749>. Accessed on 25 November 2020.

<sup>14</sup> See Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Inquiry Into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* [1757], (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

<sup>15</sup> Peter T. Murphy, 'Fool's Gold: The Highland Treasures of MacPherson's Ossian', *ELH* 53:3 (1986), pp. 567-591 (567-8). Available at <https://doi.org/10.2307/2873040>. Accessed on 26 November 2020.

<sup>16</sup> Peter Womack, *Improvement and Romance: Constructing the Myth of the Highlands* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 61-62.

<sup>17</sup> Samuel Wigley, 'Life's a gas station: Scott Graham on *Shell*', 2 June 2015. Available at: <https://www2.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/news-bfi/interviews/life-s-gas-station-scott-graham-shell>. Accessed on 9 March 2021.

<sup>18</sup> Christopher Meir, *Scottish Cinema: Texts and Contexts* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), p. 16. Explaining these thematic paradigms in Scottish cinema, Duncan Petrie notes that 'What unites Tartanry and Kailyard is the abdication of any engagement with the realities of the modern world. Rather than being directed towards transformation or transcendence of material conditions, the popular imagination seeks shelter

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in the retreat into a nostalgic mythic past'. See Duncan Petrie, *Screening Scotland* (London: Bloomsbury, 2000), p. 3. See also Colin MacArthur, *Brigadoon, Braveheart and the Scots: Distortions of Scotland in Hollywood Cinema* (London: Bloomsbury, 2003).

<sup>19</sup> John Morrison, *Painting the Nation: Identity and Nationalism in Scottish Painting, 1800-1920* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), p. 109.

<sup>20</sup> Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), Princeton: Princeton University Press (2020), p. 147.

<sup>21</sup> Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. By Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

<sup>22</sup> As Graham has repeatedly suggested in interviews, Pirrie's resemblance to the deer was a determining factor in her casting: 'Chloe is able to express a lot without dialogue and there was something about her physically that reminded me of the deer, which becomes an important metaphor in the film'. See Samuel Wigley, 'Life's a gas station: Scott Graham on *Shell*', 2 June 2015. Available at: <https://www2.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/news-bfi/interviews/life-s-gas-station-scott-graham-shell> . Accessed on 2 March 2021.

<sup>23</sup> See Freud, 'The Uncanny', p. 243. See also Ernst Jentsch, 'On the Psychology of the uncanny' [1906], *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, 2:1 (1997), pp. 7-16, 14.

<sup>24</sup> *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 13 February 1727. To understand the kind of commodity value attached to these enslaved people, £1 1shilling, the reward mentioned in the advert, corresponds to £2,280 using the average earning as a criterion. For a historian's conversion tool, see <https://www.measuringworth.com/calculators/ukcompare/>. See also 'Runaway Slaves in Britain: Bondage, Freedom and Race in the Eighteenth Century' (University of Glasgow). Available at: <https://www.runaways.gla.ac.uk/database/>; Accessed on 22 December 2020.

<sup>25</sup> 'The screen image is both bewildering and haunting. Two young women are running across the bleak Highland gorse, breathing wildly, their faces showing absolute terror as they see a horseman, lifting his 18th-century rifle to his shoulder', writes Brian Beacom, drawing attention to pictorial references to Alejandro González Iñárritu's *The Revenant* (2015), in his review of the film. See Brian Beacom, 'The forgotten runaways: Actors Moyo and Morayo Akandé on illuminating a dark chapter of Scotland's history', *The Herald*, 21 May 2017. Available at: [https://www.heraldscotland.com/life\\_style/arts\\_ents/15299308.forgotten-runaways-actors-moyo-morayo-akande-illuminating-dark-chapter-scotlands-history/](https://www.heraldscotland.com/life_style/arts_ents/15299308.forgotten-runaways-actors-moyo-morayo-akande-illuminating-dark-chapter-scotlands-history/). Accessed on 23 November 2021.

<sup>26</sup> 'East Lothian the backdrop for new film 1745 nominated for award at the Edinburgh International Film Festival', *East Lothian Courier*, 21 May 2017. Available at: <https://www.eastlothiancourier.com/news/15362102.east-lothian-the-backdrop-for-new-film-1745-nominated-for-award-at-the-edinburgh-international-film-festival/>. Accessed on 23 November 2021.

<sup>27</sup> 'History Once Hidden is Now Exposed in the Short Film 1745', Timeless Sass3nach Journeys website. Available at: <https://sass3journey.com/2017/06/25/history-once-hidden-is-now-exposed-in-the-short-film-1745/>. Accessed on 3 December 2020.

<sup>28</sup> Youngson, p. 13.

<sup>29</sup> Edward Burt, *Letters from the North of Scotland* [1754] (Edinburgh: William Paterson, 1876), vol. 2, pp. 26, 36, 35.

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- <sup>30</sup> Pierre Nora, 'Preface', in *Realms of Memory*, vol. 1, ed. by Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 1–2.
- <sup>31</sup> Claire Armistead, 'Ali Smith: The young generation is showing us that we need to change and we can change', *The Guardian*, 23 March 2019, Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/mar/23/ali-smith-spring-young-generation-brexit-future>. Accessed on 23 December 2020.
- <sup>32</sup> John R. Gold and Margaret M. Gold, "'The Graves of the Gallant Highlanders": Memory, Interpretation and Narratives of Culloden', *History and Memory*, 19:1 (2007), pp. 25-28, (19-20).
- <sup>33</sup> See <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/research/archivists-garden/index-by-plant-name/white-rose-of-scotland-scots-rose-burnet-rose>. See also Gold and Gold, "'The Graves of the Gallant Highlanders'", p. 20.
- <sup>34</sup> Beacom, 'The forgotten runaways'.
- <sup>35</sup> The Museum of Scotland holds an 18<sup>th</sup> century 'brass serf's collar' inscribed, 'Alexr. Steuart found guilty of death for theft at Perth the 5th of December 1701, & gifted by the Justiciars as a perpetual servant to Sir Jo. Areskin of Alva'. See <http://nms.scran.ac.uk/database/record.php?usi=000-100-001-337-C> (with thanks to Professor Carol Davison (University of Windsor) for bringing this artefact to my attention. Although not shown in the film, a parallel exists also between slavery and 'serfdom', namely the relationship of bondage that existed between the Scottish coal miners and their employers/masters, to whom they were ambiguously bound by Scottish law from 1606 until their status was changed by British statutes of 1775 and 1799; according to some historians, there are also connections between the campaigns for the change in Scottish miners (or colliers) status and the Abolition of Slavery. See P.E.H. Hair, 'Slavery and Liberty': The Case of the Scottish Colliers, *Slavery and Abolition*, 21:3 (2000), pp. 136-151. See also Baron F. Duckham, 'Serfdom in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', *History*, 54: 181 (June 1969), pp. 178-197.
- <sup>36</sup> Morrison, p. 11. See also David McCrone, *Understanding Scotland: The Sociology of a Nation* (1992) (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 9-10.
- <sup>37</sup> Burt, pp. 54-55 (emphasis mine).
- <sup>38</sup> Karly Kehoe, 'From the Caribbean to the Scottish Highlands: Charitable Enterprise in the Age of Improvement, c. 1750 to c. 1820', *Rural History* 27: 1 (2016), pp. 37-59 (39). See also David Alston, *Slaves and Highlanders: Silenced Histories of Scotland and the Caribbean* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021).
- <sup>39</sup> Carla Sassi, 'Acts of (Un)Willed Amnesia: Dis/appearing Figurations of the Caribbean in Post-Union Scottish Literature', in *Caribbean Scottish Relations* (London: Mango Publishing, 2007), ed. by Giovanna Covi, Joan Anim-Addo, Velma Pollard and Carla Sassi, pp. 131-198). p. 132; see also Michael Morris, *Scotland and the Caribbean, c. 1740-1833* (New York and London, Routledge, 2015), pp. 4-6.
- <sup>40</sup> Although British involvement in the slave trade was legal until its abolition in 1807, slavery was technically not legal, on Scottish soil. This does not mean it was not practised. Excerpts from the diary of Lord Fountainhall, an eminent seventeenth-century Scottish Judge, record the case of a charlatan, a man called Reid, who sued a couple for 'stealing away from him a little girl, called Tumbling-lassie, that danced upon his stage; and he claimed damages, and produced a contract, whereby he bought her from her mother for £30 Scots'. Fountainhall's commentary on the case is enlightening on two levels; first his statement that 'we have no slaves in Scotland, and mothers cannot sell their bairns', suggests the unlawful nature of slavery in Scotland and its current practice; second, the additional comment that 'one of his [Reid's] blackamores [sic] was persuaded to accept baptism

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from the Popish priests, and to turn Christian Papist, which was a great trophy' more specifically draws attention to the presence of black slaves in Scotland as early as 1687. See Lord John Lauder Fountainhall, *Chronological Notes of Scottish Affairs from 1680 till 1701* [1822] (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2010), pp. 263-264.

<sup>41</sup> Cheryl Caira, 'Sold into Captivity', *Scottish Woman Magazine*, June 2017, pp. 46-47 (46).

<sup>42</sup> On the results of the restoration process, see this informative blog post by curator Anthony Lewis, 'John Glassford's Family Portrait'. Available at: <https://glasgowmuseumsslavery.co.uk/2018/08/14/john-glassfords-family-portrait/>. Accessed on 31 July 2021. See also Morris, *Scotland and the Caribbean*, pp. 25-27.

<sup>43</sup> Sir Peter Lely, 'Elizabeth Murray, Lady Tollemache, later Countess of Dysart and Duchess of Lauderdale (1626-1698) and an Attendant'. For more details, see <https://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/1139940>. Accessed on 23 November 2021.

<sup>44</sup> James Robertson, *Joseph Knight* (2003), London and New York: Fourth Estate, 2004, p. 25.

<sup>45</sup> See 'East Lothian the backdrop for new film 1745 nominated for award at the Edinburgh International Film Festival'.

<sup>46</sup> For a brief discussion of the song, see Ginger Wiseman, 'Episode 199: An invisible history—an interview with the team from 1745', *The Outlander Podcast*, Available at: <https://www.outlanderpod.com/episode-199-an-invisible-history-an-interview-with-the-team-from-1745/>. Accessed on 31 July 2021.

<sup>47</sup> 'Between Setting and Landscape in Cinema', p. 53.

<sup>48</sup> Ruth Heholt 'Unstable Landscapes: Affect, Representation and a Multiplicity of Hauntings', in *Haunted Landscapes: Super-Nature and The Environment*, ed. by Ruth Heholt and Niamh Downing (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), pp. 1-20 (6).