

## **SCOTLAND IN YOUR EYES: THE REPRESENTATION OF SCOTLAND IN FRENCH PRESS ADVERTISING SINCE 1995**

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It can be argued that the advertising of a foreign destination is placed at the interface between two cultures: on one side the culture of the potential host and, on the other side, the cultural background of the tourist. For Urry (1990) the construction of the 'tourist gaze' is fundamentally based on contrast since tourism, a form of 'deviance', inherently seeks departure from established routines. This antipodal stance is indeed such a crucial cornerstone of tourism that the observation of tourism practices can, he argues, inform by contrast on the standard, 'normal' practices of a given social group. Although contrast is undeniably a prime appeal in destination advertising, marketing practitioners also see the need of embedding the values of the targeted group in the advertising message in order to satisfy international tourists' needs (Reisinger and Turner 2003) and reinforce their perceived self-image to create brand empathy (Morgan and Pritchard 2002). Social scientists have also stressed the part played by the tourist's culture in the semiotic process of meaning construction, as the decoding of the advertising message is negotiated through the recipient's referent system (Dann 1996) and relies on pre-established ways of seeing (McCannell 1973, Culler 1981). The process of audience construction in destination advertising is therefore underpinned by the bipolar tensions of familiarity and difference: the need, on the one hand, to work with the societal practices, values and expectations of the targeted audience as ideology tends to be conservative (Gold and Gold 1995, O'Barr 1994, Cathelat 1992), and, on the other, to suggest life enhancement through a temporary diversion from the familiar, in the exploration of 'new frontiers' (McCannell 1973).

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An illustration of this dialectical approach will be provided by looking at the advertising of Scotland as a tourist destination in the French press from the first independent campaign of the Scottish Tourist Board in 1995 to the current advertising of VisitScotland. It will investigate which elements of Scottish 'surface culture' (Reisinger and Turner 2003) were initially established as being 'recognisable' by a French audience, and how these were incorporated and progressively reworked into tourism promotional imagery for the French market to meet expectations and occasionally draw upon certain trends in contemporary French society but also to establish contrast with the audience culture, and therefore create 'transcendence from everyday life' (Craig 1997, p. 144). Analysis of advertising material will be based on a combined content and qualitative analysis (Leiss, Kline and Jhally 1990, Dann 1996, Selwynn 1996). It will trace the evolution of the 'continual battle' between the accommodation of existing discourses and presentation of innovative views of the tourist destination (Scarles 2004) with a view to commenting on the mediation of Scotland in French press advertising over a ten-year period and examine how tailoring of promotional material for a differentiated French market gave way to an approach where national characteristics were subsumed into a pan-European campaign. The promotional material considered focuses on print advertisements released in the French press<sup>1</sup> in the Spring of each year in anticipation of the main tourist summer season, for ease of comparison between campaigns and because they can be seen to encapsulate the rhetorical appeals put forward for individual campaigns<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Typically in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, the most prominent French general information magazine with a total circulation of 543,399 in 2004 (source: OJD, Association pour le contrôle et la diffusion des medias, [http://www.ojd.com/fr/adhchif/chif\\_fiche.php?adhid=677](http://www.ojd.com/fr/adhchif/chif_fiche.php?adhid=677))

<sup>2</sup> Over the years the range of media activities has increased to include poster advertising in the underground and in bus shelters, related promotions with retailers (e.g. Marks and Spencer) and travel operators, direct mail, and online advertising (from 2002).

## **OVERVIEW OF TOURISM PROMOTION OF SCOTLAND IN FRANCE**

Before looking in detail at representations of Scotland in advertising discourse, this section will consider the public-policy strategies and market contexts which have framed the implementation of promotional campaigns in France.

Tourism is one of the most important sectors in Scotland's economy: the latest figures for 2005 indicate that it currently employs 9% of its workforce and generates £4.4 billion of its £64 billion GDP<sup>3</sup>. France provides a substantial contingent of overseas tourists as it ranks in fifth position behind the US, Germany, Australia and Canada<sup>4</sup>, but has slid from the third position it occupied in 1993 (behind the US and Germany). Tourism revenues from French tourists to Scotland are expected to be £40.9 million in 2004 and £54 million in 2008, which represents an average annual increase of 8% or 5.7% in real terms (Munro and Yeoman, VisitScotland 2005).

A rapid overview of the public policy for Scottish tourism promotion overseas points to an evolution towards a gradual empowerment of Scottish statutory bodies to promote Scotland abroad: created under the Development of Tourism Act of 1969, the Scottish Tourist Board was initially not involved in overseas tourism promotion, which was then the sole responsibility of the British Tourist Authority. With the 1984 Tourism (Overseas Promotion) (Scotland) Act, the STB acquired limited powers to undertake the promotion of Scotland abroad in partnership with the BTA, which however still retained the responsibility for coordinating all marketing overseas. In particular, separate funds were not made available to the STB to run targeted advertising campaigns abroad. In 1994, however, there was a sea change as for the first time funds were released by the Scottish Office. The STB commissioned research by a marketing agency, Travel and Tourism Research, to investigate current perceptions of Scotland in France and Germany, and appointed the

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<sup>3</sup> *Scottish Enterprise website: [http://www.scottish-enterprise.com/sedotcom\\_home/sig/sig-tourism.htm](http://www.scottish-enterprise.com/sedotcom_home/sig/sig-tourism.htm) accessed on 24/06/05*

<sup>4</sup> *Scotexchange, <http://www.scotexchange.net>, based on data for 2003, accessed on 24/06/05*

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French advertising agency Medicis<sup>5</sup> to run a tailored advertising campaign in France from 1995. The American and German markets were targeted independently. In 1999, the STB invited the agency to re-pitch for the account, which it did successfully. The previous year had been a troubled one for the Scottish tourism sector as its overall revenues had declined significantly below target<sup>6</sup> and there had been an 11% fall in the number of foreign visitors, a downward trend which only stopped in 2002<sup>7</sup>. The Scottish Parliament commissioned an independent review of the STB which recommended a radical shake-up of the tourist board. This led to the formation of VisitScotland in 2001. In 2003 VisitScotland reconsidered its international marketing approach and commissioned Nunwood Consulting to carry out qualitative research with the remit to investigate whether developing marketing synergies could maximise the overseas promotional budget by delivering economies of scale. This was based on the realisation that perceptions had changed and that commonalities were increasing across Europe (VisitScotland 2005). The study focused on three key markets – Germany, France and Spain – and came to the conclusion that consumers across Europe had a similar set of need. As a result a Pan-European agency, Consellgruppe, based in Germany, was appointed in 2004 to develop a single creative approach and consistent brand identity (VisitScotland 2005).

The study of the advertising material will therefore consider three major phases of Scottish tourism promotion in France:

- 1995 – 1999: the first campaigns created by the French advertising agency Medicis for the STB;
- 2000 – 2003: the campaigns run for the STB and subsequently for VisitScotland by the same French agency following a re-pitch of the account initiated by the STB;

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<sup>5</sup> Named *SFCP Conseil* from 1993 after the merger between the *Borg* and *Medicis* agencies.

<sup>6</sup> In its *Annual Report*, the STB identified a number of factors to account for this decline: the competitive strength of the football World Cup in France, poor weather in Scotland and the strength of the pound. (*Scottish Tourist Board 1999*)

<sup>7</sup> The French tourist market reacted particularly adversely to the *Foot and Mouth* crisis (*Eugenio-Martin, Sinclair, Yeoman 2004*)

- 2004 – 2005: the campaigns devised by the Pan-European agency Conseilgruppe for VisitScotland.

### **THE 1994 ATTITUDINAL SURVEY IN FRANCE**

In 1994 the STB commissioned a marketing company, Travel and Tourism Research (TATR), to carry out an attitudinal survey in what were then the two prime European markets – Germany and France – to investigate how Scotland was perceived by consumers, with a view to building upon its brand strengths for future campaigns (Travel and Tourism Research 1994, p. 2). This qualitative research, based on discussion in four focus groups in each country<sup>8</sup>, sought to discover which aspects of Scotland were positively perceived by groups of French and Germans; it transpired from the study, which used a variety of techniques – spontaneous word associations; specific, prompted, images of Scotland; promotional material – to elicit comments that the French focus groups seemed to know very little about Scotland, about its history or its political standing within the UK. On the other hand, group discussions revealed that Ireland appeared more distinctive as a nation with its own contrasting culture. Consequently, on the basis of this small survey, one of the main conclusions of the report was that the French displayed a lack of awareness about Scotland as a valid holiday destination for holiday-makers seeking northern climes.

In relation to the limited perceptions which could be recorded, the French, when interviewed, drew largely upon romantic imagery of Scotland which they associated with a castellated landscape, legends, a moody rainy climate perceived as contributing to the atmosphere, rugged and unspoilt wilderness, deserted moors and lochs and Celtic twilight atmosphere. Some of the most prominent Scottish icons were readily listed – kilts and tartans, the bagpipe, whisky, salmon, the Loch Ness monster – while the Scots themselves were perceived as old-fashioned, reserved and gruff but hospitable and well disposed towards the French. However, some standard Scottish icons and symbols were not so successfully associated with Scotland: the thistle for

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<sup>8</sup> *A total of 28 persons, 'decision-makers' in their own family groups, attended the four French focus groups which took place in Paris and Lille in July 1994. They were allocated to a particular group depending on their age (18-34; 35-55) and on whether or not they had previously holidayed in Scotland. ( Travel and Tourism Research 1994)*

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example, which for some had negative connotations as a prickly plant, the Highland cattle recognised as Scottish but mostly by those who had previously visited the place, the Highland deer mostly perceived as non-Scotland-specific. When confronted with some types of Scottish rural or urban imagery, the French people interviewed dismissed these as not being Scottish enough: urban scenes in particular which did not fit in with views of the picturesque, crofters' cottages identified with Ireland, lush vegetation and rolling countryside which did not conform to the expected representations of rugged wilderness.

The survey also identified difficulty in finding emblematic representations of Scottish people which would depart from the stereotypical casting of a lone piper or a rugged clansman in full Highland dress. According to the French focus groups, Scotland was a place lost in a time warp, free of urban industrialisation and signs of modern living.

### **THE INITIAL STB ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS: 1995-1999**

In her seminal work on advertising Williamson (1983) emphasises the significance of prior knowledge in the decoding of an advertisement since it acts as truth guarantor for the advertisement itself. Likewise, from a pragmatic perspective Morgan and Pritchard (2002, p. 15) recommend those seeking to strike a chord in a target audience 'to craft images which can use the cliché as a hook on which to hang more detail'. The STB clearly elaborated their initial campaigns in France from the clichéd Scottish identity arising from the consultants' findings and provided a series of markers, pre-established signs of Scottishness, to guide its audience by.

The first series of advertisements run in the French press between 1995 and 1999 featured a sepia photograph set in a wooden frame against a tartan backcloth of various colours. It signals a place 'apprehended as picturable', "enworlded" by being enframed' (Crang 1997, p. 362). In all versions but one – one of the two advertisements run in 1998 which features a man in tweed cap and trench coat hopping across stones in a river bed – the photograph portrays a couple in their thirties against a background of Highland scenery in a style reminiscent of fashion shoots. The protagonists are dressed in more urban clothes than the rugged background seems to call for: cream Aran sweater and long trench coat (him), long flowing white skirt and large hat (her). These are obviously tourists playing with the idea of living through an authentic experience (Crang 1997) as their features are

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devoid of stereotypical Scottish traits but befit the image of a young affluent couple who, through Aran sweater and tweed cap, make a token gesture towards the surrounding celticity without sacrificing their sartorial elegance. They are seen engaging in genteel tourist activities: cycling on a tandem in one advertisement (1995), romantically sitting on a grassy bank next to a wicker picnic basket (1996, 1997), taking photographs of Eilean Donan Castle with an antique camera (1996, 1997), taking a leisurely walk in Highland scenery (1996) or again driving in an open coupé along an overcast loch (1998). They are the aspirational selves into which the targeted French AB-social-class readers<sup>9</sup> are invited to project themselves: tourists at play, engaged in relaxing activities, i.e. in Urry's terms, in typically staged authenticity. They are enmeshed in a web of symbols: overcast skies for dramatic effect which in turn contrasts with the light-coloured clothing for lightness of being, elegant native clothes to feed social aspirations, old-fashioned accessories to suggest access to a rich(er) past.

Dann (1996, p. 49) suggests that 'since the contemporary world is in many respects unattractive and materialistic, the resulting alienation can only bring a *Fernweh* or longing for distant places, but also a *Zeitweh*, a yearning for far-off times'. In the iconography of these adverts both longings are catered for. The feeling of nostalgia is induced through dated or vintage accessories: antique camera, wicker basket, long flowing skirt and matching floppy hat, crocheted cardigan, vintage sports car. This aesthetised reference to a golden age is in line with a marketing trend established in France since the early 1990s as nostalgia has proved highly effective to sell products by endowing them with a 'memory' (**Marketing Magazine** 2001). Interpretation of the place is built upon the combined use of the three dominant aesthetic ideologies which have contributed to popularise Scotland – namely, the picturesque with its emphasis on contrasts, variety and irregularity; the Gothic for effect on the imagination; and Romanticism which showcases wilderness unspoilt by civilisation (Seaton 1998). The emphasis on vast expanses, on privacy, on a semi-spiritual relationship with the destination earmarks Scotland as standing well and truly apart from mass-tourism destinations.

In none of the visuals is there any reference to contemporary Scotland or to its urban aspects. Highland scenery has been selected as the essence of Scotland, in keeping with the romantic representations in vogue since the late

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<sup>9</sup> *Personal communication, STB*

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18<sup>th</sup> century. Pathetic fallacy is induced through overcast skies, the ruins of castles and rugged moors. The sepia tones of the photographs reinforce its artistic quality and emphasise the stark contrast between dramatic landscapes and soft-edged intimacy. However, at the same time the use of the antique camera in one of the prints befogs the interpretation of the timescale of the photographs. It provides “entrance points” to enworlded landscapes through which ideological worlds are created’ (Scarles 2004, p. 63), but also ‘starting points on which to hang personal stories’ (Crang 1997, p. 368).

The slogan further blurs the distinction between past and present, between the reality of the location and its mythical appeal: ‘Scotland between legend and myth’<sup>10</sup> presents Scotland as standing somewhere between a mythical land and a tangible reality, between the past and the present. Identification with the characters portrayed is invited through the use of different tenses: commands and the present tense as an authoritative interpretation of the experience (still to be) lived – e.g.: ‘Listen. You’re listening to the soul of Macgregor’<sup>11</sup>(1996); or the future tense which acts as an assertive guarantee of surreal experiences to come – e.g.: ‘When you get back to the manor, you will have to choose between Mary Queen of Scots’ and Walter Scott’s bedroom’<sup>12</sup> (1995). This caption incongruously brings together references to two icons of Scottish history and literature which are probably the best known in France. First, we have Walter Scott’s runaway success in France in the nineteenth century; his influence on many leading writers of the Romantic era such as Alexandre Dumas and Victor Hugo has left some marks, even though his writings may not be much read nowadays. Second, we have Mary Queen of Scots, Marie Stuart as she is known to the French, whose tragic life has been dramatised in European literature and on the screen on many occasions.

Attempts to capitalise on box-office success in France were made explicit on a number of occasions: the reference to the soul of Macgregor in the 1996 ad establishes a cinematic connection with **Rob Roy**, the Hollywood film featuring Liam Neeson released a year earlier in 1995, while another advertisement was released in 1996 with the following caption: ‘Scotland ...

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<sup>10</sup> *‘Ecosse/Entre légende et réalité’*

<sup>11</sup> *‘Ecoutez. Vous entendez chanter la cornemuse. C’est l’âme de Macgregor’*

<sup>12</sup> *‘En rentrant au manoir, vous hésitez entre la chambre de Marie Stuart et celle de Walter Scott’*

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the new Hollywood star<sup>13</sup>. This overtly referred to the recent wave of Hollywood films which were set, if not always filmed, in Scotland and which loosely adapted for the screen heroic moments of Scottish history. This particular advertisement stood out from the rest with its use of a long body copy establishing explicit connections between historical characters and historical sites and its pictorial inserts of historical or mythical settings (Stirling, Edinburgh, Glen Nevis, Glencoe and Loch Ness). The text draws heavily on the connections with the film industry, inviting the reader to share in the glamour bestowed on Scotland in **Rob Roy**, **Braveheart**, **Loch Ness** and **Mary Reilly** by Hollywood stars such as Liam Neeson, Mel Gibson and Julia Roberts and the popular French actress Sophie Marceau. The country itself is personified as a film star – ‘Scotland is the star’ – a romantic partner in its own right since ‘the magic of this poetry turns all outings in Scotland into genuine romance’<sup>14</sup>.

Throughout the period from 1995 to 1999, the Scottish Tourist Board advertisements featured most of the iconic signs mentioned in the attitudinal survey of 1994. Visually, tartan and Highland scenery were highly prominent, as well as baronial castles and references to the climatic harshness of the country (overcast skies, low light levels). Other Scottish symbols were included in the artwork: the *sgian dhu*; Aran jumpers, both as a symbol of vernacular wear and an oblique reference to the climate. Following the findings of the survey, the thistle, arguably one of the main Scottish symbols, made only a token appearance in the Scottish Tourist Board logo in a very stylised form.

Textually, the advertisements contain numerous references to popular culture: to the bagpipes and the iconicity of the Mac/Mc prefixes; to myths about ghosts and Nessie; to authors and fictional characters who can claim Scottish lineage such as Lady Macbeth, Walter Scott, Stevenson, and Marie Stuart. The difficulty identified in the 1994 survey of finding emblematic yet non-stereotypical representations of the Scottish people was resolved by placing in the visuals a holidaying couple unmarked by national stereotypical traits.

By thus presenting Scotland as a country steeped in distant history, imbued with myths and legends, the Scottish Tourist Board sought to preserve the

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<sup>13</sup> ‘Ecosse.../La nouvelle star d’Hollywood’

<sup>14</sup> ‘cette poésie magique fait de toute escapade, en Ecosse, une authentique romance’

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representations of Scotland identified by the 1994 qualitative survey. Its initial campaigns in the French press reflected the contemporary involvement of the French with the cinema, their search for an 'authentic' experience through constructed nostalgic memory.

McCrone et al acknowledge the importance and success of Scottish traditional imagery for 'Scotland the Brand' and in particular tourism as it 'gives commercial expression to national identity' (McCrone et al 1995, p. 197). The selected windows on Scottish surface culture afforded through the French advertising campaigns of the mid-nineties allowed a very stereotypical representation of Scottish national identity. Many of the Scottish iconic signs of the 1994 attitudinal survey were brought together in individual advertisements: for instance, one was the showcase for a whole host of Scottish signs: tartan, wilderness, dour climate, romanticism, bagpipe, historical figure, Aran jumper, thistle. Another featured a compendium of tartan, wilderness, leaden skies, ruined castle, Lady Macbeth, ghosts and thistle. One may wonder if the approach selected was not, at the very least, heavy-handed and possibly confusing since, for the French semiotician Péninou (1972, p. 226) 'the best way to kill destinations is to saturate them with meaning', a view taken up by Gilmore (2002, p. 58) who argues that 'branded images have to be simple'.

### **A PERIOD OF TRANSITION: THE STB AND VISITSCOTLAND CAMPAIGNS 2000-2003**

That the problematic nature of their approach had been recognised by the Scottish Tourist Board is evidenced in a re-pitch which took place at the end of 1999. As a result, iconography and advertising copy became much leaner. The 2000 headline, 'put some legend into your holidays'<sup>15</sup>, took up the theme of legend and myth which had been central to the preceding campaign. However, the exhortation for the audience to act in response to the advertisement implies that a mythical experience of Scotland is co-constructed by the tourist. There is no body copy, no further reference to the great ghosts of the past. The message is, therefore, conveyed through the initial exhortation and the visuals which remain very much in the vein of the previous campaign: black and white photography pictures a blurred couple

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<sup>15</sup> *'Mettez de la légence dans vos vacances'*

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dressed in light clothing against a melancholy backdrop of water, moors, mist and rocks and, in two other versions, a young man in contemplation of a majestic landscape featuring a castle in the distance and a radiant young woman, hair ruffled by the wind, with a castle and bird of prey in the distance. The only colour ‘strategically imported’ (Scarles 2004) from the brand name, *Ecosse*, is in vibrant orange against the black and white photographic backdrop.

In 2001, this theme was expanded with a strapline – ‘you can breathe, it’s Scotland’<sup>16</sup> – which built upon the semantic complexity of the French verb *respirer* (to breathe) to refer to both the beneficial properties of fresh air in open spaces and breathing space in a hectic lifestyle: ‘deviance’ from everyday life became the central proposition of the advertising message.

Reference was made above to the perceived need to differentiate Scotland from other Northern destinations, and in particular Ireland. The latter is often quoted as the showcase of a well-orchestrated and successful media campaign (for instance, Morgan and Pritchard cite Ireland as a success story, one of very few in destination branding since ‘they are a rare breed and they succeed against the odds’ (2002, p. 14)). A brief overview of the Irish tourism campaigns immediately points to the twenty-seven-year head-start which they had on Scottish advertising in France since Ireland had been promoted in the French press since 1968. For Scotland the challenge was to emulate the Irish campaigns whilst establishing a valid contrast between the two destinations. Cold and Gold (1995) comment in general terms that heightened awareness of competition usually leads to rapid replication of effective campaigns, either to share their success or to erode their differential advantage. It can be argued that the 2001-2002 Scottish strapline – ‘you can breathe, it’s Scotland’ – echoes the rhetorical trope used in the contemporary Irish campaign in France: built upon the same dichotomous reference – in this case the literal sense of location and the figurative sense of spiritual renewal – ‘find yourself in Ireland’<sup>17</sup> had been the headline and pivotal theme of the Irish campaign since 1998. However, the similarities between the two destinations end here for, while the Irish campaign features green landscapes and colourful villages and expands on the intensity of personal experience of the country and

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<sup>16</sup> ‘*Respirez c’est l’Ecosse*’

<sup>17</sup> ‘*Retrouvez-vous en Irlande*’

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encounters with its inhabitants, the Scottish advertisements major in hues of grey and are devoid of reference to inhabitants of Scotland.

The 2003 press advertising campaign showed significant changes in its strapline – ‘Welcome to Scotland’<sup>18</sup> – and in its visual contents: the tourist alter-egos – tourists at play – are no longer present and for the first time since the initial campaign of 1995, Scottish protagonists are pictorially entered into the equation. These are however no ordinary human referents to engage with: in one advertisement, the picture of a red-haired young woman lost in dreams is blurred against a background of ancient stones, the connection with the famous Scots of bygone days clearly anchored by the short body copy: ‘there is always a castle, a legend to inspire you’<sup>19</sup>. In another advertisement, reference to the reported warmth of the indigenous population is made with a humorous twist, its embodiment a sheep featured above the following caption: ‘there is always a warm(-hearted) witness when beauty takes your breath away’<sup>20</sup>. As in previous campaigns Highland scenery occupies central stage but the ‘romantic gaze’ constructed in previous campaigns, the sense of private association with the destination conveyed in previous imagery, give way to a spectating experience.

This is however no complete departure from earlier advertising: the threads of the previous campaign are picked up by transferring the previous headline – ‘you can breathe it’s Scotland’ – to a signature position below the VisitScotland logo. An aggregated impact of the Scottish campaign was thus sought, since, as Morgan and Pritchard (2002, p. 39) comment, ‘the secret is to continually evolve and enrich the original brand personality’. The following year was to witness a rapid evolution in the brand personality.

### **THE VISITSCOTLAND PAN-EUROPEAN CAMPAIGN 2004-2005**

The qualitative research commissioned by VisitScotland and undertaken in 2004 by Nunwood Consulting Ltd had identified three core needs for a Pan European campaign: social engagement ‘to create the expectation that

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<sup>18</sup> *‘Bienvenue en Ecosse’*

<sup>19</sup> *‘Il y a toujours un château, une légende pour vous inspirer’*

<sup>20</sup> *‘Il y a toujours un témoin chaleureux quand la beauté vous coupe le souffle’*

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consumers will engage in high levels of spontaneous interaction with friendly, welcoming people' (VisitScotland 2005); discovery and personal learning; and flexibility. This interest in otherness, while somehow running counter to some trends in inter-European holiday travel, can also be interpreted as a reaction against homogenising tendencies (Jacobsen 2003). The creative campaign developed by Conselgruppe<sup>21</sup>, based on these positionings, features a series of experiences tourists have had on their journey. Christened the 'white line concept' from the quirky white line meandering through the print ad, it conveys the potential of discovery in a scenic landscape and social engagement with the destination through short stories: e.g.: 'I spoke to a lovely lady, thought she was the gardener, but turned out she owns the castle'; 'Got stuck in a herd of sheep – the Scottish way to slow down your life'; 'there was no standing on formality with Mrs Dewar. She simply let us have the keys to her castle'. The text mimics in both typography and contents the epistolary style of a traveller recounting idiosyncratic encounters with the natives, both humans and animals. As such it is strongly reminiscent of the style of Irish advertisements used in the late ninety-nineties in which postcards blended into the landscape in a pictorial construct of *mise en abîme* were used to transmit the immediacy of human warmth and sense of unique experience through the artificially borrowed voice of tourists. Another commonality with the Irish campaigns is the use of proper nouns – e.g.: Mrs Dewar. These ascribe the rudiments of a personality to locals through use of the vernacular – in this case English – and serve as 'truth markers' in the rhetoric of advertising (MacCannell 1999). The new strapline 'Scotland. Welcome to our life'<sup>22</sup> – seems devoid of complex rhetoric. However the short greeting belies its apparent simplicity since reference to the home is extended to emotional involvement with the whole nation. The notion of welcome extended as a gift is visually reinforced in the front page visual insert by the small tartan ribbon wrapped around the cover picture of castle, loch and hills. The subdued greys of previous campaigns have given way to a selection of very bright colours with majoring hues of blues and green for outdoor landscapes (including lochs, castles and coastlines). The inside pages of the inserts show inclusion of cityscape (Edinburgh, street and pub life) and of Scottish human referents (old lady serving tea, men in kilts, children jubilant with face-paintings of the saltire, participants in Highland games etc

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<sup>21</sup> *Four-page inserts in the Spring in the news magazine **Le Nouvel Observateur** and TV magazine **Télérama**, complemented in the Spring and Autumn by direct mail*

<sup>22</sup> *'Ecosse. Bienvenue chez nous.'*

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). Tradition is the dominant note but pleasing features of modern times are also accommodated. Contemporary Scots have gained prominence in the new advertising message as they are shown to complement both natural and urban environments. The emphasis is still on tradition since iconic representations such as whisky, tartan, pipers and pubs are given pride of place but there are also signs that these are part of the Scottish contemporary scene and are moving on with the times (for instance through the novelty kilts worn by young men in swaggering fashion, and the Scottish national emblem proudly exhibited by the younger generation).

### **CONCLUSION**

The advertising of Scotland in France has evolved quite substantially since the incipient campaign of 1995. Initially, recognition of traditional Scottish referents was sought either visually or textually and, on the basis of the initial qualitative survey, great care was taken to feature only those which elicited a positive response in the French target audience. The staging of Scottish signs consisted in visual reference to the three dominant ideologies which had shaped an aesthetic perception of Scotland in Europe: the picturesque, the Gothic and the Romantic. The first campaigns created by the French advertising agency Medicis provided a construct in which the French audience was invited to project themselves as tourists casting a 'romantic gaze' (Urry) in semi-spiritual relationship with the object of that gaze. Use of vintage props and reference to box office success may be interpreted as attempts to capture the mood of a French audience sensitive to the marketing of products through nostalgia and receptive to cinematographic references. The visual stance was compounded by textual reference to predetermined discourse on a variety of other signs: this resulted in a complex semiotic mix which presented Scotland as a playground for tourists, a land of laden skies, steeped in history, devoid of contemporary Scots to engage with and of any signs of urban and modern living. This initial campaign subsequently gave way to a leaner visual approach, still featuring tourist alter-egos, but fewer textual referents and a new strapline – 'You can breathe, it's Scotland' – which explicitly exhorted deviance from life at home, by offering physical and spiritual benefits, in a style reminiscent of earlier Irish tourism campaigns. The last phase of the French agency campaigns (in 2003) witnessed the introduction of a simpler headline – 'Welcome to Scotland' – the phasing out of the romantic gaze and the introduction of indigenous referents (red-haired woman, sheep) which, however, were cast in an

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immaterial world of history and legends. The Pan European campaign orchestrated from 2004 is arguably based on the Marxist-inspired concept of an audience differentiated by a social-based set of needs rather than by national characteristics. It marked a break from representations which anchored the Scottish destination in the past as a playground where passing tourists could briefly experience the call of the wild and securely retreat into comfortable 21<sup>st</sup> century living. The need for social engagement in the tourist destination, identified as a common European aspiration by qualitative surveys, became one of the key features of the 2004 and 2005 campaigns, the tourist's involvement previewed through the engineered 'reconstruction' of experience in a diary form. In the current representations of a nation at ease with its heritage and culture, the Scottish campaign has moved one step closer to the advertising formula which has contributed to the success of 'Ireland the Brand' in Europe.

Over a ten-year period the Scottish campaigns in France have therefore undergone a progressive shift in the construction of the audience's engagement with the destination, the result of evolving concepts of interactions between mediated culture and consumer culture: 'Scotland in your eyes' is no set picture.

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