The rejection that dare not speak its name
(the 'Other' in Welsh and Scottish nationalist discourse and policy)

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If their discourse on difference is anything to go by, Plaid Cymru and SNP Nationalists have, over the last half-century, clearly espoused the cultural and social plurality of, respectively, Welsh and Scottish society. Nevertheless, despite these impeccable credentials (Part 1), some of their flagship policies are rather illiberal in their nature (part 2). Most interestingly, it seems that the fact there's many a slip 'twitx the cup and the lip can help us gain an insight into the true nature of nationalism on the British periphery, i.e. into its inherent conceptual and practical limits (part 3).

'Le débat cache l'ennemi vrai.' Michel Serres, *Le Contrat naturel*, Paris: Flammarion, 1992 (1990), p. 25

Introduction

Nationalists the world over have often been taken to task over their narrow-mindedness, self-centredness and anti-humanism. These days however, many scholars and commentators insist that this vision may have been true in the past, and may still be true as regards some forms of nationalism (e.g. the North-Italian version), but are adamant that, on the whole, it no longer stands close examination: most separatist movements, they say, have come a long way over the last half-century or so.

A case in point, according to French British Studies expert Annie Thiec, is the Scottish National Party (or SNP); indeed, the stronger it has become politically, the more responsibly it has behaved, fully embracing the plural nature of contemporary Scottish society[1], seen by the SNP themselves as a 'rich tapestry', as the 'tartan nation', 'composed of a myriad of threads of different colours all equally important to the beauty of the resulting material'[2].

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[1] See Michel Feith, *Nationalismes et régionalismes : des nations avec ou sans Etat*, Nantes: Centre de Recherches sur les Identités Nationales et l'Interculturalité – Université de Nantes, 2005, pp. 32-33.

[2] Annie Thiec, 'Rethinking National Identity in Twenty-First Century Scotland', in Bernard Sellin, Annie Thiec & Pierre Carboni (eds.), *Ecosse : l'identité nationale en question / Scotland: Questioning National Identity,* Nantes: Centre de Recherches sur les Identités Nationales et l'Interculturalité – Université de Nantes, 2009, p. 41.

Similarly, it would seem that Plaid Cymru (or Plaid), the Welsh nationalist party, has now distanced itself for good from a not so distant past in which they were mainly playing the rural card, and looking upon the mastery of the Welsh language as the acid test to decide whether or not one truly belonged, i.e. one was truly Welsh[3].

Nationalist discourse may sound straightforward and convincing to a lot of people, but the problem is that difference itself, i.e. the 'Other', is not a given: one is always different from someone (or something) *else*; in other words, dealing with difference/otherness means establishing a relationship[4]. But, in the context of nationalism, it is bound to be an unequal one. Firstly, Nationalists on the UK periphery champion what they consider to be distinctly and quintessentially Scottish or Welsh (history, culture, economy, and so on), a system and a heritage to be protected. Secondly, and importantly, difference is what their *own* discourse deals with: they consider it to be their responsibility, as the 'true' – in fact self-appointed (see below) – representatives of the nation, as 'those who speak up for the nation', to accommodate difference, which is then the *object* of their discourse. They therefore inevitably become the fundamental yardstick against which to measure the 'Other', the reference point that lays down the rules of the game and standards whose very existence determines who the 'Other' is, and what he/she can and cannot do. This, by definition, allows little or no reciprocal action, little or no interplay[5].

That is why, in 2007 for instance, Dr Maleeha Lodhi, a journalist http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academic, academic and diplomat, who, among other things, held the post of Pakistan's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom (2003-2008), urged Scottish Muslims to speak up for themselves and not allow others (by which she meant the SNP) to be seen as their natural representatives[6], i.e. those who spoke while they, the Scottish Muslims, listened.

Characteristically, several writers in Wales have also pointed critically to the limitations of the language of inclusion. It seems indeed that it has displaced concepts such as social justice/injustice, as it has emphasised the blotting out of exclusionary boundaries instead, and therefore put no real pressure for change on society and promoting blanket policies that are colour- and culture-blind[7].

Thus, the question we shall have to answer becomes: what kind of 'Other' is the Nationalist discourse about? What kind of existence (political or otherwise) can the 'Other' enjoy when his/her place in society is in fact necessarily defined by a more or less external agent? Isn't there a danger that the 'Other' might be simply taken for granted right from the outset?

The aim of this contribution to the debate on rejection will be to try to answer these questions with a view to showing that despite impeccable credentials (Part 1), nationalist policy[8] in Wales and Scotland actually falls far short of the stated goal of making room for the 'Other' (Part 2). Most importantly, the discrepancy can help us gain an insight into the true nature of nationalism, i.e. into its inherent conceptual *and* practical limits (part 3).

1 – Impeccable credentials

Let us first render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's.

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[3] See e.g. D. J. Davies, 'The National Tongue' – *The Welsh Nation*, April, May & July 1950, in D. J. Davies, Towards Welsh Freedom, Cardiff: Plaid Cymru, 1958, pp. 184-196.

[4] See Gérard Lenclud, 'Le factuel et le normatif en ethnographie', in Marc-Olivier Gonseth, Jacques Hainard & Roland Kaehr (eds.), *La différence*, Neuchâtel: Musée d'ethnographie, 1995, pp. 16-17.

[5] See François Hainard, 'Quand la différence conduit à l'exclusion', in Ibidem, pp. 79-80.

[6] See Tom Gallagher, *The Illusion of Freedom: Scotland Under Nationalism*, London: Hurst & Company, 2009, p. 139.

[7] See Charlotte Williams, 'Social inclusion and race equality in Wales', in Charlotte Williams, Neil Evans & Paul O'Leary (eds.), *A Tolerant Nation? Exploring Ethnic Diversity in Wales*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003, p. 154.

[8] Up until their mid-2011 landslide victory (69 seats out of 129), the SNP had been running a minority government in Scotland (since May 2007), while Plaid were Labour's junior partner in the coalition agreement for the Welsh Assembly (known as 'One Wales') that was sealed in the summer of 2007 and came to an end in 2011.

Very few would dare say that the democratic, tolerant and egalitarian spirit, epitomised e.g. by the phrase 'We're aa Jock Tamson's bairns', does not prevail in Scotland, and in particular in SNP circles. Some, for instance, believe that Winnie Ewing's sensational victory in the 1967 Hamilton bye-election (which put the SNP on the UK's parliamentary map) most probably had a lot to do with her making a strong point of equal pay for women[9]. However that may be, the 1960s were actually a decade during which the SNP recruited a new generation of broad-minded, outward-looking, altruistic and cosmopolitan activists keen on fighting – among other things – colonialism and the use of nuclear weapons[10]. In the early 1970s, scholar Douglas Young e.g., a long-standing member of the SNP, explained that he was 'an internationalist, favouring world-government in certain spheres', although he still believed in an independent Scotland where 'reasonable socialism' would go hand-in hand with a mixed economy[11].

Similarly, during that decade too, the leadership of the party allied itself strongly with trade unions and miners against the central government[12] all in the name of openness and democracy. As a matter of fact, from 1974, the SNP started to call itself 'social democratic'[13]. And it will come as no surprise that, over the last few years, the SNP Members of Parliament's voting record at Westminster has been clearly supportive of peace movement and civil liberties issues[14].

Last but not least, according to Professor Michael Keating, the SNP's ideology 'is impeccably civic' (i.e. based not on ethnicity, but on the notion that all who are born and live in a given territory are members of the nation), and, therefore, respectful of diversity[15]. The SNP, as a matter of fact, has often emphasised its civic nationalism: '(…) we believe all who live in Scotland have a valued part to play in our new country, regardless of their place of birth or ethnic background. (…) the SNP has an open and inclusive approach to citizenship. The automatic right of citizenship will be open by right to all those living in Scotland (…).'[16] This is because, in an independent Scotland, 'at the beginning, there would be an open book.'[17]

Mr. Alex Salmond himself, the Scottish First Minister, said (in the wake of the Scottish Human Rights Commission having been given Grade A accreditation by the United Nations, in early June 2010): 'Respect for human rights is integral to our vision for a modern, inclusive Scotland.'[18]

During his key-note speech at the 2010 SNP conference (17 October 2010), he made his vision even clearer: 'I don't fight for flags and anthems', but for 'jobs'[19], while, very recently, he has explained what he would like as his legacy: 'Progress to independence. Not for its own sake, not "let's be independent so we can hoist the Saltire". Let's be independent so we can better the lives of the Scottish people.'[20]

In fact, the foregoing seems perfectly logical to the extent that A. Salmond actually considers himself to be 'a post-Nationalist' (as he said in an interview in September 1998)[21]. Similarly, to George Reid, the second Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament and a former SNP MP and MSP

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[9] See Douglas Young, *Scotland*, London: Cassell & Co. Ltd., 1971, p. 17.

[10] See Richard Finlay, 'The Early Years: From the Inter-War Period to the Mid-1960s', in Gerry Hassan (ed.), *The Modern SNP – From Protest to Power, Edinburgh*: Edinburgh University Press, 2009, p. 29.

[11] *Young*, Scotland, pp. x-xi.

[12] See Isobel Lindsay, 'The SNP and Westminster', in Hassan (ed.), *The Modern SNP*, p. 97

[13] See Stephen Maxwell, 'Social Justice and the SNP', in *Ibidem*, p. 121.

[14] See Isobel Lindsay, 'The SNP and Westminster', in *Ibidem*, p. 102.

[15] Michael Keating, 'National Movements in Comparative Perspective', in *Ibidem*, p. 217.

[16] See François Hainard, 'Quand la différence conduit à l'exclusion', in Ibidem, pp. 79-80.

[17] See 'Introduction', in Harry Reid & Paul Henderson Scott (eds.), *The Independence Book: Scotland in today's world*, Edinburgh, Luath Press Ltd., 2008, p. 9.

[18] Quoted in 'Salmond hails UN recognition' – *The Scotsman*, 2 June 2010.

[19] See 'Conference 2010: Scottish National Party' – BBC2 Scotland, 17 October 2010.

[20] Quoted by Tom Peterkin, 'Alex Salmond: 'I'd be a labourer if it wasn't for Mum'' – Premium Article !

[21] Quoted in Gallagher, *The Illusion of Freedom*, pp. 128-129.

(speaking in 2000), Scotland is a 'post-nationalist community'[22.]. People from all walks of life have actually come to share this view. Thomas J. Winning (1925–2001), the former Archbishop of Glasgow and President of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland, said in October 1999, that Scottish nationalism was 'mature, respectful of democracy and international in outlook'[23]. This approach to diversity is shared by nationalist-minded Scottish voters. According to e.g. a 2005 survey, they are 'more likely than English separatists to support a civic and more inclusive view of nationalism', whose character is therefore more 'benign'[24].

As pointed out above, Welsh nationalism too, so it seems, turned a corner in the course of the 20th century. According to historian K. O. Morgan, by the 1970s, 'a more durable and defensible concept of Welshness was being evolved, one based on social and economic realities.'[25]

Plaid's manifesto for the 1997 general election boasted that 'our principles do not arise from a history of imperialist exploitation of other nations, nor from any Welsh tradition of conquest and domination of other peoples. Rather our civic nationalism is rooted in a deep respect for the rights of peoples to self-determination, in a love of our heritage and environment, and in a profound appreciation of the fragile planet on which we live. (…) Our civic nationalism welcomes all those living in Wales to join us in finding the solutions to those challenges and in restoring the equilibrium of social justice and environmental sustainability in Wales and Europe.'[26]

In the very same document, there is even a passage that reads: 'We are fortunate in Wales to be the proud inheritors of two linguistic traditions, Welsh and English, and two cultural experiences, the urban and rural. These have formed a matrix that has enriched our national life. This process continues as other communities become established in Wales and take an increasing role in our national life. They also place us at the centre of European experience, which is mostly bi- or multi-lingual.'

The creation of a Welsh Assembly in Cardiff in 1997-1999 has actually meant Plaid had to adapt to the idea of inclusiveness as they dealt with groups considered to be in urgent need of inclusion in the political process (e.g. women and members of ethnic minorities). At its annual conference in September 1998, the party even voted to append an English translation to its name, therefore becoming: 'Plaid Cymru – The party of Wales', i.e. a party standing for the rights of *all* the citizens of Wales[27].

The above clearly echoes a passage in the manifesto drafted by Welsh historian Gwyn A. Williams on behalf of the pro-devolution (see below) in Wales launched in November 1988: 'everyone (…) who commits herself or himself to Wales is a member of the Welsh people. I don't care what language they speak. I don't care what colour their faces are, I don't care where they come from.'[28]

By and large then, 'previously labelled as backward and anti-modern, stateless nations and regions came to be identified with the modern and even post-modern.'[29] As a hymn to inclusiveness

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[22] See George Reid, 'Un nouveau chant pour l'Ecosse', in Gaïd Girard & Matthew Graves, *Europe unie, le Royaume désuni ? Enjeux politiques, constitutionnels et identitaires de la dévolution* (Actes du Colloque international de Brest, 4-5 février 2000 – Triade n° 7), Brest : Université de Bretagne Occidentale (CEMA/CRBC), novembre 2000, p. 176

[23] Quoted in Gallagher, *The Illusion of Freedom*, p. 110.

[24] See Anthony Heath & Shawna Smith, *Varieties of Nationalism in Scotland and England*, Centre for Research into Elections and Social Trends (CREST.), Working Paper # 108, February 2005, pp. ii, 20 & 22. Available at the following internet address: www.crest.ox.ac.uk/papers/p108.pdf.

[25] Kenneth O. Morgan, *Rebirth of a Nation – Wales 1880-1980*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982 (1981), p. 419.

[26] See 'The principles of Plaid Cymru', in *Best for Wales – Plaid Cymru's Programme for the New Millenium*, April 1997.

[27] See Paul Chaney & Ralph Fevre, *Welsh Nationalism and the Challenge of 'Inclusive' Politics,* Cardiff: Cardiff University School of Social Sciences, September 2000, pp. 4 & 8.

[28] Quoted by Hervé Abalain, 'Vers une Assemblée galloise', in Girard & Graves, *Europe unie, le Royaume désuni ?*, p. 199

[29] Keating, 'National Movements in Comparative Perspective', in Hassan (ed.), *The Modern SNP*, pp. 206-207.

and universalism, nationalist discourse, it must be said, looks the part. But things are actually more complex as we are now going to see.

2 – Contradictions galore: cracks in the nationalist façade of universalist rigour and cultural tolerance

It would be a mistake to believe that any form of Scottish/Welsh autonomy, or, with greater reason, outright independence, would be value-neutral and give pride of place to all cultures, be they English, Muslim or otherwise. The move would be quite surprising, to say the least, since e.g. in Scotland many Nationalists have attacked the UK state simply because it has little time for traditional Scottish culture and values. In fact, devolution (i.e. the devolving of certain powers from London to an Edinburgh-based parliament and a Cardiff-based assembly, which took place over 1997-1999), i.e. a limited form of autonomy, proves the point.

Richard Rawlings may be right when he writes that the mildest form of autonomy, i.e. devolution of power, is somehow a form of compromise and is characterized by moderation, since '(it) is grounded in territoriality, but must also contend with the contemporary sense of a more cosmopolitan society, whose people have multiple identities.'[30] However, while it does in theory provide immense opportunities, 'Devolution as a policy evolved as much from a conservative rather than radical impulse – it was built on, and designed to preserve, the pre-existing landscape of public institutions in Scotland', as two commentators have explained[31].

The very logic of the *Claim of Right for Scotland* (presented to the Campaign for a Scottish Assembly on 6 July 1988), which is normally regarded as one of the most articulate pleas for Scottish devolution, pointed out (see page 14 of the document) that the (British) Union had become 'a threat to the survival of a distinctive culture in Scotland', while page 2 read: 'Scottish nationhood does not rest on constitutional history alone. It is supported by a culture reaching back over centuries'.

The Scottish Convention 1995 report too, lamented the fact that Scotland's different culture was in danger of disappearing due to 'alien policies' foisted on the region by 'hostile governments' whose majority support was located in southern England.

Interestingly, there is actually no fundamental difference between this vision and that defended in a motion adopted by the Scottish Home Rule Association on 9 September 1918, which read: 'the present centralised system of government from London is inefficient and inconsistent with national sentiment'[32].

Similarly, to Paul Chaney (Cardiff School of Social Sciences) and Charlotte Williams (Keele University), two Welsh academics who have written widely on issues of racial discrimination and equal opportunity, devolution in Wales had a 'disastrous start' precisely because of the weakness of ethnic networks and the emphasis on a Welsh sense of identity perceived by minorities as based on the notion that 'Welsh' meant white (and, sometimes, Welsh-speaking), a situation best illustrated by the lack of Black or Asian Assembly Members (AMs) in the first Assembly (1999-2003) although it has a legal duty to deliver race equality outcomes and 'ethnic' participation. Hence the conclusion reached by Chaney and Williams as late as 2003: the only way forward was a clear commitment to the building of 'an open, responsive and multicultural system of governance.'[33]

This was despite the following 1995 declaration by former Labour (now Plaid) politician Ron Davies (known as the 'architect of Welsh devolution'): 'Once the Assembly is established it must reflect the diversity and plurality of Welsh social, political and cultural life.'[34] Nevertheless, the problem, if Canadian political theorist Charles Taylor is to be believed, when one is concerned with

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[30] Richard Rawlings, *Delineating Wales – Constitutional, Legal and Administrative Aspects of National Devolution*, Cardiff: Cardiff University Press, 2003, p. 8.

[31] Neil McGarvey & Paul Cairney, *Scottish Politics – An Introduction*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p. 244.

[32] Quoted in Christian Civardi, *L'Ecosse depuis 1528*, Paris: Ophrys, 2000, p. 198.

[33] See Paul Chaney & Charlotte Williams, 'Getting Involved: Civic and Political Life in Wales', in Williams, Evans & O'Leary (eds.), *A Tolerant Nation?,* pp. 205, 211 & 215.

[34] Ron Davies, 'Shaping the vision', Red Kite, June 1995, p. 17, quoted by Charlotte Williams, 'Claiming the National: Nation, National Identity and Ethnic Minorities', in *Ibidem*, p. 221.

identity, which nationalism, then, is more or less always about, 'what is more legitimate than one's aspiration that it should never be lost?'[35]

True, up until mid-2007[36], neither the SNP nor Plaid had ever been in office. So let's now see whether or not the implementation of their (cultural) policies has made any difference?

In early 2008, the SNP government announced that Scottish history was to be restored to its position at the heart of the school curriculum, a move described as the biggest ever change to Scottish school education. Fiona Hyslop, the then Education Secretary (who, ironically, was brought up in England), maintained at the time that it would 'create a better understanding of how Scotland came to be, where it is now and the part the nation could play in shaping the future'; tellingly, though the statement would baffle many historians, she went on to say that 'Flower of Scotland[37] is a wonderful combination: a stirring anthem and a history lesson. What a marvellous achievement it would be to arouse the same passion in people about the rest of this proud nation's history.'[38]

Although some historians and opposition politicians have warned against teaching pupils 'a "tabloid" version of history that could fuel anti-English sentiment', i.e. a "narrow nationalist" view of Scots history', the SNP government has also recently announced that 'it is to offer schoolchildren subsidised trips to Bannockburn and Culloden'[39], yet another battlefield epitomising the long history of bitter antagonism between Scots and English. And this is despite the sad picture shown by the findings of the 2003 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, namely that English birth is 'a significant barrier to a successful claim to be Scottish.'[40]

In much the same way, the Scottish government's new culture minister, Kent-born Mike Russell (whose other role is that of constitution minister, with responsibility for a possible referendum on separation from the UK), insisted in a 2009 speech about a new arts body, Creative Scotland: 'Given how intertwined a nation's political and cultural identities are, I am delighted to have the chance to help advance our aspirations for constitutional change.'[41]

Rob Gibson, one of his SNP colleagues and also Member of the Scottish Parliament, speaking at a conference in Nantes in 2009 too, approached the issue from a different angle but basically said the same thing: 'Scottish identity is clear. The idea of Scotland as a historic nation has meant that whilst for nearly 300 years Scotland did not have a Parliament, it retained a civil society which included control of local government, the Church, the law, and it was the way in which education and this civil society perpetuated the nation that allowed the twentieth century flowering of a national movement.'[42]

This, of course, is nothing new. In the run-up to the 1997 general election, an SNP policy document stated in regard to Scottish culture: 'An independent nation will wish its people to be aware of this heritage, and the curriculum at all levels of education will make available knowledge and experience of our history, languages, literature, arts, music and dance.'[43] Prof. M. Keating therefore

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[35] Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992, p. 40, quoted by Walter Benn Michaels, *The Trouble with Diversity – How We Learned to Love Identity and Ignore Inequality*, New York: Metropolitan Books / Henry Holt & Co., 2006, p. 156.

[36] See note 8 above.

[37] i.e. Scotland's national anthem. It is in fact a mid-1960s song by Roy Williamson, of the folk group The Corries; it is about 'hill and glen' and 'autumn leaves', and, more generally, the victory of the Scots, led by Robert the Bruce, over England's Edward II at the battle of Bannockburn in 1314.

[38] See Fiona MacLeod, 'Pledge to reclaim Scottish history for our children' – *The Scotsman*, 21 January 2008.

[39] See Tom Peterkin, 'Field trips spark new battle of Bannockburn' – *The Scotsman*, 10 September 2009.

[40] Quoted in Gallagher, *The Illusion of Freedom*, p. 206.

[41] Quoted by Tim Cornwell & Hamish Macdonell, 'Culture minister comes under fire for using arts as a nationalist stage' – *The Scotsman*, 19 February 2009.

[42] Rob Gibson, 'The Scottish Political Scene Today', in Sellin, Thiec & Carboni (eds.), *Ecosse : l'identité nationale en question*, p. 9.

[43] See Malcolm L. MacKenzie, 'The Politics of Scottish Education', in Tom G. K. Bryce & Walter M. Humes (eds.), *Scottish Education*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000 (1999), p. 86.

has a point when he writes: 'Nationalists have sought to accentuate the Scottish but have been curiously uninterested in nation-building, tending to take the nation for granted.'[44]

The SNP have then apparently (and conveniently, it seems) forgotten that history is not just about 'national heritage' (and its perpetuation); indeed, history is, in the words of Columbia University-based British historian S. Schama, 'a bone of contention' (the Greek word *historia* used from the very beginning by Herodotus meaning 'inquiry'), which ultimately suggests that 'the arguments it generates resist national self-congratulation.'[45] In other words, history is a construct (i.e. a form of diegesis, or narration), not the reproduction of a given order (i.e. a form of mimesis)[46]. History cannot therefore be objective in the same way as science[47].

The most obvious reason why history matters so much to the SNP is of course far from circumstantial: 'As histories become sedimented—part of the taken-for-granted past—so do they serve as implicit guarantees of community solidarity.'[48] In other words, 'identities rely on memory and on the powerful collective practices of political work of remembrance—monuments, memorial days, museums etc.—that aim at creating commonalities across time and thus collective identities.'[49] Which suggests, at the very least, that the so-called national community is, originally and basically, not so united after all. In a democratic society indeed, with people free to choose who to interact with, the process of building the said community can only be an unfolding and incomplete one[50]. At the end of the day, therefore, 'by elevating norms and canons above life itself, the official culture increasingly consists of 'dead, finished' elements.'[51]

Admittedly, this is not the kind of problem that many in Scottish society lose sleep over. As a French sociologist has shown, the local authorities in e.g. the Western Isles (= the Outer Hebrides), a nationalist stronghold, have over the last few decades constructed a new regional identity to match and legitimatise the extension of their political power from the local (Stornoway – Isle of Lewis) to the regional (the Western Isles Council); this collective identity however is a top-down affair; it is based on bilingual toponymy, celebrates local heroes and history, while ethnic minorities and women are simply nowhere to be seen[52].

Residents on Tiree, the most westerly island of the Inner Hebrides, have recently launched a protest against an offshore windfarm planned for the area, not because they see it as a low priority, but because they think an influx of workers could spoil their way of life. A Tiree resident, originally from Glasgow, has even said: 'We have had families who have moved here for one or two years but have now left – the lifestyle is wonderful for us, but is definitely not for everyone.'[53] Even the most cursory of glances at the posts by quite a few of the SNP-supporting readers on the Internet site of e.g. *The Scotsman*, the Scottish daily, tell very much the same story of a black-and-white vision of society and history.

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[44] Michael Keating, *The Independence of Scotland – Self-government and the Shifting Politics of Union*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 175.

[45] Simon Schama, 'My vision for history in schools' – *The Guardian*, 9 November 2010.

[46] See Paul Veyne, *Comment on écrit l'histoire*, Paris: Eds. du Seuil, 1996 (1971), p. 15.

[47] See *Ibidem*, p. 211.

[48] Kenneth J. Gergen, 'Narrative, Moral Identity, and Historical Consciousness – A Social Constructionist Account', in Jürgen Straub (ed.), *Narrative, Identity, and Historical Consciousness*, New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006 (2005), p. 116.

[49] Heidrun Friese, 'Introduction', in Heidrun Friese (ed.), *Identities – Time, Difference, and Boundaries*, New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2002, p. 7.

[50] See Alan Swingewood, *Cultural Theory and the Problem of Modernity*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1998, pp. 113 ff.

[51] *Ibidem*, p. 126.

[52] See Nathalie Coffre-Baneux, *Le Partage du pouvoir dans les Hébrides écossaises – Pasteurs, élus et managers*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001, pp. 19-20 & 258-259.

[53] See Jane Bradley, 'Tiree will resist windfarm blow-ins' – *The Scotsman*, 12 November 2010.

Nevertheless, this is by no means an attitude shared by the rest of the population. Here are high-profile illustrations of this[54]. In mid-2009, a Scottish businessman, Jim Aitken, who captained the Scottish rugby team to the 1984 Grand Slam (the first in 59 years), donated £100,000 to the Scottish Conservatives, 'the second largest single donation ever given to the party in Scotland', and thereby pledged his support to David Cameron. However, a month earlier, he had 'courted controversy by insisting that the new coach of the national rugby team must be a Scot and that the S(cottish) R(ugby) U(nion) should turn down the application of a former England internationalist [Andy Robinson, who, ironically, was eventually selected].'[55]

Marrying these apparently antithetical positions is far from extraordinary. In 2007, Archie Stirling, a millionaire Scottish landowner, who thinks 'Scottish culture is distinct from English culture', and believes in raising the quality of the Holyrood parliament, nevertheless set up a new political party ('Scottish Voice') to 'recognise Scotland's nationhood, commitment to the Union, and innate potential of the Scottish people.'[56]

Scottish society, more generally, shows how diverse and/or divided a given group of people sharing the same territory can be. While in the 1999, 2003 and 2007 regional elections, some 52 to 56% voted on the basis of what was going on in Scotland at the time, in the 2001 and 2005 general elections on the contrary, over two-fifths of the same electorate (a clear relative majority) did vote on the basis of what was going on in Britain as a whole.

Quite a few commentators have actually talked about 'the political non-alignment of Scottish identity', by which they mean for instance that a third of those who vote for the Labour party (a unionist party) in Scotland support independence, whilst half of SNP voters do not[57]. In 2001, 51% and 65% respectively of those who said they were 'Scottish only' or 'more Scottish than British' supported neither independence nor the SNP[58]. According to the 2003 Scottish Social Attitudes Survey, a surprising 10% of those who said their national identity was 'British not Scottish' supported independence while only 47% of those who felt 'Scottish not British' did the same[59]. According to a more recent survey, 25.1% of those with a 'Scottish but not British' identity expressed some pride ('very proud' or 'simply proud') in the Union Jack whilst only 57.1% of those with a 'British only' identity did so[60]. Finally, according to yet another survey of 1,001 respondents conducted by telephone between 18th November and 21st November 2010, 49% of SNP voters only, compared to 14% of Labour voters, supported independence[61].

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[54] The importance of these individual cases should be underestimated. As Paul Ward has explained (see 'Welsh and Working Class (and British too): The case of Huw T. Edwards', in *North American Journal of Welsh Studies*, Vol. 6, 2 (Summer 2006), pp. 16, 17 & 18), 'biography is an essential form of research in the understanding of national identities and their complex interrelationship with other social identities, particularly as represented within politics.' Indeed, it 'allows for detailed discussion of human agency in the development of national identities' as 'nations have to be imagined by individuals.' Biography, then, 'encourages the consideration of national identity as an act of negotiation between the individual and the collective.'

[55] See Tom Peterkin, 'Rugby star's £100k pledge to Tories' – *The Scotsman*, 3 May 2009.

[56] See Andrew Pierce, 'SAS clan calls for new fight to save the Union' – *The Telegraph*, 3 January 2007.

[57] See Christopher G. A. Bryant, *The Nations of Britain*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 96.

[58] See Sharon Millar, 'Marketing Identities in Devolved Regions: The Role of Global Corporate Culture in Scotland and Wallonia', in John Wilson & Karyn Stapleton (eds.), *Devolution and Identity*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006, p. 169.

[59] See Charlie Jeffery, 'Devolution, public attitudes and social citizenship', in Scott L. Greer (ed.), *Devolution and Social Citizenship in the UK*, Bristol: The Policy Press, 2009, p. 88 (table 5.10).

[60] See Anthony Heath, Catherine Rothon & Robert Andersen, 'Who Feels British' – Sociology Working Paper (# 2005-05), Oxford: University of Oxford (Dept. of Sociology), 2005, pp. 18-19 (table 7). Available at: www.sociology.ox.ac.uk/documents/working-papers/2005/2005-05.pdf

[61] See 'Scots want more power but not independence' (Scottish Public Opinion Monitor, 30 November 2010), available at the following internet address: www.ipsos-mori.com/ researchpublications/researcharchive/poll.aspx?oItemId=2706.

By ascribing the same identity to everyone then, 'one equates what is not equivalent, subsumes the other under the same', which unavoidably leads to ethnographical naturalisation[62]. Crucially, this proves the point made by our distinguished UNSA colleague, Professor Joël Candau, an anthropologist, namely that one should 'carefully' distinguish between *saying* that a collective memory does exist and the *actual* existence of that memory. The public representation of memory is indeed transformed into mental representation by those it targets, a mental state that like all mental states is by definition inaccessible[63].

Indeed, there is no escaping the fact that, as Alan Swingewood has written, 'a major problem for the sociology of culture lies in theorising the precise relations between different social groups, or fractions of groups, and the production and reproduction of culture. All societies are structured in hierarchical relations and unequal access to different forms of culture and power.'[64] From Durkheim to the Frankfurt School, from Lyotard to Baudrillard, there has been little theoretical room for 'a reflexive social self whose social and cultural identity arises out of complex interactions with others.'[65] But, as Mikhail Bakhtin, E. Levinas, F. Jacques and others have shown, without the 'Other', i.e. without dialogue (which is when power does not stem from one source only, when recognition works both ways: I recognise others as individuals in their own right and they recognise me as an individual in my own right), I would not be what I am, which suggests a degree at least of fluidity in social relations[66].

The same obviously applies to Wales. On the one hand, one cannot jump to conclusions regarding the nature and implications of national identity there. An opinion poll carried out e.g. in November of 2010 for the *Western Mail*, the Welsh daily, found that whilst 75% of Welsh speakers intended to vote Yes in the March 2011 referendum (on extending the powers – linguistic among others – of the Cardiff Assembly), interestingly, as many as 16% said they planned to vote No (the rest were undecided)[67].

On the other hand, defence of the Welsh nation can be as illiberal as in Scotland. In August 2009, over 400 people 'signed a petition on the Welsh National Assembly's website calling on the Assembly to formally withdraw from what is known as the West Cheshire/North-East Wales sub-regional strategy', a move to strengthen cross-border links between these two regions on either side of the Anglo-Welsh border. It was denounced 'as a Trojan horse that would dilute Welsh identity', create 'artificial links', 'and turn Wrexham' and 'part of Denbighshire into a "colonised plantation" for North-West England'[68].

More generally, for the last thirty years or so at least, the English/Welsh divide has actually come to be viewed as 'racialised'; for cultural organisations such as Cymdeithas Yr Iaith Gymraeg (whose *raison d'être* is to protect linguistic enclaves against monoglot English-speaking incomers), the idea of the 'Welsh community' has long been constructed as a fixed entity, very much along an 'us and them' line, 'them' being the English, an entity seen as immutable too, whatever the very real diversity on the ground.

It is likely, in fact, that, in spite of the much-publicised efforts made by a few modernisers within Plaid to reconcile themselves to the concept of inclusiveness, the traditional core supporters remain to be convinced. In short, few people are thinking in terms of a Wales consisting of many

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[62] See Jürgen Straub, 'Personal and Collective Identity – A Conceptual Analysis', in Friese (ed.), *Identities*, p. 64.

[63] See Joël Candau, *Mémoire et identité*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1998, pp. 29 & 31-32.

[64] Swingewood, *Cultural Theory*, p. 71.

[65] See *Ibidem*, pp. 108-112 (p. 109 for the quote) & 166-173.

[66] On the question of originary dialogism and 'controlled dissonance', see e.g. Charlie Galibert, *L'anthropologie à l'épreuve de la mondialisation*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 2006, pp. 70-78, 88-90, 93-95, 119, 120, 122-126 & 228-229.

[67] See Martin Shipton, 'No campaign supporters fear 'backlash' if they speak out in Welsh' – *The Western Mail*, 18 December 2010. Concerning the political non-alignment of Welsh identity, see e.g. Martin Shipton, 'Majority think Wales will never be independent' – The Western Mail, 2 April 2011.

[68] See Martin Shipton, 'Group fears English 'land grab' for part of Wales' – *The Western Mail*, 20 August 2009.

Wales, of many identities based on rival discourses, let alone in terms of the political system this could (should?) promote[69].

According to research done in 2010 by two Bangor University academics, 50% of parents who choose Welsh-medium education for their children in the Rhymney Valley, one of the South Wales valleys[70], do so for cultural reasons; indeed, they regard Welsh as the essence of being Welsh. In fact, the study replicated a 1970s one which had, on the contrary, found that Welsh-medium education was looked upon favourably primarily for economic reasons[71].

Some high-profile Welsh Nationalists, too, as they equate people (plural) with nation, can be very smug about their actual plans for the future. As Cynog Dafis e.g. (a Plaid MP from 1992 until 2000, and an AM between 1999 and 2003) has explained, an autonomous Wales should be based on 'an independent education system, with a truly national curriculum at its heart and the opportunity for a radically different Welsh approach; (…) a truly national broadcasting system; (...) a networking of Welsh institutions to forge the territorial unity of Wales'[72].

Many dismiss the whole of the foregoing criticisms as being neither here nor there since nationalism has, they insist, become a necessity for purely economic reasons. The almost complete control of the proceeds of Scottish oil by e.g. the British Exchequer must therefore be ended as soon as possible. The problem with this line of argument is that one cannot justify it politically; equal citizenship indeed is meaningless if it does not include economic solidarity, which is never dependent upon who you are (southerner/northerner, man/woman, black/white, and so on), but exclusively upon an abstract principle (however vulnerable) that lies at the heart of the democratic process. Put differently, one may say that one can only refuse to share the oil money if it is clear from the start that the Scots and the English/Welsh/Northern Irish are different in essence, and cannot therefore share the same rights because of that essence. Which brings us back to square one.

Journalist Kenny Farquharson, the deputy editor of the *Scotland on Sunday* newspaper, has recently told a very interesting story with relation to that particular question. When he was a young reporter, he met Jim Sillars, a socialist and, at the time deputy leader of the SNP, and asked him this: 'You're a socialist, Jim, I said, and yet you'd rather Scotland's oil benefited Scots alone rather than the whole of the UK. What about working-class families in Wallsend or Wandsworth? Don't they deserve the benefits, too? Why does nationality trump solidarity in your politics? There was no shortage of need in the world, (J. Sillars) said, and all of it needed addressed. All we could do in the meantime was do right by our own country, and that country was Scotland.'[73]

Prof. M. Keating is then quite right (again) when he uses the phrase 'vague concept' when dealing with the 'social union' between Scotland and the rest of the UK Scottish Nationalists would advocate, should their country become independent[74]. More importantly, what is lost sight of in nationalist rhetoric is the fact social democracy expresses social need as an absolute, i.e. as something that is not constrained by administrative boundaries or otherwise.

All these problems, however, are nothing but the banal expression of misconceptions that have to do with the notion of culture, as we have just seen, but also with those, in particular, of state and democracy. The nationalist rhetoric about the 'Other' does obscure many of these vital questions, which we now turn to.

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[69] See Charlotte Williams, 'Claiming the National: Nation, National Identity and Ethnic Minorities', in Williams, Evans & O'Leary (eds.), *A Tolerant Nation?,* pp. 222-231.

[70] Encompassing the villages of Abertysswg, Fochriw, Pontlottyn Tirphil, New Tredegar, Aber Bargoed, Bargoed and the towns of Rhymney and Caerphilly.

[71] See Martin Shipton, 'The Welsh reasons for ensuring children get Welsh education' – *The Western Mail*, 2 December 2010.

[72] Quoted in Martin Shipton, 'Avoid independence: Cynog' – *The Western Mail*, 23 December, 2003.

[73] See Kenny Farquharson, 'You've misjudged us, Mr Salmond' – *Scotland on Sunday*, 16 May 2010.

[74] See Keating, *The Independence of Scotland*, p. 89.

3 – A Lesson for political science

If anything, the above does give the lie to the idea that there is such a thing as a more inclusive (Scottish and Welsh) civic nationalism.[75]

There is actually a major problem with the idea that the notion is an unqualified blessing. Bernard Yack, a Canada-born American political theorist, who is Professor of Democracy and Public Policy at Brandeis University, has written: 'The idea that there are two forms of nationalism, a good 'civic' kind and a bad 'ethnic' kind, is increasingly accepted by political commentators and policy makers', e.g. Michael Ignatieff, the Canadian writer, who defines a civic nation as 'a community of equal, rights-bearing citizens, united in patriotic attachment to a shared set of political practices and values', which turns 'national belonging into a form of rational attachment', a choice rather than a legacy that we receive from our ancestors. But in debunking the ethnic myth, Ignatieff and the others, B. Yack has pointed out, exaggerate our independence from the contingencies of birth and cultural heritage.

In fact, as B. Yack goes on to explain, 'each national identity comes loaded with inherited cultural baggage derived from their peculiar histories. (…) The myth of civic nationalism thus exaggerates the value as well as the extent of the form of community that it recommends.'[76]

This is hardly surprising: for an exclusively civic nationalism to exist anywhere, 'the people' (singular) would have to be the whole of the population, which is the case in the average nation state, but only from a purely constitutional point of view (when one is recognised as a full-fledged citizen, i.e. when one has the same duties and rights as any other national). Otherwise, the notion of a homogeneous people simply ignores the existence of minority groups (however large), i.e. those who do not share the same culture or history or otherwise as the majority, and therefore leads to exclusion. At the end of the day then, civic nationalism is probably the best recipe to create favourable conditions for assimilation[77].

As Arend Lijphart, another American scholar, has written, 'defining democracy as "government by and for the people" raises a fundamental question: who will do the governing and to whose interests should the government be responsive when the people are in disagreement and have divergent preferences?' One can either go for the majoritarian model or for an alternative answer, namely: as many people as possible (to maximize the size of the majority)[78]. A. Lijphart is therefore right when he insists that '*Democracy* is a concept that virtually defies definition.'[79]

The word has at least two meanings: on the one hand, it means anybody affected by a decision should be given the chance to participate in making that decision; on the other hand, it means that the will of the majority will prevail, which does violate the first rule as it excludes the minority from decision-making for an extended period. In deeply divided countries, this is simply shocking because it is destructive of any prospect of building a nation in which different groups can live together in relative harmony[80].

But the logical and crucial upshot of it all is that, as John Hume (co-founder in 1970 of the non-sectarian Social Democratic and Labour Party [SDLP] in Ulster, and Nobel Prize for peace in 1998)

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[75] See e.g. Heath & Smith, *Varieties of Nationalism*, pp. 16-17.

[76] See Bernard Yack, 'The myth of civic nationalism' – *The National Post*, 1 July 2000.

[77] See Michel Seymour, with Jocelyne Couture & Kai Nielsen, 'Introduction: Questioning the Ethnic/Civic Dichotomy', in Jocelyne Couture, Kai Nielsen & Michel Seymour (eds.), *Rethinking Nationalism*, Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2000 (1998 ; 1996 – The Canadian Journal of Philosophy / Supplementary Vol. XXII), pp. 1-10 (p. 7 in particular).

[78] Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy – Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*, Yale University Press: New Haven & London, 1999, pp. 1-2 (p. 1 for the quote).

[79] Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies – A Comparative Exploration*, Yale University Press: New Haven & London, 1977, p. 4.

[80] Arend Lijphart, *Thinking about Democracy – Power Sharing and Majority Rule in Theory and Practice*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2008, p. 122.

has explained, it is not the territory/the soil that has got rights, but all of its inhabitants[81]. This is precisely the approach that has finally prevailed in Northern Ireland, with the whole basis of the settlement known as the 'Good Friday Agreement' being about separating human rights from national identities[82], which amounts to recognizing multiple loyalties, i.e. (potentially) 100% of the population.

To come back to Wales and Scotland, I would suggest that the Welsh and Scottish Nationalists' discourse on civic nationalism conceals the fact that, in a divided society, where nationalism is strong[83], but by no means the only show in town, it could never, however strong it could become, be a public value, i.e. lead to consensus.

The following by Plaid's Cynog Dafis (see above) epitomises the problem. He insists upon equal partnership or equality between England and Wales *as nations*, e.g. when he says that 'Wales, as a nation, has the right to choose its own constitutional destiny', as if Wales were not a society (which suggests at the very least a measure of diversity), but merely a monolith. It is of course the only way the collective he firmly believes in could be given pride of place. But, though he remains convinced this can help build 'the nation to be inclusive, confident and resilient', it is unlikely to happen; looking, as he does, upon Wales as a homogeneous entity – which, again, it cannot be, unless one believes in the inevitable reproduction of history in the present – will probably, as we have seen, add to problems[84]. What is indeed the point of equality between territories (whatever the phrase may mean) when at least part of the population cannot feel represented because it simply cannot be?

In other words, as nationality is considered to be *the* form of identification and allegiance, superior to all others, the principle of equal respect for persons is violated[85]. In short, the communal identity is a form of discrimination and, consequently, nothing less than – to paraphrase Tzvetan Todorov – 'the comprehension-that-kills'[86].

Cynog Dafis's version of Wales would lack, in the words of A. Gamble and T. Wright, the 'very capaciousness' of Britishness[87]. Indeed, as it exists, British national identity, despite all its limits (Britishness is to no small extent tied to English culture, society and politics[88], and it comes with rights and duties attached), is not, in the words of Christopher G. A. Bryant, 'an overarching, [nor] an exclusive, one'[89]; this has to do with how it came into existence (through a Treaty of Union between England and Scotland). Therefore, 'it can accommodate in principle all the versions of Scotland, Wales, and England (…), except [precisely] Little Scotland and Little England (…).'[90]

Conversely, the communal identities extolled by peripheral Nationalists in Britain would indeed be imposed from above, thereby precluding more plural definitions by many of the very members

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[81] See John Hume, 'La différence, essence de l'humanité', in Ronan Le Coadic (ed.), *Identités et démocratie – Diversité culturelle et mondialisation : repenser la démocratie*, Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2003, p. 16.

[82] See Keating, *The Independence of Scotland*, 2009, p. 163. I am aware of course that, practically, things are probably more complex; see e.g. Zouhaïr Abassi, 'L'Accord du Vendredi saint de 1998 et l'approche consociationnelle', in <u>Etudes Irlandaises</u>, Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, automne-hiver 2011, n°36.2, pp. 73-84.

[83] This is especially true of Scottish society where some 30% to 35% of the population on average support separatism. In Wales, the figure is much lower (between 10% and 15%).

[84] Martin Shipton, 'Plaid man wants party to stop talking about breaking up Britain' – *The Western Mail*, 15 September 2010.

[85] See Allen Buchanan, 'What's So Special About Nations', in *Couture*, Nielsen & Seymour (eds.), Rethinking Nationalism, pp. 294-295.

[86] See *La conquête de l'Amérique (la question de l'autre)*, Paris: Eds. du Seuil, 1982, p. 163.

[87] Andrew Gamble & Tony Wright, 'Introduction: The Britishness Question', in Andrew Gamble & Tony Wright (eds.), *Britishness – Perspectives on the Britishness Question,* Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, in association with The Political Quarterly Publishing Company Ltd., 2009, p. 7.

[88] As pointed out by Murray Pittock in *The Road to Independence? Scotland Since the Sixties*, London: Reaktion Books, 2008, p. 182.

[89] Bryant, *The Nations of Britain,* p. 57.

[90] *Ibidem*, p. 287.

(newcomers and old-stock alike) of those communities[91]. This imaginary unity would make the people (singular) very real, but it would go *against* other – far more open – possible forms of unity[92].

Of course, 'a nationalist movement is one that seeks political autonomy on behalf of what it claims to be a nation [it has already answered the question: 'Who are we as a community?']. But, precisely, it is always a claim and nearly always contested', for, as we have seen, it is based on 'historic existence and present will'[93], both of which are open to interpretation.

The foregoing points are also completely missed by some prominent historians (e.g. Scottish historian Michael Fry), when, harping on the same old string, they solemnly declare that independence for Scotland should happen so England and Scotland could be equal at last[94].

Some scholars call this situation a form of 'racism without races', i.e. a discourse that, on the surface, does not sound racist at all as it does not claim one group is superior to another, but that nevertheless postulates, in the name of the sacrosanct character of traditions, specific ways of life and so on, that boundaries between groups should either be erected or never come down[95].

Gregor Gall, a Research Professor of Industrial Relations and a regular contributor to the *Morning Star* and the *Guardian*, has put it in a nutshell: 'Internationalism should, however, be understood as existing in the relationships *between* nations, in a social world where nationalities are distinguished amongst and between themselves in order to reflect their cultures and identities; these remain vital and thriving sub-global units of social organisation. The modern phenomenon of nations is but the highest level and most powerful form of identity and cleavage we have yet experienced.'[96]

The reader should know by now why this line of argument can only leave me totally unimpressed; it does smack of cultural relativism and deconstructionism, and suggests, erroneously, I think, that the world is neatly divided into homogeneous entities while this is in fact the result of nationalist policies implemented everywhere over the modern period. Worse still, G. Gall seems to fail to realize that his own vision is in itself an exercise (however modest) in political power; indeed, he starts from the notion that his vision is non-negotiable[97].

Paradoxically, quite a few on the English right are eager to plow that very furrow. To Minette Marrin e.g., the *Sunday Times* columnist and fiction writer, separation from Scotland has become necessary because – as demonstrated, she insists, by the 2010 general election – England, where a majority voted for the Conservative party, cannot have a proper Tory government since Scotland returned no fewer than 41 Labour MPs; this, according to M. Marrin, fits into a wider pattern: the UK is not united any longer as e.g. regional policies have become different on account of devolution, and as there is no love lost between many Scots and many English people[98]. In other words, politics should be first and foremost about majority rule, i.e. about superimposing the territory upon the population (a view shared by many on the *Sunday Times*[99] and on the *Telegraph*, e.g. Simon Heffer, who has presented his views of the question in his *Nor Shall My Sword – The Reinvention of England,* London: Phœnix, 2000 [1999]).

It goes without saying that many Welsh and Scottish Nationalists laugh off the comparison. Unlike these Tory-supporting southerners, *they* are republicans: typical examples include Ron

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[91] See Etienne Balibar, 'Y a-t-il un "néo-racisme"?', in Etienne Balibar & Immanuel Wallerstein, Race, nation, classe – Les identités ambiguës, Paris: La Découverte, 1997 (1988), p. 28.

[92] See Etienne Balibar, 'Racisme et nationalisme', in *Ibidem*, p. 71.

[93] Keating, 'National Movements in Comparative Perspective', in Hassan (ed.), *The Modern SNP*, p. 205.

[94] For M. Fry's position, see 'Why Should We Care about Scottish Independence?' – Dinner with Portillo, BBC 4, 14 September 2009.

[95] See Balibar, 'Y a-t-il un "néo-racisme"?', in Balibar & Wallerstein, *Race, nation, classe*, p. 33.

[96] Gregor Gall, 'In search of a Scottish outside left', in Mark Perryman (ed.), *Breaking up Britain: Four nations after a Union*, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 2009, p. 159.

[97] See e.g. Amy Gutmann, 'Introduction', in Charles Taylor, *Multiculturalisme – Différence et démocratie* (trans. Denis-Armand Canal), Paris: Aubier, 1994 (1992), pp. 34-35.

[98] See Minette Marrin, 'Cut Scotland loose – then we'll have a fair voting system' – *The Sunday Times*, 9 May 2010, p. 24.

[99] See e.g. Simon Jenkins, 'We'd be a more united kingdom with an independent Scotland' – *The Sunday Times*, 16 March 2010.

Davies[100] (see above), Plaid AMs Leanne Wood[101], Bethan Jenkins[102] and Nerys Evans[103], or more seasoned SNP MSPs, such as Sandra White[104], Linda Fabiani[105], Christine Grahame[106], Roseanna Cunningham[107] and Rob Gibson (see above)[108], not to mention many writers and commentators, e.g. Angus Calder, author of *Revolving Culture: Notes from the Scottish Republic* (London: Tauris, 1994). However that may be, a republican sort of democracy, it seems, is part of the problem, not the answer.

As French political philosopher Alain Renaud has explained, the problem is that by building exclusively from a community of values and traditions irreducible to the expression of individual freedoms (a reality encapsulated by the oft-quoted phrase 'We the people' [singular], i.e. the so-called 'general will'), republicanism is – structurally speaking – strikingly close to communitarianism; in other words, a specific conception of the good life is given pride of place, with the collective – the whole – prioritised at the expense of the individual or sub-groups – the parts. In such a situation, the state can hardly be called neutral; it separates human beings by defining what is alien (and therefore cannot be equal) and what is not[109].

As a matter of fact, a major source of (republican) inspiration to many in the nationalist movement has been Welsh thinker and novelist Raymond Williams (1921-1988)[110], one of the proponents of, precisely, culture as a whole way of life, as the product of a whole people, offering individual meanings[111]. The individual, in typical republican style, is subsumed by the collective. As R. Williams himself has said: 'We get past (a pseudo-historical or romantic Welshness) by looking and working for unity in the definition and the development of a modern Wales, in which the really powerful impulses – to discover an effective modern community and to take control of our own energies and resources – can be practically worked through.'[112]

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[100] Though the statement was eventually edited out of a Welsh television programme broadcast by the BBC, R. Davies declared to BBC Wales that 'I am a republican'. See David Wastell & Julie Kirkbride, 'I'm a republican, says rebel shadow minister' – *The Sunday Telegraph*, 3 March 1996.

[101] See e.g. Leanne Wood, 'Greening the Welsh Dragon', in Perryman (ed.), *Breaking up Britain*, p. 87. A socialist and a republican, the 39-year-old has represented the South Wales Central Region since 2003.

[102] She is Plaid's Child Poverty and Culture spokesperson; she was the youngest AM when she was elected at the age of 25 in May 2007 to represent the South Wales West Region.

[103] The 30-year-old is republican, as she herself explained during a late 2010 Question Time programme in Swansea (BBC1 Wales – 18 November 2010); she was elected as Plaid's AM for Mid and West Wales in May 2007, and has been recognised by the US State Department as a young European leader on the rise (see David Williamson, 'Devolution must work for Wales, says AM' – The Western Mail, 29 December 2010).

[104] She represents Glasgow in the Scottish Parliament. She has campaigned extensively for, among other things, racial equality, human rights and civil liberties.

[105] She was Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Culture, and Minister for Gaelic in the Scottish Government from mid-2007 to early 2009.

[106] She represents the South of Scotland region in the Scottish Parliament. In July 2009, she refused to attend the royal speech to mark the tenth anniversary of Scottish devolution.

[107] She is Minister for the environment in the Scottish Government.

[108] On this question, see e.g. Gallagher, *The Illusion of Freedom*, pp. 186-187.

[109] See Alain Renaut, *Qu'est-ce qu'un peuple libre ? Libéralisme ou républicanisme*, Paris: Bernard Grasset, 2005, pp. 22, 47 & 245. See also Sophie Wahnich's seminal account of the making of the French Republic: *L'impossible citoyen – L'étranger dans le discours de la Révolution française*, Paris: Albin Michel, 2010 (1997), 406 pages.

[110] He taught at Stanford and Cambridge universities; he specialised in cultural studies. Part of his work was greatly influenced by the ideas of Antonio Gramsci.

[111] See John K. Walton, 'New Directions in British Historiography: the Emergence of Cultural History?', in Fabrice Bensimon (ed.) *L'Histoire sociale en mutation*, Revue Française de Civilisation Britannique, CRECIB., vol. XIV, n° 4, Spring 2008, pp. 35-36.

[112] Raymond Williams, 'Are We Becoming More Divided?' (1975-1978?), in Daniel Williams, *Who Speaks for Wales? Nation, Culture, Identity – Raymond Williams*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003, p. 189.

In theory, the republican nation is of course an open society consisting of anonymous and abstract individuals united by a contract. Anyone accepting its principles is therefore admitted. However, in real life, an actual nation always grows out of history, tradition, and so on, so much so that the national bond is always more complex than republicans suggest (see above). This is inevitably a problem when the republican contract actually rests, as we have just seen, upon the 'general will'; '(the nation state) must somehow manage to perpetuate the general will, and somehow manage to integrate all its members into the nation and awaken in them the social dispositions required by mutual recognition and solidarity.' The general will shall remain uncertain unless this is addressed. Which ultimately explains why – e.g. in a country like France – so much emphasis has been laid on frames of reference ('our ancestors the Gauls'), emotions ('Joan of Ark'), feelings of interconnectedness (with all of these made even more real through national education), and linguistic uniformity. This results in the individualistic foundations of the republican contract being converted into collectivism: the individuals are absorbed by the 'people', the 'demos' by the 'ethnos'. Originally, the ambition is to transcend ethnicity, but eventually, it is an ethnic group that gets created[113]. Hence French philosopher Regis Debray's (an arch-republican himself) statement: 'Like a library a republic comprises more dead people than living ones'[114].

In typical republican style, Scottish First Minister Alex Salmond has recently insisted: '(the 2011 Scottish election) will be a decision on whether we go forward or backwards as a nation, a decision on what kind of vision and leadership we need – and ultimately a decision on what kind of country and *a people* we aspire to be.'[115] A few days later, right from the outset of a contribution to the *Scotsman*, about his vision for Scotland, and just before referring to Robert Burns (the famous 18th-century poet, known as 'Scotland's favourite son'), he quoted from the Declaration of Arbroath (a declaration of Scottish independence made in 1320), insisting that its message was about freedom and that 'No words ring down the ages with greater force', and that they 'have inspired generations of Scots'[116].

Last but not least, as minorities, whose existence is anathema to the republican state (which, again, sees difference in terms of inequality), either thrive despite attempts at uniformity or raise their heads one more time before finally going under, this form of banal nationalism does generate counter-nationalisms. As F. de Wachter has pointed out: '(…) a minority derives its rights, not from that which is unique, however important that might be, but from an abstract principle which negates each particularity and is valid for all. This is a frustrating situation. It implies that a minority, even in full possession of its rights, will not be fully appreciated for its uniqueness. From its point of view it is being recognized for the wrong reason.'[117]

It seems highly likely that republicanism lacks some of the counterforces that can help safeguard all individual and communal freedoms, through respect for particular forms of attachment and belongings, through, crucially, renouncing 'the ambition toward a fused unity of the will'. Sovereign power can therefore no longer be condensed in the 'people' 'but in the *constitution*, understood as the articulation of groups and interests, and in the *togetherness* of individuals – not just abstract individuals, but individuals marked by deep ties.'[118]

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[113] See André Van de Putte, 'Democracy and nationalism', in *Couture*, Nielsen & Seymour (eds.), Rethinking Nationalism, pp. 168-179 (p. 171 for the quote). On this question, see also Tzvetan Todorov's excellent book: *Le Jardin imparfait – La pensée humaniste en France*, Paris: Grasset, 1998, 350 pages.

[114] Régis Debray, 'Etes-vous démocrate ou républicain ?' – *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 30 November 1989.

[115] Alex Salmond, 'A new social contract for a better Scotland' – *Scotland on Sunday*, 9 January 2011 (my emphasis). Premium Article !

[116] Alex Salmond, 'My message to Scotland' – *The Scotsman*, Premium Article !

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[117] Frans De Wachter, 'In Search of a Post-National Identity: Who Are My People?', in *Couture*, Nielsen & Seymour (eds.), Rethinking Nationalism, p. 214.

[118] See Van de Putte, 'Democracy and nationalism', in *Ibidem*, pp. 193-195 (p. 193 for the quotes).

The (typically republican) notion of the sovereignty of the people is one, however, that Nationalists like to emphasise, as when George Reid (see above) said: 'There is the English absurdity that sovereignty lies with the Crown in Parliament; it's a constitutional fiction made up in the 1680s. But there's the Scottish definition of sovereignty going back six hundred years and more, determined by our own supreme court, that sovereignty lies only with the people.'[119]

Most interestingly, but quite logically, this brings us back to the question of civic nationalism, that, in my opinion, is nothing but the other side of the republican coin, as illustrated e.g. by Scottish academic Tom Nairn, yet another arch-republican, when he explained in *Janus Revisited* (1998) that Scottish nationalism was using 'nation' – whose meaning however is far from straightforward as we have seen – as a frame for civil society[120]. He has also recently written that ''Restoration' of independence isn't a return to the past, but a psychological and emotional use of that past to generate 'self-confidence' in the present, for the sake of the future.'[121] In the very same book, Harry Reid, a Scottish journalist and writer, put it all in a nutshell when he rejected ethnocentricity and yet wrote: '(…) at its best nationalism celebrates the linking of state to nation, and vice versa.'[122] But the best illustration of the foregoing I found in the same book again under Professor Neil Kay's (a distinguished economist) pen when he spoke 'about the role of shared or distinctive legal, political, historical, cultural institutions in creating sensible principles for setting the boundaries of nations, always subject to the popular will'[123].

However, not everyone, it seems, feels convinced that state and nation should always be perfectly intertwined. Better still, it is interesting to note that this vision is first and foremost shared by many Unionists. With a view to helping make Britain a more democratic and fairer country, journalists Polly Toynbee and David Walker have recently written an open letter of advice to Ed Miliband, the new Labour leader, from a clearly left-of-centre perspective, drawn from their influential new book on the party's time in power, *The Verdict*. They had a lot to say about many different subjects ranging from spin doctors to crime, to voting reform, to the NHS and party politics. The most lapidary piece of advice, however, was about Britishness; it read: 'Don't agonise over Britishness: It will look after itself.'[124]

Conclusion

Welsh and Scottish nationalist discourse and policy tend to act as a cleavage by providing a loyalty to a nation that, despite its appeal as a focus of loyalty to many, is far from coterminous with the historical territory and the whole of the population. To paraphrase a statement by Senator Obama about Minister Farrakhan's message, I would then say that this explains why nationalism can thrive as an emotion but does flounder as a programme[125].

Though many still share Welsh-speaking poet R.S. Thomas's view that 'hyphenisation is betrayal'[126], i.e. the extreme idea – as South-African novelist André Brink e.g. has written – that 'the individual's very existence (is) at stake in (…) every attempt at compromise'[127], it is most likely that separation, through self-determination (which means determination of the 'self', a concept that does not bear scrutiny in the case of Wales and Scotland as we have seen), with a view to ending all

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[119] See Girard & Graves, *Europe unie, le Royaume désuni ?,* p. 165. See also p. 193.

[120] Quoted by Christopher Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism (Scottish society and politics – 1707 to the present)*, London: Routledge, 2004 (4th edition, 1977), p. 196.

[121] Tom Nairn, 'Scotland and Globalisation', in Reid & Scott (eds.), *The Independence Book*, p. 88.

[122] Harry Reid, 'Make a Noble Dream Come True', in *Ibidem*, p. 23.

[123] Neil Kay, 'The Fish, The Ferry, and The Black Crude Reality', in *Ibidem*, p. 55.

[124] Polly Toynbee & David Walker, 'An open letter to the new leader of the Labour party' – *The Guardian*, 26 September 2010.

[125] See Barack Obama, *Dreams from My Father, New York*: Three Rivers Press, 2004 (1995), p. 202.

[126] R. S. Thomas, *Cymru or Wales?,* Llandysul*:* Gomer Press, 1992, p. 30.

[127] André Brink, *A Fork in the Road – A Memoir*, London: Vintage Books, 2010 (2009), p. 347.

conflicts and aiming for consensus, would be both fundamentally anti-political and quite unrealistic (the 'natural' community would then be superimposed upon the political one)[128].

Welsh and Scottish Nationalists' basic assumptions about their respective societies actually give the lie to their resolute espousal of an untrammelled form of democracy. Indeed, if democracy is supposed to allow space for *all* individuals/groups to express themselves (a premise that Nationalists *say* they accept), then no simple given order can ever be reproduced. Naturally, this situation results in endless compromises, in certainty being, as it were, dissolved, and in democracy being unstable and full of imperfections, as it gives birth to temporary arrangements only. This, however, is the price to be paid for having legality and moderation across the board, and, vitally, as suggested by Konrad Lorenz, freedom[129]. The end-result is what American scholar of constitutional law Ronald M. Dworkin has called a 'community of principle' (as opposed to a community of character), i.e. one organised on the basis of principles that have gained common acceptance[130].

Although unpalatable to many politicians (whether those with nationalist leanings or quite a few of their staunch unionist opponents), this notion of artificiality is absolutely crucial to the extent that without it, dialogue could never really happen[131]. As philosopher Clément Rosset, a former shining light of this university, has explained, rejecting artificiality amounts to rejecting the possibility of freeing ourselves from the 'natural' order of things (which is in fact the result of custom), but also, more worryingly, to rejecting the here-and-now[132], which is by definition the only existing framework for confrontation to take place democratically.

In fact, it seems hard to escape the following: for nationalist aspirations to be accommodated without other aspirations being more or less obliterated, it is to be hoped, as a constitutional expert has underlined, that, despite the uncertainty and instability, 'the Scottish [and Welsh] Question will always be with us'[133], as it has actually been for decades on end.

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[128] See André Comte-Sponville, *Présentations de la philosophie*, Paris, Eds. Albin Michel, 2000, pp. 30 & 31, and Alain Dieckhoff, *La Nation dans tous ses états – Les identités nationales en mouvement*, Paris, Flammarion, 2002 (2000), p. 277.

[129] See Konrad Lorenz, 'L'avenir est ouvert', in Karl R. Popper & Konrad Lorenz, *L'Avenir est ouvert – Entretien d'Altenberg*, Paris: Flammarion, 1995, p. 19.

[130] See Omar Dahbour, 'The Nation-State as a Political Community: A Critique of the Communitarian Argument for National Self-Determination', in *Couture*, Nielsen & Seymour (eds.), *Rethinking Nationalism*, pp. 330-331.

[131] See Simonetta Tabboni, 'Le multiculturalisme et l'ambivalence de l'étranger', in Michel Wieviorka (ed.), *Une société fragmentée ? Le multiculturalisme en débat*, Paris: La Découverte, 1997 (1996), pp. 249-250 ; Alain Caillé, *La Démission des clercs – La crise des sciences sociales et l'oubli du politique*, Paris: La Découverte, 1993, p. 273 ; & Simone Goyard-Fabre, *Qu'est-ce que la démocratie ? La généalogie philosophique d'une grande aventure humaine*, Paris: Armand Colin, 1998, p. 162.

[132] See Clément Rosset, *L'anti-nature – Eléments pour une philosophie tragique*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1986 (1973), pp. 50-51 & 309.

[133] Robert Hazell, 'Britishness and the Future of the Union', in Gamble & Wright (eds.), *Britishness*, p. 111.