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David Daiches. The Paradox of Scottish Culture: The Eighteenth-Century Experience. London. Oxford University Press. 1964. vii + 97 pp. 10/6.

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The Union of the Scottish and English Parliaments in 1707 was an incorporating and not a federal union. It meant certain political and economic advantages for Scotland at the cost of some measure of national and cultural identity. In this book, the published Whidden Lectures for 1964, Dr. Daiches brings out the complex effects of this amalgam. From the point of view of cultural as well as economic and other matters, the Union, he suggests, was not an unmitigated benefit to Scotland. Progress and development after 1707 tended to be imposed from without rather than to develop organically from within. The loss of political identity in 1707 reinforced the effect of the loss of the Court in 1603. When sophistication and patronage as well as Parliament moved to London, it was natural that Scotland should look south for example and models. Or else, at home, it had to be content with native tradition and culture, which, in these very circumstances, must tend to become folk tradition and culture rather than national. It was Scotland's sad dilemma that for survival it had to turn away from itself. It had to take on, more and more, an English, or Anglified, culture to ensure it an audience in the world, and subdue native tones to accents which must ever remain somewhat foreign to it.

All this Dr. Daiches considers with an insight and perceptiveness which can in no way be suggested by the above simplifications. The book consists of three sections: I. "The Cultural Consequences of the Union," II. "National Institutions: The Church and The Law," III. "The Heavenly City of the Edinburgh Philosophers." In the first, he argues that while Scotland certainly gained from the Union in some ways, improvement in matters industrial, agricultural, economic were at first "doctrinaire," and only gradually more spontaneous. Improvement met with a resistance parallelled in some of the arts; as Burns' resisting the advice of Edinburgh *literati* to accommodate his genius to fashionable poetic modes. Watson's *Collection,* marking the start of an eighteenth-century Scottish literary revival, gave a wide but confused picture of a poetic tradition. In the eighteenth century, the Scots language, a real language—Middle Scots—in the time of the *makars,* finally gave way to English for literary purposes; and spoken Scots degenerated into various regional dialects. Allan Ramsay's attempts to set up as Scottish wit and man of letters were largely based on English models:

the London club and coffee-house personality and writing. His un-
certainty in taste as editor of song collections gave authority to much
bad verse, of both rustic coarseness and insipid neo-classical elegance.
Through a growing consciousness of its heritage of song, however,
eighteenth-century Scotland "registered its national feeling."

The second section treats of the two national institutions the Union
left Scotland: the Church and the Law. The church of Knox, by its
democratic organization from "outlying parts to the centre," could be
more truly representative of public opinion, in spite of disruption, than
the Parliament had ever been. But while bearing "some of the responsi-
bilities of a lost nationhood," it could not be a patron of the arts:
indeed, it was often inimical to them. The Law here was more success-
ful. Education for the Law was in Scotland also a liberal and gentle-
manly education. Some of the country's great eighteenth-century law-
yers were also men of culture and letters, as well as, often, notable
personalities and even "characters": Lord Kames, Lord Monboddo, Lord
Auchinleck, Lord Braxfield. The last section shows that by the middle
of the eighteenth century there had grown in Scotland such a sense of
place in a wider "British" and even European cultural context, that
Edinburgh sought an actual embodiment of this Enlightenment in
stone. Craig's New Town became a symbol of the rational, civilized
ethos of this eighteenth-century. "Athens of the North." This was
Scottish patriotism on a wide plan. But, as Dr. Daiches stresses in more
than one place, it was a patriotism which, paradoxically, at the same
time ignored, for example, a contemporary Gaelic culture, while getting
excited and misled over Macpherson's "Ossian." It would if it could,
through the *literati,* have refined all originality out of Burns. It ignored
Fergusson. It failed properly to understand Hume, who was content
to compromise with lesser minds than his own.

This small book (small in size only, for it is concentrated and
scholarly) is a valuable and distinguished study and reconsideration of
the effects of Union. Of literary figures, there are the original and
authoritative considerations one would expect. And also, the historical,
economic, and sociological conditions behind the literature are assimi-
lated and presented with helpful succinctness and clarity. The work
usefully corrects often vaguely formulated and thoughtlessly perpetuated
views on such matters as Jacobitism, aspects of Burns, sentimental
Scottishness, the "torrent of tartanry." Dr. Daiches' bias is rather
against the Anglicizing influences which started in the eighteenth
century, and towards the strong, native Scottish talents and genius
which the Union partly caused to be thwarted or diverted. They had

to atrophy, or degenerate into the quaintness, sentimentality, or pawki-
ness that too much since the nineteenth century have made up part
of the Scottish image—at least outside the country. As the title sug-
gests, the idea of paradox gives Dr. Daiches a structural and thematic
basis for his deliberations. It is true he seems to find paradoxes every-
where. But they are in the situations as well as in the lectures. And
he does not give the impression that arguments are being too forced,
or an intellectual game of paradoxes played to the end. Perhaps
because the three sections of the book were lectures, there remains
some repetition. But in the interests of reiteration and emphasis, this,
in print no less than in the lecture room, has its force and effectiveness.

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