

CHAPTER II

Statement of the Problem

Scottish dress, including Highland dress, has been studied through portraits, letters, household accounts, and travel accounts, and extant garments, although these sources are not numerous. The Scottish poets created numerous poems, ballads and songs that addressed events that affected the Scottish culture. Bell (1995), Robertson (1988), and Willhardt (1993), have shown that culture is reflected in poetry, while Greenfield (1980) demonstrated that a poet's work reflects his life experiences.

Highland chiefs often had a poet to record the history of his clan (Bain, 1954; Trevor-Roper, 1984). The poet had a high status because he worked closely with the chief. Not only did poetry serve as historic records of a clan, it also served as a form of entertainment and a place to voice opinions. Scottish poetry reflects the social, political, and economic beliefs that were popularly held by the people. Prolific poetry has rarely been used as a means for documenting 17th, 18th, and 19th century Scottish and Highland dress; more specifically documenting dress between 1603 and 1830, which corresponds to significant social, political, and economic events in Scottish history.

Some major changes in the social, political, and economic environment in Scotland, particularly the Highlands, occurred between 1603 and 1830. In 1603, the Union of the Crowns occurred, which united Scotland and England under one monarch (Browne, 1896; Maxwell & Hutchison, 1958). In 1707, the Union of the Parliaments occurred, which united the Scottish and English parliaments in the British House of Parliament (Brander, 1980; Pryde, 1979). The union was followed by significant Jacobite uprisings against the English, as many people felt England had usurped the power of Scotland (Pryde, 1979). The united government suppressed the uprisings and then imposed a dress ban on the Scottish people, particularly the Highlanders. The ban, known as The Act of Proscription of 1746, forbade the wearing of traditional Highland dress (Bennett, 1980; Dunbar, 1979); thereby removing a portion of their identity. The government had hoped that the ban would help assimilate the Highlanders into the British culture. The ban was repealed 36 years later in 1782.

Cheape (1993) discussed the relationship between dress and society by stating that "dress, like weapons, functions as a symbol that commands society's highest respect and approval" (p. 41). Control of dress was indeed a weapon used by England during their political upheavals and power struggles with Scotland, in general, and the Highlands, in particular. The Act of Proscription, as well as the economic situation in

Scotland (i.e., the Clearances, population fluctuations, and the move toward industrialization) likely had a profound effect on Highland dress and English and Lowland society's reaction. The Act of Proscription was enacted as a means of banning traditional dress and forcing the Highlanders to assimilate into British culture through English style dress (Bennett, 1980; Dunbar, 1979). The English and Lowlanders regarded the traditional Highland dress as barbaric and uncivilized and thought the Highland people should dress in the more civilized English manner. Most male Europeans, including the English, dressed in shirts, waistcoats, coats, breeches, stockings, and shoes, while females wore chemise, gowns (bodice and shirt), stockings and shoes (Payne, 1965; Peltz, 1980; Russell, 1983; Tortora & Eubank, 1998). Dress was usually created from good quality plain fabrics, although brocades were sometimes used. The male Highlanders, on the other hand, wore shirts, kilts (pleated skirt-like garment) or trews (breeches and stockings joined as one garment), plaids, stockings, and brogues (shoes) prior to the Act of Proscription, while the females wore gowns (bodice and skirt) and plaids but rarely wore stockings and shoes (Bain, 1954; Cockburn, 1985; Dunbar, 1979; Grimble, 1973; Hamilton, 1991; Smout, 1969; Stewart, 1974; Wilson, 1990). The Highland dress was usually created from a plain woolen or a colorful tartan. Fabrics in Europe and Scotland mirrored economic status, as the wealthier people wore better quality fabrics. While some items of Highland dress were known to people outside the Highland subculture (e.g., the kilt), many items remain unknown. No previous research has attempted to account for all of the various types of Highland dress worn by men and women between 1603 and 1830. In addition, female dress is relatively undocumented, as well as children's dress. Some researchers (e.g., McCracken, 1984; Ryan, 1966) have noted that dress reflects societal changes; however, the reflection of social, political, and economic environments on Highland dress over time has not been studied.

Dress in many cultures often mirrors changes in societal conditions (Giddings, 1990; McCracken, 1984; Ryan, 1966; Tortora & Eubank, 1998). However, Highland dress items have not been documented in relation to the social, political, and economic conditions that occurred in Scotland between 1603 and 1830. The combination of knowing the situation (i.e. the social, political, and economic environment in Scotland), the setting (e.g., love, war, or work), and the dress can aid the researcher in documenting the importance that dress played in Scottish and Highland society between 1603 and 1830. Writers frequently described the clothing being worn by characters in the

poems and ballads. Poetry, therefore, could be a means to document a relationship between dress and the environment.

The purpose of this research was to determine whether or not poetry (i.e., poems, ballads, and songs) could be used as a source of knowledge on historic dress in a social, political, or economic context, using the dress of Scottish Highlanders from 1603 through 1830 as an example, and to triangulate the findings with other sources that portray dress through the written word or visual image. This research cross-referenced the items of dress with social, political, and economic events that occurred in the lives of the Scottish people in general, and the Highland people in particular. Poetry was a major source of expression for the Lowland and Highland people and represents a valuable resource for studying historic dress; therefore, the main source of documentation for this research was 3,501 literary documents written from 1603-1830 in the form of poetry (i.e. poems, ballads, and songs). The researcher examined these literary documents and identified 394 poems with male dress references and 245 poems with female dress references over time. The researcher also examined the relationship between dress references and the social, political, and economic events and the contents of the poetry. Finally, the researcher examined the impact of sumptuary laws (i.e., the banning of Highland dress due to The Act of Proscription) on the dress behaviors of the Scottish people during the late 18th century as reflected in Scottish poetry.

Objectives

The objectives of the research were as follows:

1. To determine the number of dress references in anthologies of Scottish poetry written between 1603 and 1830.
2. To use dress references to document what the Scottish, in general, and the Highlanders, in particular, wore between 1603 and 1830.
3. To determine whether or not the social, political, or economic environment impacted dress behaviors of the Scottish, in general, and Highland, in particular, as reflected in Scottish poetry from 1603 through 1830.
4. To examine Scottish poetry from the late 18th century for specific references to the ban (i.e., The Act of Proscription) on Highland dress.
5. To compare dress references identified in Scottish poetry with dress references in other written (i.e., travel accounts in the form of letters) and visual (i.e., portraits) documents to validate the findings.

Research Questions

Question 1: How many dress references appeared in Scottish poetry between 1603 and 1830?

This question is being examined to determine the number of poems with dress references. The pertinence of dress references in poems will aid the researcher in understanding the significance of Highland dress in poetry.

Question 2a: What specific dress items were worn by the Scottish people, particularly the Highlanders, between 1603 and 1830?

This question is being examined to identify specific dress items of the Scots, particularly the Highlanders, because there is a lack of information on some Highland dress items between 1603 and 1830. Information on female dress is especially sparse.

Question 2b: What differences existed in Highland dress for males and females between 1603 and 1830?

This question is being examined to determine if dress references in poetry will reveal differences over time, which has been organized into five specific periods (i.e., early 17th century, late 17th century, early 18th century, late 18th century, and early 19th century). The changes in dress over time can reveal the significance of certain dress items during a particular time frame.

Patterns of use for certain dress items may also be revealed.

Question 3: What impact did the social, political, and economic environment have on Highland dress in poetry between 1603 and 1830?

This question is being examined to determine if changes in Highland dress over time can be attributed to the social, political, or economic environment that occurred between 1603 and 1830. The researcher expects certain dress items may be closely linked to particular events in Highland history.

Question 4: What references were made about the Act of Proscription in poetry from the late 18th century?

This question is being examined to determine the impact on a culture when their traditional style of dress is banned. The researcher expects to find that the ban will greatly affect the poets' writing about dress.

Question 5: What are the similarities in dress references found in Scottish poetry, other written documents (i.e., travel accounts in the form of letters), and visual documents (i.e., portraits) from 1603 through 1830?

This question was examined to triangulate the results of Questions 2 and 3 with additional written and visual sources as a means of validating the research. The researcher expects to find both similarities and differences in the sources when compared with the poetry results. The similarities will validate poetry as a source, while the differences will reveal dress items not previously mentioned in other sources, thereby validating poetry as a source for information on historical dress.

Justification

I became interested in Scottish, particularly Highland, dress because of my family history. The Douglas clan (my family name) was a strong and powerful Highland clan (Brander, 1980; McNie, 1986). I noticed the Highland dress in portraits of past family members while investigating the family's genealogy. A search into Scottish and Highland dress directed me to research on tartans. The information about tartans was plentiful, but I noted a lack of information on the actual dress items. The further I investigated Highland history the more information I found on social, political, and economic upheavals during the 17th through the 19th centuries. This discovery piqued my curiosity regarding the effects of the upheavals on Highland dress. I began a search into how to study the question. Cheape (1993) made reference to a poem that included lines about Highland dress and suggested that poetry might be a way to study dress and social order.

Literature has been used to uncover the lives of people from the past. Literature is part of the physical, historical, and cultural character of a society. Pearce (1977) stated that "literary texts are also physical objects - pieces of paper, books, and so on - cultural artefacts, human expression, historical documents, and various other categorizations. In this form, then, one can just as easily argue that the study of literary texts is part of physics, sociology, psychology, or cultural history" (p. 5).

Poems have been chosen for the current research because they are a rich source of information on the Highlanders where few other dress sources exist (Bain, 1954; Bold, 1979; Cheape, 1993; Geddie, 1896). Geddie (1896) noted that the ballad reflects the root of Scottish national character, national life, and its history, and Cheape (1993) contends that the significance of references to Highland dress in poetry needs to be researched and analyzed in relation to its impact on social order. The Scottish Highlanders represent a subculture, partially determined by their dress and their poetry. The Highlanders were prolific in their use of poetry, ballads, and songs for entertainment

and to explain their way of life. The poet held a position of high status in the Highlands and wrote poetry that recorded the events that occurred in the lives of the Highland clans (Logan, 1876). The written word can provide a first hand account of life in the Scottish Highlands (Symonds, 1997), including the dress of the people.

Dress and literature are governed by rules according to time and social culture. Both dress and literature are forms of verbal or non-verbal communication. Barthes (1983) and Wass and Eicher (1980) concurred that dress is subjected to social norms and customs within a society. Dress is also subjected to changes within a society or culture; therefore, time and culture are reflected in the dress of a particular group of people. Dress can communicate an individual's attachment to a specific group or subculture within the society. Meanings of appearance within a culture or subculture are embedded in the social and historical context (Kaiser, 1990). Dress, like literature, also reflects time and culture of a person or group of people. Poetry not only reflects time and culture but also places dress into the context of the wearer within the setting.

Dress is described in poetry as a literal description of what was being worn. Eicher et. al. (2000) noted that written descriptions of dress provide a source of information on clothing behavior, even when not intended for this purpose. Diaries, travel accounts, novels, essays, and etiquette books in conjunction with some pictorial representation have been used to portray dress in a society (Gordon, 1992; Payne, 1965; Russell, 1983; Tortora & Eubanks, 1998). Often the written descriptions provide information that is unavailable in pictorial media. Although Highland dress has been documented, many gaps still exist in the information. Poetry enhances current knowledge by mentioning dress within the context of the wearer within a specific setting and environment. Also, poetry, particularly Scottish poetry, was written for the lay person as a form of entertainment and to voice opinions (Craig, 1961; Smout, 1969; Symonds, 1997). Costume books, on the other hand, are written for scholars and are based on existing portraits, letters, and travel accounts (Payne, 1965; Tortora & Eubank, 1998). Portraits are not always the most accurate source of costume for all classes in society due to artistic liberties (Tortora & Eubank, 1998). Letters and travel accounts are often one-sided and can be biased against a particular culture that is at odds with the writer's own culture (Eicher, Evenson, & Lutz, 2000).

The relationship between Highland dress and the social, political, and economic events that actually occurred or as the events were depicted in poetry written during the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries has not been well documented. The Scottish people and

the Highlanders used poetry extensively, in particular during the 17th through 19th centuries to express their feelings about their social, political, and economic environments; therefore, poetry would help provide understanding of the Highland people and their subculture. Poetry was considered a form of social communication and the writers expressed the views of the people within their own culture or subculture (Craig, 1961; Wittig, 1972). Highland writers, such as Alasdair MacMhaighstir Alasdair and Rob Donn Mackay, were considered to be part of the vernacular culture of the people, rather than part of refined culture (Murdoch & Sher, 1988). Other Scottish writers, often Lowlanders writing about Highlanders, also wrote in the vernacular. In fact, Craig (1961) noted, "They [Scottish writers] write in the manner of popular wiseacres...in a language little different from that of the mass of their countrymen, not in that of an educated upper crust" (p.19). Some poets wrote in Scottish Gaelic, the traditional language of the Highland people, while others wrote in Scots or English but still discussed subjects relevant to the Highland people. Many Lowland Scottish writers wrote about the Highlanders either from travels to the Highlands or about experiences through other contact with the Highland culture (e.g. war, work, or love). The poets wrote with the lay person in mind and tended toward subjects that involved the social, political, or economic life of the people. According to Craig (1961), Scottish writers were ordinary people that frequented pubs, markets, and worked at typical jobs (e.g., farmer, pedlar, lawyer).

Limitations

The limitations of this study were as follows:

1. The literary sources being used were reproductions of original manuscripts and reproductions of documents procured from private collections. The majority of the original sources still remain in Scotland and England.
2. Only poems with an author name and known birth and death dates or approximate dates given by an editor for poems with anonymous authors or authors with unknown birth and death dates were used.
3. Most of the ballads, poems, and songs were in Scots and Gaelic. The published Gaelic poems, ballads, and songs used in this research were translations in part or in whole into English.
4. The researcher was limited to documents available in the United States or documents that could be obtained through the university library, other primary documents do exist in private collections and museums throughout Great Britain.

5. Travel accounts, letters, and portraits being used for triangulation were reprints of the original sources. The original sources were unavailable and remain in Scotland and England.

Assumptions

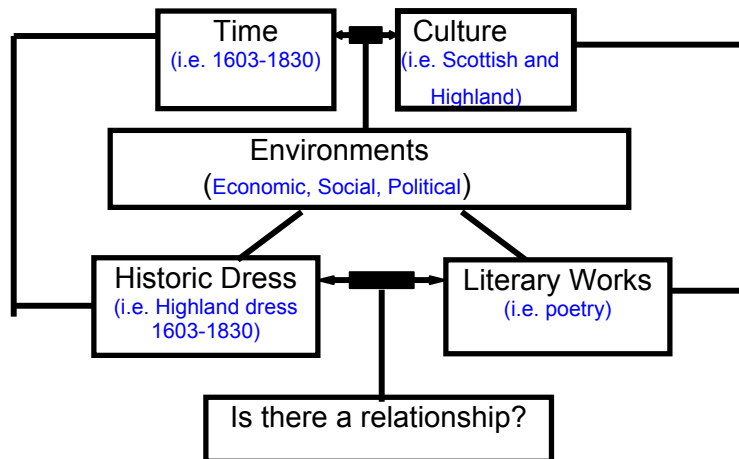
The researcher made the following assumptions in proceeding with the current study:

1. The ballads, poems, and songs in the manuscripts have been accurately dated by the editor and/or the publisher.
2. The ballads, poems, and songs have been accurately translated.
3. The ballads, poems, and songs reflect a time period similar to the published date of the work, unless otherwise stated within the ballad, poem, or song.

Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this research was to determine whether or not poetry (i.e., poems, ballads, and songs) could be used as a source of knowledge on historic dress in a social, political, or economic context, using the dress of Scottish Highlanders from 1603 through 1830 as an example, and to triangulate the findings with other sources that portray dress through the written word or visual image. The current research postulates that Highland poetry and dress are products of social, economic, and political environment between 1603 and 1830; therefore, poems written during this period provide a valid portrayal of the dress worn. Some authors (Brooks & Warren, 1974; Greenfield, 1980) confirm that literature reflects the environment and the time period in which it is written, regardless of the subject. Poetry is related to the social context in which it was written (Craig, 1961; Reiser, 1969; Wittig, 1972). Poets have a tendency to write about what is happening around them. Perry (1920) stated that the “lyric [poetry] reflects a situation or desire” of the poet (p. 232); therefore, poetry should be a valuable source of knowledge about the dress of a people during any given time period and context. The current research was concerned with whether or not there was a viable relationship between dress and literature as a means for documenting Scottish and Highland dress from 1603-1830 within its social, economic, and political environment. The proposed model (Figure 1) demonstrates the relationship between time, culture, environment, dress, and literary documents.

Figure 1: Proposed Model for Conceptual Framework



The components in the conceptual framework interact in a flow chart manner. Time (e.g., 1603-1830) and culture (e.g., Scottish and Highland) are dependent upon one another because cultures change over time. The social, political, and economic environments flow from time and culture because they are so tightly woven together with the behavior of a specific society in a particular period of time. The total environment has a variety of components, such as social events, economic events, and political events that shape the times and affect the products of a given culture, such as dress and literature. This research examined whether the events of 1603-1830 affected the poetry and dress of the Scottish Highlanders discussed by the poets.

The component of the model that addresses culture is based on Eicher, Evenson, and Lutz' (2000) definition that culture is "behaviors shared by a group of people who regularly interact with each other" (p. 34). Culture consists of both material objects and non-material phenomena. Material objects manifest themselves in a variety of ways, including the dress worn by people within a particular culture, as well as literary documents and artwork produced by people within that culture. Non-material phenomena deal with values, beliefs, ideas, and norms, which can be reflected in dress as a reaction to the social, political, and economic environment of a particular culture. According to Ryan (1966), the greatest influence on clothing choice is derived from the cultural group to which someone belongs. The Highlanders of Scotland is the subculture being researched for the present study in relation to their material objects (dress and literary documents) and their non-material phenomena (reflections of social, political, and economic environment). Eicher et. al. (2000) stated that "dress reflects or

communicates non-material culture because how individuals are dressed and the meanings attached to their dress relates to cultural beliefs about standards of dress and their symbolic value” (p.40). The Highland people dressed in a manner unique to their cultural background and could be construed as a sign of their “Highlandness,” while the rest of Europe followed fashions similar to each other, mainly looking to France for fashion direction. A group, such as the Highlanders, will evolve a shared look over time due to a common culture (i.e., Celtic heritage of the Highlanders) (Kaiser, 1990). Besides a common heritage, geographic location (i.e., the Highlanders’ isolation from the rest of Scotland) and topography (i.e., the makeup of their environment) can also influence the type of clothing worn during a particular time period (Ryan, 1966).

The Highland people evolved into a subcultural group. The concept of subcultural groups developed from the principle of a smaller or more distinct group of people within a larger society (Eicher, Evenson, & Lutz, 2000; Horn & Gurel, 1981). The Highlanders are considered a subcultural group because they were a distinct group within the Scottish society as a whole due to their geographical isolationism and traditional customs. Horn and Gurel (1981) postulated that clothing symbols that demarcate a subcultural group from society at large hinder the process of assimilation. Although the Scottish Highlanders and Lowlanders existed simultaneously, the Highlanders’ governance system and dress behaviors demarcated them as a subculture in Scotland. The Lowlanders’ dress reflected an assimilation into English culture. However, over time, the dominant English culture began to adapt the dress of the Highlanders.

Clothing can serve to reflect changing historic circumstances of a culture over a period of time (McCracken, 1987). Pannabecker (1990) contends that analysis and interpretation of clothing artifacts includes social, political, and economic changes in the culture as illustrated by changes in the clothing itself. As shown in the review of literature, the Highlanders experienced great political and social change during the 17th and 18th centuries. During such upheavals, clothing has been used to communicate the discontent of the people. Giddings (1990) stated clothing can reflect “social instability.” During times of social instability and political conflict, clothing becomes one means of communicating both ethnicity and traditional aspects of a group’s identity. Giddings (1990) concluded that the political and social upheaval of the 1960s led to resurgent pride of African-Americans in both their ethnicity and traditional dress to convey this message to society and the government. She also maintained that, in order to study clothing of a historical period, the researcher must realize that dress reflects the social,

political, and economic environment of the society being studied. Ryan (1966) and Tortora and Eubank (1998) expressed a similar viewpoint concerning political conflicts being reflected in dress. People wore revolutionary colors during the French Revolution (18th century) to demonstrate their affiliations, women decorated their garments with the colors of the revolution and men wore the “red hat of liberty” (Tortora & Eubank, 1998, p.273).

Some researchers (Giddings, 1990; Tortora & Eubank, 1998) have assumed that political conflict arises from differing cultural backgrounds among each ethnic group. Often, ethnicity is equated with race or religion, but pertains to any group with a common background; therefore, the Highlanders with their Celtic background would be considered an ethnic group. The Highlanders, the Lowlanders, and the English, all of whom differed in background, experienced political, as well as social and economic conflicts throughout the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries. This difference in the background of the Highlanders may have given rise to conflicts.