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CONCEPTS OF MODERN IDENTITY AMONG THE AINU OF HOKKAIDO AND THE GAELS OF SCOTLAND.

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ABSTRACT

This paper compares and contrasts aspects of identity among modern-day Ainu and Scottish Gaels.

The Ainu are the native inhabitants of Hokkaido, in the north of the Japanese archipelago, who were gradually displaced by Japanese immigration from the mainland and were given Japanese citizenship (but not separate, ethnic recognition) after Hokkaido's incorporation into the Japanese nation. The Gaels are the Celtic-descended inhabitants of north-west Scotland, in the northern British Isles, who still have a knowledge of the ancient Scottish Gaelic language: once spoken throughout the Highland region of the Scottish mainland, Gaelic has largely disappeared from there, so that today most true Gaels are considered to live in the Western Isles, the island chain off Scotland's north-western coast.

By 'aspects of identity', I mean the elements by which the communities view themselves as being distinctive or which have special significance in their cultures (for example, their languages and their relationships with nature); and also those elements — for example, history, tourism and symbolism — by which 'outsiders' have created popular images or stereotypes of those communities, whether or not they corre-

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spond to the 'insiders' perceptions.

Finally, I will look at the common identity — or lack of one — that the Ainu and Gaels feel they share with the larger cultures around them.

Keywords:*Ainu:Gael:Identity.*

GENERALISATIONS AND OMISSIONS.

A shortage of space has led to many inaccurate generalisations and regrettable omissions in this paper. For the sake of simplicity, I have used the terms 'Gael', 'Gaelic-speaker', 'Highlander' (historically, an inhabitant of the Scottish Highlands and Islands region when the Gaelic language was still widespread) and 'crofter' (a small-scale farmer in that area today) fairly interchangeably, though it should be stressed that in reality they do not always converge. Similarly, when I talk about 'Ainu', I am referring here to the indigenous inhabitants of Hokkaido — neglecting those who have lived in the wider Ainu 'Moshir' that included southern Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands.

I have avoided dealing with regional variations within both communities, though clearly these are important, and also make no reference to the Ainu and Gaelic 'diaspora' that is to be found in, say, Tokyo, or in Glasgow and London. With the Ainu, I have dealt only with the attitudes of activists and those who openly declare themselves as Ainu; yet it is well-known that many Ainu keep their identity a secret and might have different opinions from those quoted here.

I have not been able to talk about the role of religion in either community: and despite hearing some intriguing claims — that, for example, Ainu women were traditionally more assertive than their Japanese counterparts, or that Gaelic women are less supportive of the language and more likely to leave Gaelic-speaking areas than the men — neither have I had room to deal with the issue of gender.

INTRODUCTION.

Although this paper will compare aspects of Hokkaido's Ainu and Scotland's Gaelic-speaking communities, I should begin with some words of caution. History and geography present us with many attractive parallels but, during the process of research for this paper, I was also confronted by many dissimilarities between the two — occasionally to the point where I wondered if I was doing the Ainu a disservice in pursuing this comparison. Scotland's Gaelic-speakers have had, and may continue to have, legitimate grievances; but in terms of treatment and status, they find themselves in a situation today that, I imagine, most Ainu activists would look upon with envy. Thus, I should stress from the outset that the theme of this paper does not imply that, in terms of official recognition, there is any degree of parity between the two peoples.

To see this gulf, we need only glance briefly at the evidence. Financial support and incentives for both the Gaelic language and the Scottish Highlands and Islands, the region where most of its speakers are concentrated, have flowed fairly generously from national and European bodies in recent years: among officialdom, Gaeldom has finally been recognised as a small but valuable culture, and measures have been taken to try to ensure its linguistic and economic survival. The Ainu, on the other hand, continue to try to wrestle an acceptance of their very existence out of a disinterested Japanese government which has repeatedly acted in accordance with the belief that, in Japan, "a problem regarding indigenous people and ethnic minority groups does not exist."

On a personal level, the sense of this gulf was reinforced by an event I attended during my research. September 16th, 1993, saw a seminar on regional development policy held in Sapporo that involved representatives of the Hokkaido Development Agency and the Scottish Office. Among those participants was a senior executive from Highlands and Islands Enterprise, an agency which stimulates and oversees economic activity in the Scottish region that is home to the Gaelic culture: the assembled guests were given greetings in Gaelic and told how the agency, to quote its literature, promotes "Gaelic and other cultural activities as a regional asset."

In a seminar where so much emphasis had been placed on finding points of similarity between Scotland and Hokkaido, no reference was made on the Japanese side about the obvious Hokkaido equivalent of this ancient Scottish culture — that of the Ainu. The reason for this silence did not, I think, come from any feeling among the Japanese delegates of animosity towards the Ainu: it was simply that the thought never occurred to them.

Thus, the regional development seminar suggested a difference in the degrees of modern recognition afforded to the Ainu and Gaels. However, a second event I attended in 1993, a 'Nibutani Forum' organised by Ainu activists from August 19th to August 22nd, celebrating the United Nations' 'International Year of Indigenous People', suggested that the difference in privileges enjoyed by the two cultures might be wider yet; that there might even be historical and philosophical aspects to it. Although both peoples have suffered cruel injustices within their own territories, would, in an international context, an Ainu activist feel any more kinship with a Gael than he or she would with a Yamato Japanese?

For example, at the Nibutani Forum, the Ainu's guests included representatives of the Abemaki, Kwagiuth and Haida peoples of Canada, indigenous groups with whom they felt they shared a common bond culturally and historically. During the brutal years of the Highland Clearances of the late 18th and early 19th century Scotland, Canada had been a common destination for several generations of disenfranchised Gaels — often coming to that new country as, to quote the Highland-born journalist John MacLeod, "ragged and verminous arrivals, squatting hopelessly in the gutters, with nothing in the world but in what they stood."

But for many indigenous Canadians, those Gaelic-speaking newcomers must have seemed as hostile and unwelcome as any other Europeans who were in the process of depriving them of their ancient lands. In his 1990 book 'On the Crofters' Trail', in which he traced the transatlantic wanderings of those exiled Gaels, the writer David Craig made the following admission before the remnants of a vanished Indian culture in south-west Ontario. "It took a continual effort to remain aware that the Highland folk with whom I solidarised as agonists in the Clearances had only rooted here by dint of another clearance."

Most probably, when the indigenous peoples of the Pacific-rim countries — an international community in which the Ainu have found fellowship in recent years — think of 'victims' and 'oppressors', the Ainu would be placed in one category and Scotland's Gaels in the other.

A HISTORICAL COMPARISON.

Nonetheless, the similarities between these cultures in the island nations of Japan and Great Britain have often been irresistible to scholars keen to find analogies across the globe. For instance, in the

August 14th, 1993, edition of the Japan Times Weekly, John Mahler described the changing racial make-up of early Japan by making a comparison with British history:

"In the Yayoi period, early people migrated from the Asian continent via the Korean peninsula, landing in northern Kyushu. The immigrants arriving in boats from the Korean peninsula opened up the Japanese islands in similar ways that the Germanic tribes — the Jutes, Angles and Saxons — and later the Vikings transformed the industry and culture of Britain.

"The parallels between the two island-nations make an interesting study. Yayoi settlers, like the Germanic migrants from Europe, left their homes on their continent and established themselves across the sea in flat lands, as did the Anglo-Saxon groups in the south of Britain. The Yayoi immigrant communities were sufficiently powerful in number as well as economically and culturally to spread across Kyushu and Honshu.

"Among the earlier speech communities, only a few survived intact — the dialects of the Ainu and Ryukuans — and they were pushed to the peripheries of the island, as the Picts and Celts were driven back to Scotland and Wales. Indeed, the Ainu can be called the 'Celts of Japan'."

However, we should be wary of concluding from this that the histories of the Ainu and Gaelic 'speech communities' were ones of retreat before the inexorable march of larger, more culturally and linguistically virile peoples. The disappearance of the Ainu from northern Honshu has often been explained as flight before Yamato superiority, but the Ainu themselves (including their leading modern activist and sole representative in the Japanese Diet, Shigeru Kayano) have their own interpretation of this: the relocation of the Ainu from Honshu, across the Tsugaru Strait to Hokkaido, was something they did from choice, as constant fighting and famine in Honshu at that time had made the environment there an unstable one.

We should be similarly cautious about thinking that the Gaelic-speaking community of today is some shrunken remnant, swept northwards through Britain by a relentless tide of Anglo-Saxon. In fact, Scotland's present-day Gaels have their roots in a fifth-century invasion from the west, from Ireland — confusingly for modern-day terminology, these Irish-Celtic invaders were known as 'Scots' — that took over the Scottish Highlands and Islands and established an ascendancy over the area's Pictish inhabitants.

As I wish to address modern concepts of identity among the Ainu and Gaels, I shall now leave aside these ancient parallels and concentrate on more recent history, on events of the past three centuries that remain, indelibly, marked on the race-memories of the two peoples.

If we look at their situations at the beginning of the 18th century, we find both communities surviving with much of their traditional cultures intact; yet with change rapidly encroaching from outside. The Yamato presence was already well-established in Hokkaido. During the earlier period of stewardship by the Matsumae Clan, who monopolised trade between Hokkaido and the mainland from 1514 to 1798, the effect on the Ainu was one of gradual attrition. Resources were being depleted and diseases introduced from Honshu were taking their toll. Trade on the island worked more to the benefit of the Japanese than of the indigenous people, whose chiefs were losing authority while the social structures crumbled beneath them. There was, however, some semblance of continuity. Northern and north-eastern Hokkaido still offered plentiful hunting and fishing grounds, and comparative isolation from the Yamato influence. Not until the full-scale Japanese colonisation of Hokkaido in the 19th century did Ainu in those territories have to drastically change their lifestyles.

Meanwhile, Scotland's remote north-west Highlands and Islands were home in the 18th century to a large number (a third of the country's population) of Gaelic-speakers, or 'Highlanders' as they were popularly known. They lived in an age-old clan system with each commoner the subject of a clan chief. Nominally, this region and its inhabitants were a part of Scotland; but centuries of efforts by externally-based Scottish kings to subjugate them had had only limited success. For most of the time, the patriarchal, fiercely honour-bound clans of Gaeldom were a law onto themselves. Secure in the foreboding natural fortress of the mountainous Highlands, the clans and their chiefs could afford to be contemptuous of the supposed authority of distant kings.

However, the world around the Gaels was changing as well. 1707 had seen the signing of the Act of Union which had brought Scotland and England together to form a single state with power centred in London. No longer were the Gaels under the authority of a parliament in the Scottish capital of Edinburgh, but under that of a far stronger political and military body, the new British parliament, further south. Now the policies of London's Whig rulers were affecting even the distant society of the Highlanders. They were, for example, eroding the Highlanders' traditional barter economy; while official favour was being bestowed on one particular clan, the Campbells, who were desperately unpopular among their fellow Gaels.

Using these two scenarios as my starting points, I would like to compare and contrast three elements that would strongly — often adversely — affect the Ainu and Gaels during the next two hundred years: their role in the territorial and political ambitions of outside forces; their displacement from traditional lands and ways-of-life; and the passing of legislation that would have significance for them down to the present day.

1. Outside Forces.

Prior to the era of imperialism, both the Ainu and Gaels were involved in disputes between nations or political movements.

From the late 18th century, the Ainu were squeezed between the competing territorial claims of Japan and Russia. Russian designs on Hokkaido in the 18th century ultimately brought to an end the earlier period of stewardship by the Matsumae Clan, which lacked the man-power and the finances to adequately defend against the threat. There were both direct and indirect consequences for Hokkaido's Ainu inhabitants.

During the subsequent period of Japanese activity in Hokkaido, the early Bakufu period from 1799 to 1821, when control was imposed directly from the mainland, the first attempts were made to assimilate the Ainu into Yamato society. Whereas in previous times the Ainu had been excluded from this culture, now they were encouraged to learn Japanese customs and language and even to marry into the island's fledgling Yamato community. Furthermore, in another foretaste of later policies, agriculture was promoted among them.

Both programmes failed, however. The policy of cultural assimilation was scuppered by Yamato disdain and discrimination against those Ainu who were supposedly being coaxed into their ranks. The 'agriculturalization' policy, meanwhile, was abandonned in 1802 because of a lack of suitable land. It is significant too that once the perceived Russian threat had disappeared, no effort was made to continue or revive any of these programmes. Clearly, their purpose had been to bolster Hokkaido against Russia by securing the loyalty of the

Ainu and turning them into patriotic Japanese citizens, an exercise that was irrelevant when the international tensions were gone.

A more lasting effect of this Japanese-Russian rivalry was that Japanese immigration to Hokkaido was encouraged — hence causing more encroachment of the already-dwindling Ainu lands and resources.

The forces that the Gaels found themselves embroiled in during the 18th century were more immediately destructive. The Jacobite uprisings of 1715 and 1745 — when James Francis Stuart and Charles Edward Stuart, respective son and grandson of the deposed James II of England (VII of Scotland), attempted to remove the newly installed Hanover dynasty from the British throne and restore the authority of their own family — received heavy backing from the Highland clans. This might seem surprising considering the contempt that earlier Stuart monarchs had shown for Gaeldom. James I (VI of Scotland) had even tried to put planters from the Scottish Lowlands on the Gaelic island of Lewis, as he was to do more successfully in the north of Ireland later.

However, the changes being wrought in the Highlands by the Whigs had made both them and the Hanover monarchy extremely unpopular there; and when the Stuart 'pretenders' to the throne arrived in Scotland and incited rebellion, many clan chiefs were happy to gather together their fighting men and rally to the cause.

When the last rebellion was bloodily crushed at the Battle of Culloden in 1746, by the forces of England's Duke of Cumberland, the authorities were in no mood for leniency. The Stuarts had staged their rebellions with the blessings of Britain's greatest rival, France. Indeed, one of the reasons for the signing of the Act of Union had been English fears that Scotland might one day provide a 'back-door' route for a French invasion. Thus, the Gaels of Scotland's Highlands — disdained in the past as outlaws and barbarians — were now viewed as a threat to the throne and to national security. Gaelic had suddenly become the language of treason.

Retribution came immediately — killings and destruction of property by Cumberland's troops who, wrote John MacLeod, were "driven by a crazed anti-Highland racism that is hard to fathom today: for such, the Gaels were not remotely human" — and later, with the passing of legislation to tame and curtail the Highland way-of-life. Such potent cultural symbols as the Highlanders' tartan, bagpipes and kilts were outlawed, and the bonds weakened between the chiefs and their subjects. The historian John Prebble describes how that period helped to undermine the old culture in his book, 'Culloden': "The banning of their dress took from the clans their pride and sense of belonging to a unique people. The abolition of the hereditary jurisdictions of their chiefs, which followed, destroyed the political and social system that had held them together."

Thus, with the Ainu caught up in Japan's efforts to secure Hokkaido against Russian domination, and the Gaels involved in the Stuarts' campaigns to wrest the British throne from the Hanovers — with the spectre of France in the background — we can see clear parallels. Both episodes would pave the way for more traumatic events in the decades to follow.

2.Dislocation.

Much of the tragedy in the histories of the Ainu and Gaels comes from the fact that both peoples had strong emotional and cultural ties to their surrounding landscapes — the former as hunters and fishermen, the latter as peasant farmers — but others had the final say on the nature of that precious land-people relationship. Through the

Hokkaido policies of Japan's Meiji era government, and the economic ambitions of rich landowners in northern Scotland, the 19th century was a period of harsh transition, their traditional lifestyles being forcibly changed with much suffering caused in the process.

The 'Kaitakushi' period of Hokkaido's history coincided with the new, thrusting policies of the Meiji Restoration elsewhere in the Japanese islands. In 1868, Hokkaido was formally incorporated into the Japanese nation, and a Colonization Commissioners Office was established in Sapporo. The Ainu were soon to feel the consequences. By 1870 they had had their names entered in the census register and been declared 'Japanese'. By 1877 their lands had been nationalized, their language and customs proscribed, their names changed to Japanese ones. In the famous words of 'A Proposal for Legislations Concerning the Ainu People', adopted at a general meeting of the Hokkaido Utari Association in 1984 ——

"The Ainu were thus bereft of their land, forest and sea. Hunting deer or fishing salmon became poaching, while collecting firewood became theft. Meanwhile, the Japanese immigrants flooded the land and initiated destructive development, which threatened the Ainu people's survival."

The Ainu were forced to adopt an agricultural lifestyle which, of course, would add to the development of Japan's newly-acquired northern frontier. However, the transition to agriculture was not one the Ainu could make easily. In 'The Ainu: the Past in the Present', co-author Fred C. C. Peng attributes this to three reasons: the small importance agriculture had had in the Ainu's traditional way-of-life; the manner in which their traditional economy —— with so much being gathered from the natural wilderness —— had been closely bound to their religious beliefs and value system, making a fundamental change in that economy more difficult to accept; and resistance among the traditionally-egalitarian Ainu towards the social stratification that, inevitably, agriculture would cause.

However, a more tangible and immediate reason was that the Hokkaido Development Bureau was trying to encourage immigration from Honshu by giving away land free of charge, under the condition that it was developed within three years; and the better land went to the newcomers while that given to the Ainu was of lesser quality.

Ill-equipped to become farmers in terms of both culture and resources, the Ainu suffered accordingly. As Giichi Nomura, Executive Director of the Hokkaido Utari Association, noted in 1987, "We, the Ainu, deprived of our basis of livelihood by a series of policies of the Meiji government, rapidly fell into poverty, which became a serious social problem in the second decade of the Meiji era."

Gaeldom's equivalent of this, the Highland Clearances which took place between 1780 and 1860, was not the result of pressure from central government but came from the policies of local landowners. Though descended from the old clan chiefs, these landowners retained little sense of kinship or cultural empathy with the common Highlanders: shedding their knowledge of Gaelic, gravitating towards fashionable social circles in Edinburgh and London, sending their children south for their education, the heads of the clans had become rich, gentrified businessmen to whom their subjects were no different from the soil, crops and livestock on their estates — a resource to be used or discarded, according to the dictates of profit.

Thus, when several new possibilities for making money appeared in the late 18th and early 19th centuries — the potential for a new kelp industry in the coastal areas of the Highlands, where plentiful supplies of seaweed could be harvested and burned to produce the valuable ash used in manufacturing glass and soap products; fish stocks to be tapped in the surrounding seas; and most significantly, with the wool market healthy, the prospect of making fortunes by populating the Highland countryside with sheep — the landowners had few qualms about curtailing the traditional way-of-life of the ordinary Gaels.

From the small, agricultural townships inland where, for centuries, they'd eked a living from the thin Highland soil, communities were moved to the coasts and given plots of ground that were small and insufficient. The desperate economies of their new situation were, of course, a calculation on the part of their masters. In the words of the writer Douglas Willis, those transplanted populations "unable to make a living from the land alone were forced to toe the landowner's line and burn his kelp or catch his fish."

For many landowners, the programme was merely in keeping with the spirit of the forward-looking, industrialising times. They were a necessary rectification of the Highland economy that would, in the long run, bring material benefits to rich and poor alike. However, nothing could rationalise the immediate, terrible human cost of the Clearances. People were reluctant to leave the cottages that had been home to generations of their families; and often the thuggish lieutenants of the landowners would resort to burnings and violence to evict them. Thousands were left in poverty and squalor. For many, emigration to Canada or Australia was the only answer, but the journey — on crowded, ricketty vessels whose vulnerability to outbreaks of typhus and smallpox had earned them the nickname of 'coffin-ships' — had its own hazards.

By the end of the period, the landowners had succeeded in developing the Scottish Highlands to their own tastes, removing most of the human communities and replacing them with a more profitable, fourlegged population: for example, on the estates belonging to George Leveson-Gower, the Duke of Sutherland and one of the Clearances' most enthusiastic proponents, the number of sheep had risen from 15, 000 in 1811 to 200,000 in 1846. They had also, however, succeeded in breaking the back of the Gaelic culture, scattering much of it across the seas where it would disappear into the melting pots of North America and the Antipodes.

Among Gaels, the bitterness remains today. At least one modern writer has likened the Clearances to Gaeldom's 'Holocaust'. And much anger is still directed at the likes of the Duke of Sutherland, who is now commemorated by a 100-foot statue on a Highland mountain. In the autumn of 1994, one radical group asked the Highland Regional Council to blow the statue up.

3.Legislation.

Before the end of the 19th century, these periods of traumatic change and dispossession were followed by the passing of important legislation that would help to define the two cultures' position in society down to the present day. For one, however, the legislation would be seen as an unwelcome, official sanctioning of the injustices being visited upon it. For the other, it would be a belated sign of benevolence from central authority, a long-awaited indication that the worst times were over.

The Law for the Protection of Native Hokkaido Aborigines ('Hokkaido Kyoudojin Hogoko') of 1899 was a purely Yamato-originated act, with no consultation of those 'aborigines' it was concerned with. Though the act expressed a commitment to improving the Ainu's lot by providing them with land, and officially — if not practically — part of it remains on the statute books today, the act has been deeply unpopular among Ainu activists. Nomura, for instance, has described it as "obviously a discriminatory " law that "violates Article 27 and 14 of the existing Japanese Constitution prepared after World War II, the former guaranteeing property rights, the latter equal rights under the law without discrimination in human rights and social relations."

Naively and mistakenly assuming that the Ainu could be changed overnight into farmers, the act's land provisions were not successful. Returning to Peng, we find that some 9,656 hectares of land were originally given to the Ainu, but much of this was soon abandonned or leased to Japanese tenant farmers. 3500 Ainu families received an average of 2.7 hectares, but by 1909 this had dwindled to an average of less than one hectare. (In 1977, says Peng, in Biratori-cho the Ainu owned approximately 384 hectares, an average per household of three-quarters of a hectare.) Significantly, under the 1899 act, this land was only leased and could be reclaimed after 15 years if it had not been developed — which allowed much of it to pass finally into the hands of the mainlanders. In short, either by accident or design, the 1899 act's land allocations failed the Ainu and worked to the advantage of the Yamato newcomers.

Furthermore, the act was an official seal of approval on an assimilation policy whereby, supposedly, the Ainu would be incorporated into Japanese society and 'made' Japanese. We can understand Ainu disenchantment when the following decades brought discrimination, below-average education and living standards, and not the equal citizenship and equal prosperity that the legislation seemed to promise.

Like the Ainu, the Gaels in the 19th century were subject to important legislation with a lasting significance. Unlike the Ainu, however, the Gaels could view the passing of this legislation as a victory.

The lifestyle created by the forced migrations of the Clearances, from the interior to the coast, became known as 'crofting', which Willis neatly describes as "a way of life with the land as its anchor, but whose support was, and still is, firmly based in extra-farming pursuits" — commonly today, in fishing, weaving and tourism. In the 19th century crofting hardly seemed viable for the displaced Gaels. The kelp industry collapsed in the 1820s, and the use of potatoes as the staple crop on those impoverished coastal plots led to disaster when the potato blight which had devastated Ireland had a similar effect on the Highlands in 1846. And with rents being hiked upwards and 'crofters' being denied grazing land for their livestock, there was little sign of enlightenment or sympathy among the landowners.

Finally, the crofters' anger boiled over on the island of Skye, particularly in the Braes area of the island in 1882, when local people refused to pay rents during a dispute about grazing rights, and eventually battled a party of constables from Glasgow who had been sent in to arrest the crofters' ringleaders. This and similar rent-strikes, protests and occupations, both in the islands and on the mainland, reached such a pitch that policeman on Skye were allowed to carry firearms for their protection and marines were even stationed on the island in 1884 and 1885 to keep the peace.

However, though the London authorities took stringent precautions to maintain law and order in the Highlands and Islands, their attitude towards the crofters was generally one of benevolence. In 1883, the government set up a Royal Commission to look into their grievances, and its members travelled around the region to seek and record the Gaels' opinions. Two years after the Royal Comission published its report, the Crofters' Holding Bill was passed by the British parliament, which in turn created a Crofters Commission to safeguard the rights of the common folk of the Highlands and Islands. By the time of its final report in 1912, the Crofters Commission had worked to give crofters security of tenure, resolved differences with rent arrears, and paid money for any improvements they had carried out on their holdings. Later acts in 1955 and 1976 founded a permanent Crofters Commission and allowed crofters the right to buy the land they'd been farming.

In retrospect, we can see four major reasons why, legislatively, the 19th century ended on a more positive note for the crofting Gaels than for the newly-agriculturalised Ainu. Firstly, the Gaels never found themselves in the way of an ambitious development programme like that implemented by the Meiji government in Hokkaido. Rather, the Gaels' anatagonists were the rich men who owned their land; but who could nonetheless be called to heel by a London government that, lacking any real strategic or financial interest in the land itself, could afford to be fair-minded.

Secondly, the Ainu were denied any input into the formulation of the Native Hokkaido Aborigines Act, whereas the Royal Commission had toured the Highlands and Islands for the purpose of soliciting the views of the Gaels.

Thirdly, with communications now well-developed across the whole of Britain, the British press was able to take an interest in the crofters' cause; and the ensuing publicity, which was not flattering towards the landowners, gave moral weight to the crofters' arguments.

Lastly, the Gaelic crofters could draw strength and inspiration from similar events in Ireland, where the passing of the Irish Land Act had given small-scale tenant farmers security of tenure and legally-determined rents. For Ainu in the isolated, largely mono-ethnic islands of Japan, finding solidarity with cultures in similar situations elsewhere in the world was something they wouldn't be able to do until late in the following century.

OUTSIDE PERCEPTIONS TODAY:STEREOTYPES AND DOOMED PEOPLE.

We can see, then, parallel strands of tragedy running through the histories of the Ainu and Gaels. However, how much of these two peoples' modern situations, and modern characters, should we extrapolate from the brutal events of the past?

1.Ainu Extinction?

Outsiders — western and Japanese — who have written about the Ainu have often taken these historical traumas and moved on to a seemingly-logical conclusion: the Ainu, they have surmised, are finished. Formerly the victims of history, the Ainu now face inevitable oblivion. One of the earliest chroniclers of Ainu culture, the Reverend John Batchelor, declared in his book, 'Ainu Life and Lore', "nothing can now avert their doom. They must soon be quite of the past. And they will depart without having left any history or having left any perceptible mark on the world."

Bronislaw Pilsudski was emphatic in his 1912 book, 'Materials for the Study of Ainu Language and Folklore', that the Ainu were a "doomed race... being swiftly and not unwillingly assimilated with their more civilised neighbours." By 1970, Sakuzaemon Kodama was predicting in 'Ainu — Historical and Anthropological Studies' that "the pure Ainu will be entirely extinct sooner or later", and James Patrie noted in 1982's 'The Genetic Relationship of the Ainu Language' that "Although an estimated twenty thousand Ainu descendants are living in Japan (primarily in the northernmost island of Hokkaido), they are completely assimilated, both culturally as well as linguistically, to the

Japanese."

Some have spoken of a desire among many Ainu to shed their culture, to become an indistinguishable part of the Japanese nation. In 1977, Peng observed that "Many older Ainu still find something of value in the traditional culture, while for most younger Ainu it is precisely the past that denies them full acceptance in Japanese society."

M. Inez Hilger wrote in her 1971 volume, unoptimistically titled 'Together with the Ainu: A Vanishing People', that "Young Ainu parents expressed the hope that by the time their children will have reached the age of parenthood... all Ainu and Japanese will be looked upon and treated as one people and that no one will no longer be designated as an Ainu or as a descendant of the Ainu." Now that those children have reached adulthood, one wonders how their parents feel about the entry of the unrepentantly Ainu Shigeru Kayano into Japan's House of Councillors in 1994, publicising and underlining the distinctiveness of Ainu culture more strongly than ever.

If we examine the statistics, we have to question these assumptions. As a percentage of the entire Hokkaido population — that is, in proportion to the number of Yamato on the island — the Ainu have certainly dwindled; from 33.2% of the population in 1873 to 0.4% in 1986. Yet, numerically speaking, the statistics hardly support the idea of decline. Although the number of registered Ainu remained fairly static from 1878 (17,098) to 1908 (18,017) to 1936 (16,519), by 1986 the figure had climbed to 24,381. (And this is limited to self-declared Ainu: many estimates put the true number, including those who prefer to keep their Ainuness a secret — from, for example, fear of discrimination — at fifty or sixty thousand.)

Nor is there much sign that, as younger generations displace older ones, interest in Ainu culture is waning. In a 'Report on Actual Living

Conditions of the Ainu People in Hokkaido' published in November 1986 by the Hokkaido Local Government, 88% of the Ainu respondents said it was "necessary to preserve the Ainu people", and 76.6% felt that their culture should be "popularised" — hefty increases on the respective 79.6% and 66.2% of Ainu who had answered the same questions affirmatively in 1979.

So why is there a contradiction between external assumptions and the evidence the Ainu themselves have offered in recent years? It is possible, I think, to identify four major reasons.

Firstly, many researchers have based this idea of decline on the appearance of Japanese blood in people of Ainu stock and the resulting dilution of the Ainu bloodline. The modern Ainu may not necessarily accept this as a criterion for assessing their culture's vitality. Writing in a 1990 issue of the newsletter for the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs, Katarina Sjoberg — an academic who has been critical of many past writings about the Ainu — claimed that they regard a person with any of their community's blood in his or her veins, whatever its quantity, as being 'Ainu'. Indeed, this conception of Ainuness had been reinforced by the traditional hostility of Japanese attitudes. Japanese people who had married Ainu had, through prejudice, often forfeited their place in Japanese society, leaving them with only their spouses' community in which to forge ties and relationships — thus becoming 'naturalised' Ainu. "Intermarriage," concluded Sjoberg, "does not contribute to the destruction of Ainu tradition."

Secondly, if we set aside the issue of bloodlines and concentrate on Ainuness as being purely a matter of chosen psychological identity, it is undeniable that recent years have seen a revival in the community's self-awareness and assertiveness — mirroring revivals of minority and indigenous cultures in other parts of the world. In her study, 'Mr Ainu', Sjoberg dates this "period of reorganisation and revitalisation of values and beliefs that belong to the Ainu" as starting in 1968.

She is echoed by Kirsten Refsing in her 1986 book, 'The Ainu Language', where she writes that "if we define Ainu in terms of self-identification — ie. as people who think of themselves more as Ainu than as Japanese — ...recently their numbers have begun to show a steady increase. This trend is seen as an expression of growing pride in being Ainu, and it is a sign that many Ainu are now finding the courage to stand up and be counted." However, many influential texts about the Ainu predate this period of revival and were written at a time when dormancy could easily be mistaken for impending extinction.

Thirdly — as many activists would point out, aware that the campaigns by groups like the Hokkaido Utari Association and the high profiles of individuals like Shigeru Kayano are continuing thorns in the side of the Japanese establishment — it is in the interest of the authorities to denigrate the Ainu community, to encourage the idea that its culture is dying and its numbers are shrinking.

Fourthly, there is the matter of perspective. Many of the words commonly bandied around in external studies of the Ainu, such as 'marginal' or 'periperal', imply a position that necessarily excludes the world-view of the Ainu themselves. Returning to Sjoberg again, she criticises this "centre-periphery context" of assessment and attempts to analyse the situation through the Ainu's own eyes: "The Ainu do not refer to themselves as 'indigenous', nor do they talk about themselves as 'marginal'. To the Ainu, the Ainu are 'central' as are their land and natural resources, and their activities and their ways of handling their situation."

Thus, many non-Ainu researchers — wittingly or unwittingly — have chosen the Yamato position from which to observe the Ainu, and chosen Yamato assumptions as the basis for their thinking. As a result, the culture they have described is impoverished and fading because that is one of the Yamato assumptions they have aligned themselves with. The Ainu perspective, however, might give an entirely-different picture.

2.Gaelic Misrepresentation.

To outsiders, the Gaels too have seemed a 'peripheral' people, certainly in a physical sense. Their domain is in the extreme north-west of Scotland — itself a peripheral part of the United Kingdom, which in turn is on the periphery of western Europe — with most of the Gaelic language being spoken today in the distant fringe of islands known as the Outer Hebrides, or Western Isles. However, in terms of predictions about cultural extinction, scholars have been somewhat kinder to the Gaels than to the Ainu (though if we define Gaelic culture as being primarily a linguistic entity, as many have, the scenario becomes more pessimistic.)

For one thing, the Gaels' physical isolation has saved them from being swamped by members of a larger and more materially robust culture, as the Ainu were in Hokkaido during the time of the 'Kaitakushi'. Their culture may have been scattered by the Clearances, but for those who remained in the hybrid existence that was crofting, the landscapes around them were still, essentially, Gaelic ones. They were still the main inhabitants of a rugged environment that has defied development, that has kept at bay any potential invasions of culturally-different newcomers.

(Lately, however, there has been disquiet at what is nicknamed the 'White Settler' phenomenon, a tendency for wealthy people from outwith the Highlands and Islands — especially, for example, from middle-class southern England — to buy property in the area, where they can pursue a rustic 'good life' free of the pressures of the industrialised south. This movement causes local property prices to rise and younger members of the indigenous community are forced to leave the region and establish homes elsewhere.)

Nonetheless, their distance from the administrative, academic and media centres of both Scotland and Britain as a whole has caused Gaels to complain too about the misrepresentations of outsiders. One person I encountered during my research was critical of many of Scotland's (non-Gaelic) historians and their depictions of the Highlands and Islands: "The books are written from perspectives often by people ignorant of the language, which I think would be essential to anything that the people felt in the 17th and 18th centuries. There have been too many examples of histories written by outsiders and that have very much an outsider's perspective." He criticised "particularly an over-romanticised view of the Highlands — the Walter Scott syndrome — which is not justified in any work of history." The influence of Scott will be examined in the next section of this paper.

Similarly, there is a feeling that modern-day media reports about the Gaels are often inaccurate; that they are patronising misrepresentations by broadcasters and journalists far removed from Gaeldom, unable or unwilling to comprehend it. Certainly, major news stories about the region and its people in recent years have rarely been positive.

In 1991, Comhairle nan Eilean — the Western Isles Island Council — lost a great deal of money through an investment in the ill-fated Bank of Credit and Commerce International. Two years before that, the Free Presbyterian Church, a small but devoutly Protestant sect whose members mostly have Gaelic-language and/or crofting backgrounds, received much unfavourable publicity when it suspended its most famous adherent, Lord MacKay of Clashfearn, a senior figure in the British legal system: MacKay had offended his Highland church by attending a Roman Catholic mass during a colleague's funeral. Also, crofters have at times been given an unsympathetic image as 'subsidy-junkies', because Britain's membership of the European Community has entitled them and their economically-fragile way-of-life to financial support from Brussels.

Such reporting, it is alleged, reinforces traditionally-held stereotypes of the Gaels as being simpletons, or drunkards, or dour, puritanical Christians, or crafty idlers. In a passionate rebuffal of such stereotypes at the end of his book, 'No Great Mischief if you Fall', John MacLeod addresses the outside world in the second person and rails: "You like to think we are laid-back and slothful; but if we were, these hills and Hebrides would have been empty long since. You say that we are especially prone to mental illness; that we have a very high rate of drunkenness and alcoholism; that we go in either for manic boozing or manic religion. These are tabloid fantasies. Our religion, which still impacts our communities, seems preferable to your own non-religion that does not... And there is no statistical proof whatever that we are any more prone to depression or addiction than yourselves.

"We see things differently; that is why our community survives, while yours in the south is largely dead."

Thus, we see here an echoing of Sjoberg's remarks about the centre and the periphery. MacLeod, an inhabitant of the supposed periphery, forces on us his own perspective; challenging, making us question the 'superiority' of our own assumed centre.

TOURISM AND SYMBOLISM.

The cultural anthropologist Jonathan Friedman has claimed that "all history including modern historiography is mythology". I have already tried to show that there is an unwelcome 'historical mythology' imposed upon the Ainu — and to a lesser extent, the Gaels — by outsiders who, psychologically unconnected with those communities and their value-systems, have failed to recognise their continuing vitality (in terms of cultural self-identification, if not strict racial criteria), imagining only stereotypes, propagating only ideas of defeat, decline and extinction.

However, history has produced a second, much more pervasive form of mythology, one that is distorted and demeaning at times, yet one that many Ainu and Gaels have had to embrace in a devil's bargain of economic necessity: the images created by tourism. My personal impression, acquired during my research, is that for the Ainu tourism has been often a degrading experience but also, in some cases, a culturally-energising one. The Gaels on the other hand have had to experience something else again: the metamorphosis of their history, through tourism, into a bizarre mass-myth.

1.The Ainu and Tourism.

Many of the tourist centres in Hokkaido drawing inspiration from Ainu culture have in fact more to do with the commercial interests of the Japanese. One can sympathise with Ainu people who are forced by financial pressures to work in such places, performing caricatured versions of their ancient songs, dances and rituals before crowds of largely-uncomprehending tourists — nearly all of them members of the race that usurped Ainu culture in Hokkaido in the first place. Shigeru Kayano, who had once been a 'display Ainu' at Noboribetsu, paints a memorably-bleak picture of the job in his memoir, 'Our Land was a Forest'.

"I was reluctant to work as an 'Ainu' at a tourist site. Much of the setup violated what I had learned about the Ainu lifestyle, culture and spirit. But the job brought in far more money than carving at home and made a substantial difference in my ability to collect and record.

"I worked beside 'Bear Meadow', where an Ainu-style house had been built and where we presented half-hour shows of 'bear-sending' songs and dances. What in real life took place once in five or ten years was repeated there three or four times a day. It is beyond words for me to explain to others how miserable it made us feel to sing and dance — albeit for money — in front of curious tourists from throughout Japan when we weren't even happy or excited.

"...most visitors go home with the illusion that they have learned all about modern Ainu life from a glance at a traditionally furnished Ainu house created purely for tourists, Ainu people in costumes made to resemble authentic Ainu clothing, and the 'bear-sending' made to look like an Ainu ritual. They then show their families and friends their souvenir photographs while telling them about the Ainu.

"This sort of thing leads to added misunderstanding of the Ainu. Many Ainu are offended by fellow Ainu who participate (or are forced to participate) in such activities at these tourist traps. But having worked as a tourist attraction, I understand the feeling of 'display Ainu' so well that my heart aches. I cannot one-sidedly castigate them."

Yet, we must distinguish carefully between tourism that serves Japanese purposes, and tourism overseen by the Ainu themselves. When I interviewed Kayano during my research he remarked that if tourism "works for a good intention, I think it's good... In the communities that don't have tourism, their culture has been forgotten long ago. It's maintained these rituals. It's kept them alive." The same sentiments were echoed by another Ainu interviewee, who said, "The good thing is that everyday life can be seen in the tourist places, like songs, dances and sculptures, so that it gives more opportunities for young people to see some parts of the Ainu culture. If they grow up in a tourist-orientated Ainu community, children always see those Ainu cultural things... They're always exposed."

However, both were refering to tourism that the Ainu had control over. They tempered their approval with denunciations of "Japanese who use them for promotion" and "fake Ainu" and "those who are selling their culture to strangers".

The authenticity of even Ainu-run tourism has been questioned. In a forward to 'A Catalogue of Books Dealing with the Ainu in the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies' (in the University of London), Charles Dunn writes sarcastically that some Ainu in Nibutani, "stimulated by the Ainu Museum and street of curio shops that now exist there, are becoming professional Ainu, spending their days selling souvenirs, hiring out costumes for Japanese tourists to be photographed in, carving wooden bears (often with electric tools), and retiring in the evenings to their Japanese homes to watch television and consume the same food and drink as any Japanese."

In 'Mr Ainu', Katarina Sjoberg refutes this negative view of Ainu tourism. Such tourist centres, she says, "function as places where the Ainu establish their own specificity by emphasising the distinctive content of their culture for tourists and the larger public... The main purpose of the tourist centres today, though the commercial aspects cannot be ignored, is to foster an awareness of Ainu identity and to function as information centres." Furthermore, she claims to have found that "the people who work in these centres do not look upon their work as just another job, nor do they agree that the main purpose of the tourist centre still is to present a folkloristic picture of Ainu practices and activities to tourists."

A museum run by Kayano — the former Nibutani Museum of Ainu Cultural Resources, renamed in 1992 as the Kayano Shigeru Ainu Memorial Museum — is a case in point. In a speech at the Nibutani Forum in 1993, he spoke scathingly of how in the past scholars came to his village and "brought back antiques and sold them to other countries. The majority of these Ainu artefacts were carried away by so-called scholars, academics, whatever, though they were not true scholars... I remember that 40 years ago they took away Ainu things, so I started to collect Ainu things, and 20 years ago I established a museum."

Thus, while the museum is a popular tourist attraction and an undoubted source of revenue, it plays a positive role in the preservation of Ainu culture in that it houses valuable items that could otherwise have been scattered. Moreover, it serves as a focal point for the Ainu and, indeed, for others: because it also contains artefacts from similar cultures whom Kayano has visited during his 20-odd trips overseas, it has now become a symbolic rallying point for those aboriginal peoples from around the world with whom the Ainu have been trying to find solidarity.

2.The Gaels and Tourism.

Similarly, tourism is a key component in the finances of the Gaelic environment. According to the 1992/93 report of the Highlands and Islands Enterprise agency, the industry employs 20% of the region's workforce and accounts for 20% of its gross domestic product. However, though Gaels I interviewed conceded that tourism was useful as a money-maker, none of them really saw it as an energising force, a focus for strengthening their cultural identity as Sjoberg believed the Ainu tourist centres to be.

One interviewee said, "To a large degree, I think if tourism is going to be a cultural thing, it's because it allows people the financial ability to stay in their own communities, which is not a bad thing." Yet it was money rather than any cultural affirmation that made tourism matter. Another Gael opined, "I think it could play a cultural role... There is a certain amount being done to connect tourism to an appreciation of the culture and the language, particularly in places like Sabhal Mor Ostaig Gaelic College, doing summer courses which people use as holidays, where you learn some of the language and hear some of the music and all the rest of it. But that's the exception rather than the rule. I think that up till now it's pretty much been a waste of time."

We must remember that though Gaelic culture is often used to stress the unique character of the Highland landscapes — for example, during a recent television campaign to promote the region as a holiday destination, advertisements were sometimes broadcast which had a Gaelic-language voice-over and English subtitles — many tourists come to the area on the strength of its beautiful, unspoilt scenery alone. The presence of an indigenous language and culture may be an additional bonus, but not the main reason for their visit. Hence, the role tourism can play in empowering Gaelic culture might be limited.

Indeed, being so strongly rooted in a language, the Gaelic identity may be losing more than it is gaining from the influx of (mainly) English-speaking tourists. Gaels have been long-known to switch from Gaelic to English at the appearance of a single non-Gaelic speaker, for fear of rudely excluding him or her from the conversation. With increasing numbers of tourists around, the times when Gaelic can be spoken may shrink correspondingly. One interviewee said pessimistically, "I think the Gaels are too polite to this degree... Which is probably ultimately why it will die."

3.Tourism and the Transfer of Symbols.

The Gaels have a particularly good reason to be wary of tourism. It was the embryonic Scottish tourist industry, during the 19th century, that helped to transform several of their cultural trappings — the old traditional garb of the Highlanders, for instance, and the wailing bagpipes that had once led them into battle — into the curious, often ridiculous phenomenon of 'tartanry' which has come to represent Scotland as a whole in the minds of many foreigners: a bizarre subculture of Scottishness that the journalist George Rosie has succintly described as a "melange of chequered cloth, strident music, mawkish song and bad history."

At first glance, it may seem strange that the trappings of Gaeldom should have become so popular in Britain when, in the 18th century, so many of its members had rallied to the Stuarts and their challenge to the British throne. Lowland — that is, non-Gaelic — Scots regarded them as northern barbarians and according to the historian T.C. Smout "usually called them the 'Irish', being unwilling even to admit them as Scots." To the English they were a danger to the state and indeed, after the 1745 rebellion, tartan, bagpipes and the rest were banned as treasonable symbols until 1782.

By the later 18th century, however, with the Highlands and Islands no longer perceived as a threat, the British establishment had taken a more positive interest in the region. Shrewdly, the British army started to recruit Highlanders into its ranks, harnessing their fighting skills for the colonial exploits of the following century. The use of tartan in military uniforms became a reassuring sign of ethnic continuity for those Highlanders whose allegiances had undergone a U-turn from Stuarts to Hanovers.

In early 19th century, tartanry found its most famous populariser. The romantic historical novels of Sir Walter Scott added tremendously to the mystique of the Highlands and Islands in the minds of southern readers. It was also Scott who largely engineered the 'King's jaunt' in August 1822, the first visit of a British monarch, George IV, to Scotland for almost 200 years.

George IV arrived in Edinburgh to be greeted by a garish tartan pageant to which Scott had invited dozens of Highland chiefs and their followers, all tricked out in full Highland garb. Scott's wealthy guests saw no irony in the fact that, while they were strutting through the streets of Edinburgh in the costumes of Gaeldom, their Clearances policies were erasing the common Gaels from the landscapes of their northern estates.

The most ludicrous spectacle of all was that of the grossly-overweight monarch wearing a Highland costume he'd had commissioned for the event — a tartan monstrosity which John Prebble details in his account of the visit, 'The King's Jaunt': "The sporran... of soft white goatskin lined with silk, its golden spring-top ornamented with the Royal Arms of the Scottish thistle in variegated Scottish gems... nine heavy tassels and cords, all of gold thread... a sword-belt to be worn across the shoulder... a powder-horn mounted with gold and gems... a golden plaid-broach in the form of a running hart, also set with Scottish gems.. his emerald-hilted dirk... the broadsword... the hilt and mounting inlaid with gold... a brace of Highland pistols, of polished steel inlaid.

"The excessive vulgarity of this theatrical costume was a mockery of the simple belted plaid once worn by the Highlander, his shirt of saffron cloth and his plain knitted bonnet."

After George IV, it was only left for Queen Victoria and Prince Albert — who purchased Balmoral Castle in 1858 as a Scottish summer retreat — to make tartanry fully fashionable among their wealthier subjects. As T.C. Smout says in his book, 'Scottish Voices', "They thus became the first monarchs since before the Union of Crowns to visit Scotland on a regular basis, and their infectious enthusiasm for everything Highland greatly reinforced the fashion for recreation in the hills. From this point onwards, the Highlands increasingly came to be appreciated, and therefore to 'belong' to the visitor, the outsider and the incomer, as well as to the Gael."

Unfortunately, this patronage did not extend beyond a liking for the landscape and a fondness for donning a carricatured version of the Gaels' traditional dress. Smout writes in another book, 'A Century of the Scottish People', that "When they did observe the crofter he seemed to them very lazy as well as very poor, transmogrified sometimes into a comical 'Sandy' to parallel the Irish 'Paddy'. In their view he only had himself to blame for the plight he was in."

Furthermore, tartanry and 'Highlandism' managed somehow to become a powerful, stereotyped image for all of Scotland, not only the Gaelic part of it. Lowland Scots, a complicated blend of Britons, Celts, Picts and Saxons who had forged a culture separate from that of the Gaels, speaking a very distinctive dialect of English called 'Scots', began to be viewed by the outside world as a race of kilted, mountain-dwelling clansmen as well. Sometimes they viewed this association with outrage: the Lowland regiments of the British army were horrified when in 1881 the War Office ordered them to wear tartan-adorned uniforms. At other times, it has been accepted with a shrewd eye on the cash register, never more so than in the Scottish tourist industry, where there are now as many examples of tartan kitsch to be found in souvenir shops in the far south of the country as in the mountainous north.

Most of the Gaels I interviewed during my research were eager to distance themselves from tartanry: whatever roots it may have had in Gaeldom, they felt, the culture of the pipes, plaid, kilt and sporran had long since been removed, cultivated and corrupted by others. A typical reaction I heard was: "...the average Gael doesn't identify with the image of the tartan... I have seen fewer people wearing kilts in the Isles than anywhere else."

One Gael I spoke to, however, viewed the tartan garb quite favourably — though not in any narrowly-Gaelic sense. An avowed Scottish patriot, he said, "As far as I can see, anything that involves the whole of Scotland, anything that unites Scotland... I'm delighted. I don't think of it as Highland dress. It's Scottish dress as far as I'm concerned."

He is echoed by the political journalist Andrew Marr, who notes in his book, 'The Battle for Scotland', a history of the Scottish home-rule movement, a tendency among Scottish nationalists to adopt tartan regardless of its cultural and historical contradictions. For example, the poet Christopher Grieve who, under the pseudonym Hugh MacDiarmid, had a huge impact both on 20th century Scottish literature and on the country's nationalist politics, "adopted a cod-Gaelic name and a kilt for his nationalist-revivalist persona. Yet he came from the Borders and did not speak Gaelic. He was tricking himself out in trumpery associated with Sir Walter Scott, who was among the Scotsmen MacDiarmid most hated and railed against."

Perhaps this is because, as we have seen, the Gaels' old tartan is now the most ubiquitous of Scottish myths: it is the symbol that most readily springs to mind when the name 'Scotland' is mentioned and, as such, it is a convenient symbol of Scottish unity. Or perhaps, as Marr suggests, it is appealing to patriots because it has become such an utter carricature of Scottishness: "some young nationalists wear the kilt with a kind of defiant mockery... It is a pale reflection of the cultural inversion that causes American black radicals to refer to themselves as 'niggers' or gays to rechristian themselves 'queer'."

In any case, it is likely that, for good or ill, tartanry is something that has largely transcended Gaeldom and has little relevance within the borders of that community today.

* * *

Walking past the souvenir shops that fill Chitose Airport terminal, or the underground area of Sapporo Station, or the length of Tanukikoji near Suskino — shops busily selling Ainu-style carvings, jewellry, dolls and curios — it is tempting to think that a similar appropriation of symbols might be underway in Hokkaido; that, gradually, the trappings of the ancient minority will become a label for all of Hokkaido, including its majority Japanese population.

On a commercial level, this has already happened. As a Japanese entity, Hokkaido is lacking in a history that can be plundered by tourist retailers for designs and motifs. Hence, the traditional culture of the Ainu has been exploited for that end — though, as in the case of Scotland's Gaelic culture, not until it had ceased to be a contentious social and political issue in the minds of the majority.

On a different level, however, the cases diverge because of their contexts. Peripheral though the Gaels are regarded, they are a subgroup of a group — the Scots — who are themselves seen as being peripheral: a small country and a small community of five million on the northern edge of the 56,000,000-strong, supra-national British state;

far removed from the British capital of London where, to quote Marr again, power is "centralised and concentrated to a remarkable degree."

Thus, both tiers of identity, Gaelicness and Scottishness, are small, distant and sometimes misunderstood, and in the minds of outsiders it has not been difficult for the symbols of one to be transferred to the other. Then, with the outside world expecting that all Scots should come clothed in the trappings of Gaeldom, that association has been imprinted on the general Scottish consciousness itself. Modern Gaels, meanwhile, seeing those items as corrupted or carricatured or no longer unique to their culture, seem to have largely disowned them.

However, Japan is not a collection of cultures and traditions, countries and dependencies like that which constitutes the modern United Kingdom. (Tellingly, in an opinion poll carried out by the Scotsman newspaper in 1991,69% of the respondents considered themselves either 'Scottish and not British' or 'more Scottish than British', whereas only 21% felt 'equally Scottish and British'.) The non-Ainu population of Hokkaido would define their nationality in the same way as the average inhabitant of Tokyo or distant, southern Kyushu: as 'Japanese'. Japan is, mainly, a mono-ethnic nation. Thus, though there are clear regional variations of character to consider, the Ainu find themselves at the edge of a large, determinedly-homogeneous culture whose members vastly outnumber them.

With such huge differences in scale and status between the minority and majority cultures, such a transfer of symbols, from the former to the latter, could hardly be expected to happen. Nor would the Ainu, who have spent so much effort trying to revitalise their identity around their traditional rituals, garb and images, want to lose them in the bizarre, quasi-comical way that tartan escaped from Gaeldom.

LINGUISTIC IDENTITY.

Language is important for identity, though there is some debate over the extent of that importance. It is instructive here to quote the political scientist Walker Connor, who questions in his book 'Ethnonationalism' the role of language as a defining criterion for a community:

"...the Ukrainians, as a method of asserting their non-Russian identity, wage their campaign for national survival largely in terms of their right to employ the Ukrainian, rather than Russian, tongue in all oral and written matters. But would not the Ukrainian nation (that is, a popular consciousness of being Ukrainian) be likely to persist even if the language were completely replaced by Russian, just as the Irish nation has persisted after the virtual disappearance of Gaelic, despite pre-1920 slogans that described Gaelic and Irish identity as inseparable? Is the language the essential element of the Ukrainian nation, or is it merely a minor element which has been elevated to the symbol of the nation in its struggle for continued viability?"

The different degrees of importance which activists have attached to the role of the Ainu and Gaelic languages, especially in defining Ainuness and Gaelicness, seem to reflect the two options Connor's question addresses.

If the Ainu language was indeed the 'essential element' of being Ainu, the prospects for the survival of that identity would truly be bleak. According to John Maher, in August 1993, "The number of native speakers is certainly very small, possibly around 30 adults, almost all in their 80s." Yet in the same article, Maher notes that "At no other time in the history of Ainu studies in Japan have there been more courses on the Ainu language at the university level." He mentions the existence of more than 20 language classes at community centres in Hokkaido, as well as there being a revival in the use of Ainu-language prayers and songs at ceremonial events. Since 1988 there have even been Ainu-language-learning broadcasts on Hokkaido radio, and a yearly Ainu-language speech contest since 1989.

To stage a revival of this magnitude, of a language that was once commonly supposed to be moribund, the psychological belief in being Ainu must at some point have transcended the ill-health of the language. The Ainu language is something you may choose to adopt after you have accepted the Ainu identity: a badge of what you are, but not your whole being.

The point is reiterated by Joseph DeChicchis in his recent paper, 'The State of the Ainu Language', in which he makes a comparison between its importance for Ainu and the importance of Latin for devout Roman Catholics. No longer are they the languages of everyday discourse, but they remain alive on a powerfully symbolic level, as the accompaniment to ritual and ceremony, as — in the case of the Ainu tongue — the currency of song, greeting and prayer, as a potent verbal trait of one's identity.

But for Gaels — often labelled in purely linguistic terms as 'Gaelic speakers' — language would seem to be more of a defining criterion than a symbol. One Gael, for example, gave an explanation of how he would classify someone as a member of his community by saying, "The parents themselves would probably either be Gaelic-speaking or there'd be some fairly strong family connection to the Gaelic-speaking areas. Apart from that, I think that some kind of knowledge of the language is necessary to justify the label... I think you've got to be able to speak the language." Asked if a Gaelic consciousness could ever survive the disappearance of the language, he said, "No. No such thing as a Gael...

There wouldn't be a Gael."

We can understand why the language is given such a priority when we consider a comment one Gael made about his identity: "It was so difficult for us to be completely detached in our answers because so much of it is intangible. It's internal. It's feeling. It's thought processes." Indeed, there is little that does seem tangibly 'Gaelic'. There is no racial sign of distinctiveness from Lowland Scots that (at least 'pure-blooded') Ainu can boast among the Japanese. They willingly share a nationality, 'Scottishness', with the Lowlanders, and their traditional garb — albeit in a garishly exaggerated, even falsified version — has become a stereotype for all Scots, outwith Gaeldom as well as inside it. Only the Gaelic tongue seems to be an immediate, perceptible mark of separateness.

Though the number of Gaelic speakers had effectively halved within the first five decades of this century, from 202,700 to 93,269 in 1951, recent years have seen strident efforts to preserve that mark of separateness.

There has been the appearance and expansion of Gaelic-language broadcasting: national and local radio, television programmes, finally the establishment in 1991 of the Gaelic Television Fund, which receives nine-and-a-half million pounds annually from the government. A whole spectrum of Gaelic education has developed, ranging from Gaelic nursery schools across Scotland, to Gaelic-medium primary education (though not as yet at the secondary level), to the founding of a Gaelic college on the island of Skye: Gaelic has been offered as a university course in Scotland since 1882 and it was given provision in the 1918 Education Act for study at schools in 'Gaelic-speaking areas'. There has been a growth in Gaelic publishing and a flurry of activity in the arts: Gaelic drama productions, the creation of a Gaelic film and video unit in the Highland town of Inverness, and the emergence of at least one popular Scottish rock band, Runrig, who regularly perform songs in the language.

Yet if such activies will arrest the decline of the Gaelic language, the latest census figures (in 1991, showing a drop of 14,000 from the 79,000 Gaelic speakers recorded in Scotland in 1981) suggest it has yet to happen.

Not all Gaels were wholly upset at the news of the census figures. John MacLeod, a critic of the Gaelic language revivalists, has written in his book, 'No Great Mischief if you Fall': "Gaelic has long been deemed central to our identity as Hebrideans and Highlanders. But is this true? Is not our Gaeldom as much racial, and psychological, as linguistic? And is Gaelic not so much the core of our identity as a badge of our differences? In truth, should we not acknowledge Gaelic as an external, an instrument outwith our identity — quaint marks, lovely sounds, but nothing more than a language, and a language heading for the abyss?" In fact, MacLeod repeats Connor's query at the beginning of this section — is language the essential element of identity, or a minor one?

Even if language is simply a badge, a symbol rather than the defining criterion, it is a badge that Gaelic activists, like their Ainu counterparts, are loathe to throw away. However, even those Gaels who define their identity mostly in terms of "a knowledge of the language" acknowledge that today all Gaels must be bilingual, that their tongue must at best survive in tandem with English. The ability to speak Gaelic — and hence, by their own definition, to be a Gael — will in future be a choice.

In fact, as time progresses, as the social and media environments around the Ainu and Gaels become even denser meshes of Japanese or

English, the acquisition of the Ainu and Gaelic languages will become an increasingly conscious assertion of identity. At the moment, however, the stakes seem to be different. The Ainu's badge of linguistic identity does not have to be particularly big or visible, or even present, for that person to feel or be considered Ainu. Despite what a few might be saying about "shaping a post-Gaelic Highland identity" (MacLeod's words), for many, speaking the Gaelic language remains the one badge that no authentic Gael can be without.

ENVIRONMENTAL IDENTITY.

We have seen how the Ainu and Gaels have had traditional cultures that were shaped by their close relationships to the landscapes around them; and how their histories have contained long, agonising periods of forcible displacement from both those lifestyles and those territories. It is worth considering, then, the significance of the natural environments that were their original settings — the Ainu's Moshir, the Gaels' Highlands — in their modern identities, especially in an age like today when many people have begun to reassess their impact on and whole relationship to nature.

It is hardly surprising that the Ainu have made much of the environment while asserting themselves in modern Japanese society - not only in view of their traditional lifestyle of hunting, fishing and limited gathering, but also since the Yamato culture that is credited with 'marginalising' them went on to become an industrial and technological juggernaut, its momentous progress in the following century often at a heavy environmental cost. How logical it must seem to align your Ainuness, the victim of Japanese colonial encroachment, with the natural environment of your ancestors, the victim of the pollution and demand on resources of modern Japanese industry!

Accordingly, when I asked Shigeru Kayano for a definition of Ainuness, the first criterion he offered was; "Being Ainu is respecting nature and being kind to nature and worshipping nature." As an example of this, he reminised, "About 60 years ago when I was a child I went to catch salmon in the river... My father told me to put salmon on the pebbles so the crows could eat it, and in the bushes so a fox could eat it. So my father wasn't just thinking of the people, but also of the other living creatures around them." Another example: "Going hunting deer, the Ainu would watch the sky and when a lot of birds were flying, they would know deer were present there... After they killed the deer, they spread the intestines on the ground for the birds."

Thus, when the Ainu press their demands for recognition on the Japanese, there is often reference made to environmental matters too. In cases such as the road-building activities of the Hōkkaido Development Agency, using Ainu land which it has regarded as national rather than privately-owned property, or the appropriation of Ainu land (with strong cultural and religious significance) for the Nibutani dam project, the issues of Ainu rights and environmental protection have converged.

1993's Nibutani Forum saw Kayano make a speech outlining a list of environmental grievances. "In less than a hundred years a lot of mountains in Hokkaido were made bare. They cut down the trees... There are 57 rivers where salmon come back to spawn. There are only two where there are not any weirs or dams. Because of the existence of the weirs, the salmon do not come up the river." With delegates from indigenous cultures around the Pacific rim making similar complaints about toxic chemicals in their rivers, acid rain, even companies trying to use native lands for the dumping of nuclear waste, the Nibutani Forum showed how environmental concern, so prevalent in the modern

Ainu consciousness, is in fact shared by many of the world's indigenous peoples.

Is there a historical justification for this attitude of 'ecological superiority'? Some academics are sceptical. One American researcher told me bluntly, "I laugh when I hear environmental people talk about how they (INDIGENOUS PEOPLE) used to save the environment. It's not because they are more environmental or nature-loving. It's just that they have more resources to destroy... A good example are the Australian Aborigines."

Of the Ainu, however, Charles Dunn writes that "They exploited their environment, but only to the extent that it was necessary, and took some care to preserve it. It is said, for example, that when they stripped bark from a lime-tree, to make clothing of bast, they were prudent enough not to take so much that the tree died."

Similarly, the crofting lifestyle of so many inhabitants of Gaeldom has been hailed as a mode of human existence that makes only gentle demands on the earth. Birds like the concrake, long since banished by intensive farming practices on the Scottish mainland, are still to be found in crofting areas: and crofting in the Western Isles has preserved the 'machair', a unique strip of land formed by the intermingling of soil and sand, distinguished by its rich profusion of wild flowers. As one interviewee told me, "...the crofting way of life in the past was very concerned with the environment. I mean, it was very natural, in its cyclical way and its non-intensive nature. I think there was a very close symbiosis."

Nonetheless, from time to time, crofters have shown themselves to be wary of environmental causes. Unlike the Ainu, they have not always championed these causes, but have had them imposed from outwith, from environmentally-concerned southerners.

Douglas Willis reports how Britain's Nature Conservancy Council, in designating certain crofting areas recently as 'sites of scientific interest' —— thus limiting the amount of development permitted there —— provoked one crofter to accuse the Council "of presiding over a modern version of the Highland Clearances. The accusation centred over the need to provide an environmental assessment for an area which was to be the subject of a development plan by the local crofter grazings committee for reseeding and shelter-belt planting. Unfortunately, conservation has often been perceived in the north as being associated with a distant bureaucracy. In a part of the world where the memory of outside, southern interference is still very strong, it is perhaps not hard to seek an explanation for why such perceptions exist and conflicts of interest flare up."

While an awareness of nature and the land does undoubtedly play a role in the consciousness and culture of many Gaels, it is not really an element they have chosen to promote and make into a campaigning issue, as the Ainu have; perhaps because sympathetic legislation in the past has given them some sense of authority over their traditional territory, of being less vulnerable to predatory, economic intrusions from elsewhere. (And as we have just seen, when outside interference has been perceived, it has often been in the name of 'conservation'.)

Indeed, the field of Gaelic activism seems to be narrower than its Ainu counterpart. I was told by one person that "Gaelic activism is about language, to be perfectly honest... It's language as distinct from culture." If crofting was highly prized, it was because of its importance for the Gaelic tongue rather for than the environment. "You just have to look at the natural setting of Gaelic and make no analysis. Where do kids still speak Gaelic? It's Ness and it's the middle district of South Uist and that's where crofting is strongest... Whereas if you look at

Castlebay, Lochmaddy, all the urban settings on the islands, there's no Gaelic."

Another Gael explained: "The whole thing goes back to the sense that Gaelic revolves so much around the land and the culture of the land and the croft and the peats... We have a vocabulary that can deal with that. We don't so far have a vocabulary that can deal with computing, with the new industries that are coming in, and however much we try to create one, it's still unnatural to us."

Thus, though the environment is of major significance for both modern-day Ainu and Gaels, we can see underlying differences in their attitudes. For the Ainu, the natural world — their traditional home — has become something of a rallying point, another front on which to assert themselves and their outlook against the prevailing Japanese culture. For Gaels, their natural setting is similarly prized, though not so much as an end in itself, but as the nurturing ground for what many perceive as their main trait of distinctiveness, if not the core of their identity: their language.

THE WIDER PICTURE.

Finally, I would like to consider the positions that Ainu and Gaels see themselves — or would like to see themselves — occupying in relation to the larger cultures around them: those of Hokkaido/Japan and of Scotland/Britain.

1.The Ainu and Hokkaido/Japan.

Clearly, as we can see from the discontent expressed in the ongoing campaigns of Ainu activists, the relationship between the Ainu people and the Japanese culture and state that have 'annexed' them remains problematic. This difficulty is described by Katarina Sjoberg towards the end of 'Mr Ainu': "Today the Ainu have only individual rights. Their rights as a people are non-existent, simply because the authorities do not recognise distinct ethnic groups within their national context." Under the law, then, you can be Japanese, but not Ainu.

However, as many activists would bitterly point out, the ignorance and prejudice that, even today, many Ainu encounter in daily life makes them feel anything but Japanese. As one lady told me, "I'm Ainu — but on paper I have Japanese nationality... Because I'm 100% Ainu I don't look Japanese. When I lived in Tokyo, Tokyo people had hardly seen an Ainu before. So not only foreigners, but also Japanese started speaking to me in English. What is the meaning of being Japanese? I just don't fit in."

Shigeru Kayano, meanwhile, brings his autobiography to a close with the following, illuminating passage: "If you look up the word 'people' ('minzoku') in a standard Japanese dictionary, it says 'A social group that shares, or believes itself to share, the same racial and territorial origin, historical destiny, and cultural heritage, particularly language. Does not necessarily correspond to boundaries of race or nationality.' I do not know if this definition is an official one, or if it is accepted internationally, but it is an undeniable truth that we Ainu spoke the Ainu language in Ainu Moshir and are a self-contained ethnic group.

"The country, this prefecture, and its cities, towns and villages all lack any modicum of sensitivity regarding the Ainu as an ethnic minority. In neighbouring China, regions populated by ethnic Koreans have bus schedules printed in both Korean and the standard dialect, Mandarin. In fact, all fifty-four minority nationalities in autinomous regions throughout China similarly display two languages."

That Kayano mentions the lack of correspondence between a 'people' and 'boundaries of nationality', and goes on to show how China has accomodated its minorities by acknowledging their linguistic separateness, suggests an acceptance of Japanese political identity. What is being demanded, however, is recognition of Ainu ethnicity — so that Ainu can enjoy a sense of identity different from, but as legitimate as the Yamato one, even while both continue to carry Japanese passports and belong to the political entity known as 'Japan'. It is a request for the authorities to concede that, in Japan , national and cultural or ethnic identities do not necessarily converge.

Yet so strong is the sense of national and cultural oneness in Japan that Kayano and his fellow activists may still have a long way to go. For example, Anthony D. Smith, Professor of Sociology at the University of London, has written: "More homogeneous and geopolitically rooted than most, the Japanese ethnic community was united in the early medieval era by the legacy of the Heian and Nara empires and by the emergence of successive feudal states (the Kamakura, Ashikaga and Tokugawa shogunates) despite long periods of civil war between feudal lords. By the early seventeenth century Japan had evolved into an ethnic state with only the small Ainu minority (later supplemented by Koreans) living in the north. Tokugawa feudal absolutism cemented the congruence of state and 'ethnie' by (almost) sealing Japan's borders with the outside world."

The effect of this historical process, then, is a belief in a single Japanese identity that is both 'national' and 'cultural'. Distressingly for Ainu activists, that belief has sometimes been expressed by the people at the apex of Japanese society, the political leaders. In 1986, the then-prime minister Yasuhiro Nakasone — after a diplomatic blunder whereby he'd made remarks offensive to minorities in the United States

— spoke of a common Japanese misunderstanding of multi-cultural societies. The inhabitants of Japan, he said, were "a mono-ethnic people, so (we've) got to be more careful." But in trying to atone for cultural insensitivity that had enraged groups in the United States, Nakasone displayed further insensitivity that enraged the Ainu in his own country.

With such assumptions prevailing, we can understand a comment Giichi Nomura made to 'Newsweek' magazine in 1993: "You must be brave to declare you are different from the mainstream culture." From the commitment they have shown recently, however, it seems likely that Ainu activists will continue to be brave.

2.The Gaels and Scotland/Britain.

As I wrote earlier, the contexts of the Ainu and Gaels differ in that the former are situated at the edge of a much more populous culture, the Yamato Japanese, who occupy the length of the Japanese archipelago and have a strong, historically-ingrained sense of their own solidarity and uniqueness; whereas the latter, though on a geographical periphery, find themselves surrounded by concentric circles of identity, of 'Scottishness' and then 'Britishness'.

In recent years, there has been such discussion of the relationship between 'Scottishness' and 'Britishness' that the position of the Gaels, at a lower tier of identity, has often been overlooked. Much media and academic interest, for instance, has been devoted to the fact that three of the four main Scottish political parties now support major change in the constitutional links between London and Scotland, with much more political power being devolved northwards; or evidence like that of The Scotsman opinion poll that suggests many Scots now find being 'Scottish' incompatible with being 'British'. What, however, are the feelings of Gaeldom about their situation within modern-day Scotland and Britain?

Certainly, ethnic tensions in Scotland between Lowlanders and Highlanders have largely faded. There was once widespread belief in the south that, to quote Patrick Sellar — a Lowlander who, as a factor on the Sutherland estates, gained much notoriety for being one of the most ruthless perpetrators of the Highland Clearances — the Gaels were "with relation to the enlightened nations of Europe in a position not very different from that betwixt the American colonists and the aborigines of that country... most virtuous where least in contact with men in a civilised State... fast sinking under the baneful effects of ardent spirits." There are now merely occasional grumbles in the Lowland media about the crofters and their language being too generously subsidised by the British and European Community governments.

Indeed, most Gaels I spoke to seemed happy to accept themselves as Scots, and there was even a certain weariness about the labels they encountered. One interviewee mentioned the experiences of a Gaelic-speaking friend who'd found employment with a television company on the Scottish mainland: "He had gone to school in Scalpay and Lewis and then come out to Aberdeen, and spoken Gaelic all his life. But it wasn't until Grampian Television took him on as a television trainee that the word 'Gael' appeared. He began to hear this word 'Gael' on a day-to-day basis, often used by other people in the studios who were talking about, "You Gaels are getting all this money!"... Maybe in his deep consciousness he'd regarded himself as a Gael because he was a Gaelic-speaker — but he'd never really thought about it. He spoke Gaelic, but that was that. He was a Scottish Gaelic-speaker."

One man was keen to downplay his Gaelicness in favour of the wider identity. "Perhaps I'm different... But as far as my identity's concerned, I would say I'm more Scot than I am Gael... I don't have any identity problem at all. I never think of it... I'm a very ardent Scot, no question of that, and I'm extremely disappointed in the way things are working out just now for Scotland."

In fact, there was evidence that some Gaels saw themselves as 'truer' Scots than their Lowland countrymen; perhaps because their physical and cultural isolation has traditionally made them less susceptible to outside, non-Scottish influences, whereas the Lowlanders, having to share a border with England, have absorbed many of their southern neighbour's values and customs. "The Gaels," claimed one person, "know more about Scotland, they know more about its history than your average person walking about Edinburgh or Glasgow."

This idea is backed by political evidence. The Scottish National Party, committed to establishing a Scottish parliament independent of the United Kingdom, has traditionally enjoyed strong support in Gaeldom. It held the seat for the Western Isles in the British parliament from 1970 to 1987, and currently represents the Highlands and Islands at the European parliament at Brussels.

(Accordingly, though the Gaels I spoke to were willing to consider themselves 'Scots', I heard little mention of the term 'British'. The supra-national identity of 'Britishness' was not one that seemed to impress them or even to occur to them.)

That is not to say that differences and tensions between Lowlanders and Highlanders have been smoothed away and a common sense of 'Scottishness' pervades everywhere. One Gael said frankly, "Well, I'm rather sceptical about the Lowland Scots. I don't have that much fellow feeling with the Lowland Scots... I have more fellow feeling with the Lowlanders than I have with the English or the inhabitants of most other countries, but primarily I see myself as a Gael, and the Lowlanders aren't. They're another country, and I hope it's a country I can be on good terms with and have dealings with. But there's a race-memory in the Gaelic world of the damage that has been done to Gaeldom by the Lowland Scot... I think it's a strange split, but there's a split and you can't ignore that."

He did, however, feel that the preservation of Gaelic culture was now a matter for the "Gaels themselves" and made no attempt to blame Lowlanders for any modern problems in his community. In the present era, at least, there was no sense of oppression by the majority.

* * *

It hardly takes much analysis to recognise the great gulf between the United Kingdom (or indeed, the entirity of western Europe) and Japan in regard to ethnic composition and attitudes about ethnicity. We have already seen Anthony D. Smith's account of the forces that shaped such a fiercely-monolithic sense of identity among the Yamato Japanese, and a corresponding assumption that the boundaries of their culture match perfectly the political and territorial boundaries of the Japanese state. In this context, the efforts of Ainu activists to assert their ethnicity, language or culture must entail wringing concessions from a very reluctant establishment.

That the Gaels apparently have a more relaxed view of the wider society, and more readily identify with it, reflects the more varied nature of Europe ethnicity. It is worth noting that among the twelve current (that is, in 1994) members of the European Community, in addition to seven major languages, there are some 35 minority languages spoken by about a sixth of the E.C.'s 320 million people. These smaller languages — of which Scottish Gaelic is only one — have an E.C. department to look after their interests, the European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages.

Do the Japanese authorities have anything to fear by granting the Ainu the legal recognition that their activists are demanding, by providing funds for education about the Ainu language and culture, and by paying reparations for past encroachments? Would this simply increase the estrangement that some Ainu feel already from the larger society? Would it lead to a more separatist mood in the Ainu community?

I have mentioned that at present there is a lot of constitutional debate in Scotland about its future position in the United Kingdom and calls for increased Scottish autonomy. Yet Scottish nationalism has rarely been a cultural thing. The Gaelic language and culture have hardly ever been used as propaganda tools by separatists. Indeed, that the majority of Scots, Lowlanders, don't differ greatly from people in the other parts of the United Kingdom in their customs, or in the language they use, suggests that cultural distinctiveness is not a serious reason for the growing nationalist sentiment.

Instead, there is evidence that giving minority cultures and languages official recognition may neutralise them as separatist weapons. In a newspaper interview in 1993, Max Simeoni, a Member of the European Parliament, remarked that "There is nothing political about a language, but if you ban it, restrict it to the ghetto, then it can quickly acquire such a status." By promoting minority languages — and by extension, minority cultures — the E.C. hopes in fact to reduce, not intensify, separatist feeling.

By listening more sympathetically to the petitions of the modern Ainu, the Japanese establishment could at last remove the mental walls of a 'ghetto' in its northernmost island and achieve something for the good of society as a whole.

CONCLUSION.

The Ainu and Gaels have some striking historical parallels. Both were participants in major territorial or political rivalries — the former with competing Japanese/Russian claims over the northern area of the modern Japanese archipelago, the latter with the French-backed Jacobite uprisings which attempted to wrest the British throne from the Hanover dynasty. During the 'Kaitakushi' period of the late nineteenth century in Hokkaido, and the Highland Clearances in northern Scotland from about 1780 to 1860, both peoples had a strong and lasting sense of being disenfranchised and displaced from their traditional lands. Finally, both the Ainu and Gaels were the subjects of important legislation passed at the end of the nineteenth century, the 'Hokkaido Kyoudo-jin Hogoko' and the Crofters' Holding Bill, though the Japanese legislation has been a lasting source of discontent to Ainu activists, while the Gaels have looked on the British legislation as a victory.

Today, both communities are viewed as 'peripheral' cultures by the mainstream, the Ainu often seen as a 'doomed' or 'defeated' people, the Gaels often carricatured and stereotyped by distant media portrayals: such images are not necessarily accepted by the members of those communities themselves.

Tourism plays a major role in the economies of both groups and for the Ainu — despite some exploitation by Japanese commercial interests — it may even have served to revitalise them culturally. The Gaels see tourism less as a cultural asset. Indeed, tourism from southern Britain in the nineteenth century helped to create confusion between 'Gaelic' culture and the wider 'Scottish' culture. For that reason, for example, tartan cloth is now seen as a symbol of all of Scotland when in fact it was originally part of the garb worn only by Gaels.

Language is an important issue for both Ainu and Gaels, though to differing degrees. The number of native speakers of Ainu is miniscule, but there is increasing interest in learning it as a second language. It seems likely that in future the Ainu tongue will be important primarily as a symbol of Ainuness, something to supplement the essential Ainu identity. For many Gaels, however, the Gaelic language is seen as the defining characteristic of their identity, the element by which they differ from the mainstream culture of Scotland. Recent years have seen a similar flurry of interest in and activity surrounding the Gaelic language, but as yet the decline in the number of speakers — 65,000 according to the last official figures — has not been checked.

Both cultures attach much value to the natural environment. However, while the Ainu have used it as a campaigning issue against the Japanese establishment, claiming that their traditional lifestyle was a very 'environmentally-friendly' one, the Gaels view their closeness to nature and rural culture as being important because such modes-of-existence help to preserve the Gaelic language.

Most Gaels interviewed during the research with this paper seemed happy to be considered 'Scottish', accepting a wider identity. Clearly, however, many Ainu do not feel ethnically 'Japanese' and are demanding that they be given recognition as a distinctive cultural group within the Japanese state. The policies of the European Community, where minority languages and cultures are promoted rather than discouraged, thus making them less politically contentious and less likely to be utilised by separatist movements, suggest that acknowledging the Ainu culture might be ultimately to the benefit of Japanese society.

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