History, Memory and National Identities in Multinational States

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History is the life of memory
Cicero *De Oratore*, ii.

For the Dutch historian of early modernity, Johan Huizinga, history was the intellectual form in which civilization rendered account to itself of the past.[1] This is an activity most societies engage in and that has become more explicit in the era of modern nationalism with the diffusion of print technology, the development of standard national languages, and the growth of mass education. But what is the relationship between history and the collective memories which people(s) have? And how does this play itself out in the particular context of multinational states?

The contemporary French historian, Pierre Nora, has advanced his own interpretation of the relationship between history and memory.

> "Memory, history: far from being synonyms, we are conscious of everything that makes them opposites. Memory is life, something associated with living groups and from this point of view, open to the dialectic of remembrance and amnesia. . .History is a problematic and incomplete reconstruction of what no longer exists. Memory is an always relevant phenomenon, a living link with the eternal present; history a representation of the past. For Halbwachs, there are as many memories as there are groups, multiple, non-multiple, collective, plural and individualist. Memory is an absolute whereas history only knows the relative."[2]

Nora's differentiation raises as many questions as it answers. If history is problematic, why not our collective memories as well? If our memories are plural, how can these be absolute? Is there not, as David Hume argued in *An Enquiry into Human Understanding*, an ambiguity associated with the moral sciences, like history or politics, as compared to

[1] Johan Huizinga, "A Definition of the Concept of History," 1936, cited in Henry Ritter, ed., *Dictionary of Concepts of History*, Greenwood Press, 1986, p. 198.

the mathematical sciences? If so, does it make sense to see memory as something associated with the living and history with a no longer existing past? After all, the memories of those who are themselves no longer alive often helped forge the images that historians and others transmit to us from the past; conversely, history as a living presence can often have as much to do with the present as with the past.

If I am ultimately unconvinced by Nora's delineation, it is because I do not see history and memory in mutual opposition with one another. Rather, they interact in subtle and complicated ways that the British historian, Raphael Samuel, better captures in the following formulation:

> "Memory is dialectically related to historical thought, rather than being some kind of negative other to it. It bears the impress of experience. . . It is stamped with the ruling passions of the time. . . Like history, memory is inherently revisionist and never more chameleon-like than when it appears to stay the same."[3]

If we look at the histories of a number of major nation-states, we become aware of some of the complexities that Samuel evokes. In relationship to Russian and Soviet history, one could argue, in the words of an anonymous Soviet historian, that the USSR was a land of the "unpredictable past."[4] The past was a dangerous country, and its interpretation could easily spell serious trouble for historians if they were to run up against prevailing party ideology. Memory was no more relevant to this concern than actual historical occurrence. For example, if Ivan the Terrible served the purposes of Stalinist state-building in the 1930s, that is the version of Ivan that film-makers like Sergei Eisenstein or Soviet historians would need to project. During the Tsarist period, more liberal historians tended to be critical of Ivan's excesses and more conservative ones were prepared to defend him.[5] History was shaped, in no small part, by the outlook of

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[2] Pierre Nora, sous la direction, *Les lieux de mémoire*, T1 *La République*, Paris: Gallimard, 1984, p. XIX, my translation.
[3] Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, vol. 1, London: Verso, 1994, p. x.
[4] Cited in Eric Foner, Who *Owns History?* New York: Hill and Wang, 2002, p. 74.
[5] Alexander Yanov, *The Origins of Autocracy: Ivan the Terrible in Russian History*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981.

historians themselves, and memories of historical events shaped by versions of the past that served contemporary purposes.

In much the same way, French historiography has long been a battleground when it comes to interpretations of the French Revolution. By and large the right, religious and legitimist, was hostile to what they took to be a catastrophic event, with family and other memories nourishing vivid opposition to it, and subsequent developments, e.g. the Paris Commune, the emergence of the 3rd Republic, further reinforcing their point of view. Conversely, republican, socialist, and communist forces were strong defenders of the Revolution, with transmitted memories playing a role for some, and political developments, e.g. the Dreyfus Affair, the Russian Revolution, the Popular Front, for others. In recent decades, more liberal interpretations of the Revolution have come to the fore, with a strong reaction against communist practices in the world of the gulag playing its part in shaping a very different kind of memory - or is it perception? - of Jacobin policies on the part of present-day French historians than might have true in previous generations.[6]

History and multinational states

Problems with conflicting historiography and memory are particularly salient when we turn to the experience of multinational states. There tend to be very different views of the same historical events when seen from different sides of the national divide between majority-type and minority-type nationalities. Was the Act of Union of 1707 that abolished separate English and Scottish parliaments a step forward for Britain as a whole, or a crass betrayal of Scottish interests? Should Queen Elizabeth be known as Elizabeth II, when her earlier namesake was only Queen of England, and never of Scotland? Are

[6] François Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1981; François Furet and Mona Ozouf, eds., *A Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution*, Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1989; Stéphane Courtois ... [et al.], *The Black Book of Communism : Crimes, Terror, Repression*, Cambridge, Mass.:Harvard University Press, 1999.

Scottish, Welsh, or Irish history even legitimate subjects for study, as opposed to British history that is equated by some English historians with English history?[7]

Is Belgian history that of a single people with a common social life and a syncretic mixing of two cultures, as Henri Pirenne, the distinguished francophone Belgian historian of the early 20th century, argued?

> "Belgium, divided ethnographically between a Latin and a German race, and politically between France and Germany, is a 'microcosm' of Western Europe. Its unity does not lie in a community of race as in Germany, or in the centralizing action of a hereditary monarchy as in England or France, but in the unity of its social life. . .Our national culture is a sort of syncretism, where one finds, mixed with one another and modified by one another, the genius of two races."[8]

Or is it more accurate to see the Flemish and Walloons, with their two respective national outlooks so often at loggerheads with one another, as having quite different memories of the past, as the Flemish historian, Lode Wils, would suggest.[9]

In the Spanish case, one can point to conflicts in archaeology between researchers in universities and centres who have a broader Spanish perspective and professionals or amateurs attached to archaeological departments of the autonomous governments only interested in research that is nationalist-regionalist in character.[10] One can contrast the exhibits at the Museum of Catalan History in Barcelona with its highlighting of a Catalan-based interpretation of events through the centuries with the Royal Academy of History in Madrid and its insistence on the teaching of a single Spanish history. A Basque nationalist view of the broad nature of foral rights in an earlier period can be contrasted with Castilian centralists for whom the *fueros*, institutions of regional autonomy, were

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[7] "As late as 1985 one Cambridge college 'steered students away from Scottish, Irish or Welsh history should they show unhealthy signs of interest in such peripheral topics. . .British history was English history.'" David Lowenthal, "European and English Landscapes as National Symbols," in David Hooson, ed., *Geography and National Identity*, Blackwell, 1994, p. 16.

[8] Henri Pirenne, *Histoire de Belgique: Des Origines à Nos Jours*, Bruxelles: La Renaissance du Livre, 1900, Preface, p. 10, my translation.

[9] Lode Wils, *Historie des Nations Belges*, Bruxelles: Quorum, 1996, p. 339.

[10] Margarita Díaz-Andreu, "The past in the present: The search for roots in cultural nationalism. The Spanish case," in Justo Beramendi, Ramón Mais, Xosé M. Núñez, eds., *Nationalism in Europe Past and Present*, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 1994, vol. 1, p. 211.

privileges granted by the sovereign crown.[11] More generally, one can compare the single nation view of Spanish history associated with new conservative historians today, with regionalist interpretations, and with left versions of the common history of Spain based on the coexistence of plural identities.[12]

In the Canadian case, one can contrast French Canadian/Quebec views of history with those of English-speaking Canadians. Was the Conquest of 1759 a fatal curse or a new beginning? Were the 1837 Rebellions in Lower Canada primarily national in character, or were they part of the same quest for responsible government that one found in Upper Canada? Was Confederation essentially a pact between the two founding peoples or the creation of a new nation with a system of government modelled on that of Great Britain? Similar differences characterize approaches to the hanging of Louis Riel, to the Manitoba and Ontario School Questions, and to the question of conscription during the two world wars. It is interesting to note that there is no simple agreement among history teachers in secondary schools in English Canada and Quebec as to what the most important events in Canadian history actually are. In a 2001 survey, Anglophone teachers stressed events like Confederation, the two world wars, or the Charter; Quebec francophone teachers gave lesser weight to such events, and greater weight than their anglophone counterparts to the discovery of Canada, the Conquest, or the post-1960 development of Quebec nationalism.[13]

History plays a central role, not only between majority-type and minority-type national communities, but also within each camp.

Alan Bold, writing about Scotland, observes:

> "Scotland is still fighting old battles, still obsessed by the past, still trying to convert defeat into victory. Scotland is a country uniquely haunted by history.

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[11] Michael Keating, *Plurinational Democracy: Stateless Nations in a Post-Sovereignty Era*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 44-5

[12] Xosé-Manuel Núñez, "What is Spanish nationalism today?" *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 24, #5, Sept., 2001, 719-752, pp. 730-7.

[13] The Dominion Institute, History Teachers Survey, 2001, http://www.dominion.ca/English/polls.html

> With so many defeats to contend with the Scots have gradually come to regard themselves as born losers."[14]

For Colin Kidd,

> "History rather than natural law or political theology derived from Scripture was the very backbone of political argument in early modern Scotland. Scottish history as ideology was multi-faceted and highly developed. Scotland's past provided material for the national origin myth; for national independence; for the religious nation's 'chosen people' status; for pride in the caste of its aristocratic warriors who preserved freedom intact against foreign invaders and domestic tyrants."[15]

And for David McCrone, "Scotland has no shortage of history; indeed, it can be argued that it has too much."[16]

An example of the ways in which historical memories can be harnessed to serve contemporary political purposes lies in the quite different interpretations that can be offered of key events, e.g. the Declaration of Arbroath of 1320, sent by supporters of the Scottish cause to the Pope, at a time of prolonged conflict with England.

> "For as long as but a hundred of us remain alive, never shall we on any conditions be brought under English rule. It is in truth not for glory, nor riches, nor honours that we are fighting, but for freedom."[17]

For a Scottish National Party MP, the Declaration can be directly tied to the cause of Scottish independence in our own day:

> "In the year 1320 after the birth of our Saviour, in this town of Arbroath, our ancestors met to consider and declare upon the issue of Scottish freedom. Their words reach out to us over the centuries in a ringing, confident declaration of self-government. . . Nation or region? That is the challenge before all of us at this general Election."[18]

Yet Labour activists see the Declaration of Arbroath in quite a different light, as a challenge to the divine right of kings, noting that the Declaration stated that if the King of the Scots "betrays us, then we reserve the right to turn him out and have somebody else." Canon Kenyon Wright of the Scottish Constitutional Convention made a similar point at

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[14] Alan Bold, *Modern Scottish Literature*, London: Longman, 1983, p. 11.
[15] Colin Kidd, *Subverting Scotland's Past*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, p. 27.
[16] David McCrone, *The Sociology of Nationalism*, London: Routledge, 1998, P. 59
[17] The Declaration of Arbroath in P. H. Scott, *Scotland: An Unknown Cause,* Edinburgh: Canongate, 1997, p. 5

a Scottish Trades Union Congress when he noted: "Scotland has a tradition of saying to those in power you have no mandate unless the people give it to you."[19] Here historical memory is being invoked to serve the cause of Scottish grass-roots democracy and ultimately devolution, but not independence.

The Abbé Groulx, a clerical French Canadian nationalist historian of the first half of the 20th century, spoke about "notre maître le passé." A traditionalist, Catholic-inspired view of history dominated many of the textbooks in Quebec down until the 1960s. But there have been non-nationalist historians like Fernand Ouellet, as well, and there is a much more pluralist caste to Quebec historical writing today than in the past.[20]

The notion of *ethnie*, as pioneered by Anthony Smith,[21] may also help explain the development of different kinds of communities of memory at certain periods. Those who identify with a particular *ethnie* will tend to highlight a we-group identity defined by ethnic/cultural traits. An example would be the use of terms like race to describe French Canadians at the end of the 19th or early 20th centuries.[22] In a similar fashion, there was a racialist construction of Basque nationalism in the late 19th century, e.g. claims that Basques were authentic living descendants of a pre-Aryan race, whose race and language had a purity that other peoples lacked.[23] Sabino Arana, the founder of the Basque nationalist movement, argued, "Race, once lost, cannot be resuscitated."[24]

But ethnic categories can cover over differences that exist within different sections of the population. They can over-emphasize unity of views, and the degree of ethnic or racial purity that any particular society experiences. After all, who exactly

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[18] Andrew Welsh, Scottish National Party MP, speech, Arbroath, 1992, cited in Stephen Reicher & Nick Hopkins, *Self and Nation: Categorization, Contestation and Mobilization*, London: Sage, 2000, p. 146.
[19] Cited in Reicher & Hopkins, op. cit., p. 146
[20] Cf., for example, works by historians like Gérard Bouchard, Jocelyn Létourneau, Paul-André Linteau, Brian Young, Ronald Rudin.
[21] Smith talks about *ethnies* as "possessing common myths of ancestry and shared memories connected to a homeland." Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism. Theory, Ideology, History*, Polity Press, 2001, p. 13
[22] Cf. the title of André Siegfried's well-known book, *The Race Question in Canada*, Toronto: Carleton Library, 1966, first published in 1906.
[23] Margarita Diaz-Andreu, in Beramendi et al. vol. 1, p. 204
[24] Sabino Arana, cited in Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain*, London: Hurst, 1997, p. 176.

qualifies as a Catalan? Basque? Scot? Fleming? Québécois? Do any of these labels have the same meaning today as 10, 100, 200, or 500 years ago? What has been the impact of immigration and emigration on the populations living within the borders of territories historically associated with particular peoples? Whose memories does one choose to emphasize and who will most identify with such concepts as "Nous les Québécois," or "We the Scots"? Are these national identities single or plural in character?

There has been a notable turn from ethnic to civic versions of nationalism in almost all western societies in recent decades. This is as true for minority-type nationalities in multinational states as it is for majority-type nationalities.[25]

In the Quebec case, for example, it was striking how strong was the backlash among many Quebec nationalists to Jacques Parizeau's 1995 referendum night outburst to the effect that the Yes side had lost because of "money and the ethnic vote." The old *pure laine* (pure wool) version of Quebec identity has increasingly given way to something a lot more open in character. As Jocelyn Maclure, a younger Quebec academic, writes:

> "Quebec-ness today is composed of many types of elements - past and present, cultural and intercultural, ethnic and civic, temporal and spatial, imaginary and material, local and global - and any attempt to homogenize that identity with the wider world or purify the difference within it strikes a frontal blow at the possibility of Quebecers seeing their identity as plural."[26]

In the case of Scotland, both nationalist and anti-nationalist spokesmen reject any purely ethnic reading of Scottish identity today:

> "Scottish nationalism could not be racist if it tried because there just isn't such a thing as a pure Scot. I mean what is a pure Scot? Somebody that doesn't have any ancestry from outwith Scotland? But you'd be down to what? One per cent of the population?"[27]

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[25] Cf. Philip Resnick, "Civic and Ethnic Nationalism: Lessons from the Canadian Case," in Ronald Beiner & Wayne Norman, eds., *Canadian Political Philosophy*, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2000, 282-297.
[26] Jocelyn Maclure, *Quebec Identity: The Challenge of Pluralism*, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003, p. 141. Similar views are expressed by a number of the contributors to the collection edited by Michel Venne, *Vive Quebec! : new thinking and new approaches to the Quebec nation*, Toronto : James Lorimer, 2001.
[27] Scottish National Party activist, cited in Reicher & Hopkins, p. 165

> "Most people who live in Glasgow, or the large majority, are Irish anyway. So to say that they're Scottish on the basis of a sort of blood test, you would find that most people who live in Scotland failed it."[28]

Similar observations can be found with respect to Spain's peripheral nationalities:

> "There are important political and intellectual segments of Catalan, Basque or Galician nationalism which insist on the need to build civic nations based on an inclusive character, whose main characteristics should be the acceptance of a co-existence of different loyalties and cultures among their citizens."[29]

> "Catalonia and the Basque Country may be considered as multinational as Spain; that is, they contain groups of people who have different feelings of national belonging, whether to one nation only, or to several simultaneously."[30]

It is striking that the largest festival in Catalonia is now the Feria de Abril, a festival of flamenco dancing, rather than of Catalan dance, reflecting the large migration to Barcelona in recent decades from Andalusia and other parts of Spain. In the same way, race is a much weaker category in the Basque Country today than in the past.[31]

Language and memory

Let us now turn to the relationship between language and memory. How does language help to shape historical divides? For a linguist like B. L. Whorf,

> "Users of markedly different grammars are pointed by the grammars toward different types of observation and different evaluations of externally similar acts of observation . . .and hence arrive at somewhat different views of the world.[32]

For a contemporary scholar of intercultural differences,

> "Many words in foreign languages, that we think of as identical and interchangeable with our own, do not have the same meaning in all contexts."[33]

Nursery rhymes, legends, songs, children's stories, school texts, newspapers, magazines, radio and TV programs, literature, and historiography itself only reinforce these language-derived differences.

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[28] Sir Nicolas Fairburn, Conbservative MP, cited in Reicher & Hopkins, p. 166.
[29] Xosé-Manuel Núñez, "What is Spanish nationalism today?" *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 24, #5, Sept., 2001, 719-752, p. 744.
[30] Victor Pérez-Díaz, *Spain at the Crossroads*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999, p. 155.
[31] Jose Alvarez Junco, "Spain a Product of Incomplete Nation-Building," in Louk Hagendroon et al., eds., *European Nations and Nationalism; Theoretical and Historical Perspectives*, Ashgate, 2000, p. 210.
[32] B. L. Whorf, *Language, Thought and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1956, p. 221.
[33] Gilles Verbunt, *La Société Interculturelle*, Paris: Seuil, 2001, p. 140, my translation.

Language is often a key feature of national identity for members of minority or peripheral nationalities, one of the political geometries that shapes multinational states.[34] A Flemish dictum of the 19th century stated: "Language is the entirety of the people."[35] Somewhat similar claims could be made for Catalan. “Our language, the expression of our people, which can never be given up . . . is the spiritual foundation of our existence,"[36] read an appeal by the Catalonian Cultural Committee in the 1920s. "The Basque language must be the pillar of national consciousness," argued Sabino Arana at the end of the 19th century.[37] "Nos institutions, notre langue, nos lois," read the motto of the French Canadian newspaper, *Le Canadien,* in 1831.[38]

Language is central to many minority-type nationalities - especially when that language has been threatened with repression or actively repressed. In the Canadian case, the Durham Report of the late 1830s called for the assimilation of French Canadians into the English-speaking population of British North America; this was successfully resisted by generations of French Canadians and their political leaders, but not without recollection of this earlier threat sinking into the French Canadian collective consciousness. In the Spanish case, one can point to the policies of the Franco regime, during the long decades of dictatorship between 1939-1975, with its insistence on "a national unity that is absolute with a single language, Spanish, and a single personality that is Spanish."[39] This only reinforced the appeal of Catalan or Basque nationalism.[40] Similarly, Flemish was very much a secondary language in Belgium in the 19th century,

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[34] For the use of the term political geometry in relationship to multinational states, see Patrick Hossay, *Contentions of Nationhood: Nationalist Movements, Political Conflict, and Social Change in Flanders, Scotland, and French Canada*, Latham: Lexington Books, 2002, pp. 29-31.
[35] "De taal is gens het volk." Cited in Lode Wils, op. cit., p. 330. Cf. also Hossay, chap. 4.
[36] Catalonian Cultural Committee, *Appeal on Behalf of Catalonia*, Geneva, 1927 cited in Joshua Fishman, “Language and Nationalism,” in Stuart Woolf, ed., *Nationalism in Europe 1815 to the present: A reader*, London: Routledge, 1996, 160.
[37] Sabino Arana, founder of the Basque National Party at the end of the 19th century, cited in J.-M. Izquierda, *La question basque*, Bruxelles: Editions Complexe, 2000, p. 56.
[38] Yves Lamonde, *Histoire Sociale des Idées au Québec*, Montréal: Fides, 2000, p. 176 .
[39] Francisco Franco, cited in Javier Tusell, *España, Una Angustia Nacional*, Madrid: Espasa, 1999, p. 151
[40] "Suppression breeds opposition, and there is a long history in Catalonia of protest and resistance to centralist policies which has helped to maintain Catalanism alive." Charlotte Hoffmann, "Language,

when compared to French, securing an equal status only in the 20th century. Much of the Flemish movement revolved around its promotion and defence.[41]

Even languages that have been much weakened over time can play a symbolic role where the assertion of national identity is concerned. A Welsh activist acknowledges the fact that Welsh is no longer needed for purely functional communication in Wales, but sees it as having a structural role in "saving the separate identity of the Welsh as a People."[42] Gaelic may play something of a similar role in Ireland. The same is true for various aboriginal languages in contemporary Canada. And the same may be true for Basque, spoken by little over a quarter of the population in the Basque Country, as compared to the significantly larger number of Catalan or Galician speakers in their respective regions of Spain,[43] but still an important element of Basque national identity, especially for nationalists.

Members of a particular language group often have quite different memories and readings of history from members of another language group. This can lead to a sense on the part of minority nationalities of constituting a distinct society or people. This is reinforced by the desire for a strong territorial base, the better to reinforce security for one's language.[44] For the defence of a minority language in places like Flanders, Quebec, Catalonia, or the Basque Country is at the same time a defence of the memories of the larger national community.

The possibility exists of turning multiple languages, identities, and memories into defining features of the larger state. Canada since the late 1960s has used official bilingualism as a unifying feature, helping to define Canadian identity vis-a-vis the

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autonomy and national identity in Catalonia," in Dennis Smith and Sue Wright, eds., *Whose Europe? The turn towards democracy*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1999, p. 53.

[41] Theo Hermans, Louis Vos, & Lode Wils, eds., *The Flemish Movement: A Documentary History 1780-1990*, London: The Athlone Press, 1992.

[42] J. R. Jones, "Need the language divide us?" cited in Reicher & Hopkins, p. 157.

[43] A poll by the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas from 1995, cited in *Le Courrier International*, #486, 24 février-1 mars, 2000, shows only 28% of residents in the Basque Country with a speaking knowledge of Basque vs. 79% of the residents of Catalonia with a speaking knowledge of Catalan, and 89% of the residents of Galicia with a speaking knowledge of Gallego.

United States. Flemish along with French are defining characteristics for Belgium. Spain in its post-Franco constitution recognizes its nationalities, regions, and its minority languages. The recognition of distinct languages is not necessarily a zero-sum game, so much as an acknowledgement of the complex reality that makes multinational states what they are.[45]

This process, however, does not come without all kinds of friction. One thinks of the struggle for the assertion of French as Quebec's official and working language in the aftermath of the Quiet Revolution[46]; of the hostility that Bill 101, the Charter of the French language, engendered and of its clash with the logic of Canada's Official Languages Act; of the uproar over the use by the Quebec government of the override clause in the Canadian Charter of Rights, following the 1988 Supreme Court ruling on Quebec's sign law, triggering, in turn, a backlash in English Canada against the Meech Lake Constitutional Accord. In Belgium, the battle over language instruction at Louvain/Leuven, led to the sundering of this ancient university into two, while ongoing tensions persist regarding the use of French in public services in suburbs of Brussels that happen to be located within the regional territory of Flanders but that have large francophone populations.

> "The 1960s marked a decisive turn in the national question in Belgium. The 1961 strikes in Wallonia, language legislation, and the Louvain affair led to a radicalization on the Flemish and on the Walloon and Francophone Brussels sides, whose effects continue to this day."[47]

Religion

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[44] Jean Laponce, *Languages and their Territory*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987.

[45] Article 3 of the 1978 Spanish Constitution reads:

1. Castilian is the official Spanish language of the State. All Spaniards have the duty to know it and the right to use it.
2. The other languages of Spain will also be official in the respective autonomous communities, in accordance with their Statutes.
   The richness of the linguistic modalities of Spain is a cultural patrimony which will be the object of special respect and protection.

[46] Cf. Marc Levine, *The Reconquest of Montreal : Language Policy and Social Change in a Bilingual City*, Philadelphia : Temple University Press, 1990.

[47] Wils, p. 327.

Religion has also engendered deep historical cleavages within multinational states. Different religions can pit one community against another, e.g. Protestant vs. Catholic in Canada. As André Siegfried observed:

> "English Protestants and French Catholics find themselves face to face every day in the political arena; and the English obstinately make it a point of honour not to let themselves be surpassed by adversaries whom they judge backward and inferior"[48]

Rival faiths can thus reinforce competing communities of memory.

Despite a Protestantism common to both Scotland and England, the Scots had a tendency to fancy themselves as "a chosen Protestant people."[49] The English view of Scottish Presbyterianism, however, was sometimes quite negative. To cite an important 19th century English historian, Henry Thomas Buckle:

> "In no civilized country is toleration so little understood as in Scotland. . .The churches are so crowded as they were in the middle ages and are filled with devout and ignorant worshippers who flock together to listen to opinions of which the middle ages alone were worthy. The result is that there runs through the entire country a sour fanatical spirit, an aversion to innocent gaiety, a disposition to limit the enjoyment of others."[50]

For their part, Flanders and Wallonia may both have been Catholic societies - a crucial reason for Belgium's independence from the Netherlands; yet Flanders tended to be far more religiously observant than Wallonia.

> "It is an indisputable fact that free thinking is a factor of Walloon national identity serving as a counter-weight to the role that religion has played in the Flemish movement."[51]

In the Basque Country, as well, a traditionalist form of religion was for long a core element in Basque nationalism.[52]

As the hold of religion has declined in contemporary western societies, it has not brought about the eclipse of national sentiments that may once have been associated with

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[48] Siegfried, op. cit., p. 96.
[49] Lindsay Paterson, *The Autonomy of Modern Scotland*, Edinburgh University Press, 1994, p. 172.
[50] Henry Thomas Buckle, *History of Civilization in England*, New York, 1872, cited in Hossay, op. cit., p. 102.
[51] Wils, p. 331

religious practice. The French historian, Paul Venne, argues that the decline in religious sentiment has left a vacant place that history fills in our day and age.[53] The British historian, Eric Hobsbawm, wonders, "Is it an accident that Quebec separatism became a serious political force at the end of a decade when the traditional Catholicism that had defined French Canadians collapsed?"[54] To what degree do more secular versions of history provide an acceptable replacement for faith-based versions? Does part of this evolution involve the need to invent new terms, e.g. Québécois, where an older term such as French Canadian was more religiously and traditionally defined? Is there a need for a reinforced sense of roots in a world where so much else seems to be up for grabs and everything is undergoing rapid transformation?

Empire and historical memory

Empire fosters its own kinds of memories, as does its aftermath. In its rising phase, empire can help forge a larger state, e.g., Spain following the Reconquista as well as the Spanish conquest of the New World; Great Britain, following the Act of Union and the development of its overseas empire. In the case of Spain, the Basque Country and Catalonia profited no less than other regions from Spain's New World ventures.[55] Linda Colley, for her part, has underlined the role played by overseas expansion in fostering a British identity, with the Scots playing a notable role in populating the Dominions and administering the empire. The empire, for Colley, became "the means by which the union between Scotland and rest of great Britain was made real." [56] For Murray Pittock, "Scots

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[52] "'When you say Basque, you say Catholic' is an old proverb." Mark Kurlansky, *The Basque History of the World*, Penguin Books, 1999, p. 146.

[53] "Entretiens avec Paul Venne," J.-C. Ruano-Borbalan, ed., *L'histoire aujourd'hui*, Editions Sciences Humaines, 1997, p. 431.

[54] Eric Hobsbawm, "Nation, State, Ethnicity, Religion," in Justo Beramendi, Ramón Mais, Xosé M. Núñez, eds., *Nationalism in Europe Past and Present*, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 1994, vol. 1, p. 45.

[55] "While most Europeans were focused on their region, their country, their crown, the sucessful Basque was a man of the world. He was interested in Africa and Asia and especially passionate about the lands Basques called Amerika. . . .Basques who returned from the Americas were people worthy of respect in the community." Kurlansky, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

[56] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992, P. 132

were over-achievers in the Union and the British imperial mission."[57] Belgium also profited handsomely from the exploitation of the Congo, though for long, this was Leopold II's personal colony, with only a relatively small number of Belgians, some 1500 when the colony was officially annexed in 1908, actually having made a career there.[58]

But empire can also be a source of internal discord. This was certainly true for Canada at the time of the Boer War, in the run-up to World War I, and again during World War II. English Canadian public opinion identified strongly with Britain and the empire, favouring Canadian involvement in its defence; French Canadian was just as strongly opposed to overseas imperial commitments.[59]

A period of imperial meltdown may also heighten internal nationalist tension. The generation of 1898 expressed Spanish disillusionment with defeat abroad in a very palpable way, reflecting on "the bitter melancholy of a grand past."[60] A notable radicalization of Spanish nationalism occurred in the decades that followed.[61] For their part, members of Spain's peripheral nationalities could have a quite different reaction to the same event.

> "A Catalan nationalist movement seized the opportunity presented by the crisis of the Spanish state (divided between the war with the United States and the loss of Cuba, its last American colony) to build a strong sense of identity on the basis of the recognition that Spain was the state and Catalonia the nation."[62]

Once the British empire entered into decline after World War II, a notable weakening of Scottish identification with Britain took place. As the Scottish academic and nationalist, Neil MacCormick, noted in a lecture to the British Academy:

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[57] Murray Pittock, *A New History of Scotland*, Sutton Publishing, 2003, P. 265.
[58] Hossay, p. 228
[59] Cf. Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism 1867-1914*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970; Sylvie Lacombe, *La rencontre de deux peuples élus*, Presses de l'Université Laval, 2002.
[60] The poet Antonio Machedo, cited in Javier Tusell, op. cit, p. 117
[61] Borja de Riquer & Enric Ucelay-Da Cal, "An Analysis of Nationalisms in Spain: A Proposal for an Integrated Historical Model, in Justo Beramendi, Ramon Mais, Xose Nunez, eds., *Nationalism in Europe Past and Present*, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 1994, Vol. 2, pp. 298-9
[62] Mireay Folch-Serra & Joan Nugue-Font, "Civil Society, Media, and Globalization in Catalonia," in Michael Keating & John McGarry, eds., *Minority Nationalism and the Changing International Order*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 162.

> "The empire was, perhaps, the 'British thing' par excellence. Now it has gone, and now Europe is, as once before for Scots, far more a theatre of opportunity than a threat to identity."[63]

Certainly the Scottish National Party has enjoyed far greater success in recent decades than was the case when the British empire was a going concern.

One can even find residues of earlier historical memories in the differences between English Canada and Quebec with respect to the Free Trade Agreement Canada-US. Something of an older English Canadian fear of the United States going back to the period of identification with the British empire surfaced on the English Canadian side. Conversely, a French Canadian proclivity to prefer the United States to Great Britain also going back to an earlier period may have played a role in explaining more favourable Quebec reactions to the Agreement.[64]

Warfare and memory

Warfare engenders its own collective memories. One need but refer to the conscription crises in Canada during the two World Wars, with the majority English Canadians strongly supportive of conscription for overseas service and the minority French Canadians opposed. "French Canadians enlist in retail and desert in wholesale" and "[French Canadians are] the only known race of white men who quit" were two jibes directed at French Canadians by English Canadians during World War I.[65] "Where are your sons?" thundered the anti-conscription Mayor of Montreal, Camille Houde, to his French Canadian supporters, during World War II.

In the Belgian case, the Germans favoured the Flemish over the Walloons, through their so-called *Flamenpolitik*, both in World Wars I and II. This left differing

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[63] Neil MacCormick, "The English Constitution, the British State, and the Scottish Anomaly," *Scottish Affairs*, Special Issue on Understanding Constitutional Change, 1998, P. 143.

[64] Cf. George Grant, *Lament for a Nation*, Toronto: Carleton Library, 1965, for a classical statement of this earlier English Canadian identification with the British empire. For a discussion of the Quebec view of *l'americanité* in more recent decades, see Joseph Yvon Thériault, *Critique de l'americanité: Mémoire et démocratie au Québec*, Montréal: Québec-Amérique, 2002

[65] The *Orange Sentinel* and the *Manitoba Free Press* cited in John Meisel, Guy Rocher, Arthur Silver, eds., *As I Recall/ Si je me souviens*, Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1999, p. 98

memories of these events. For a Flemish novelist, Gerald Walschop, who was a young Flemish activist in 1918:

> "Activism divided us more profoundly than it is possible to understand today. We had to choose between Flanders and Belgium, two homelands that had been equivalent in our eyes until then, and which, to our horror, had suddenly become irreconcilable enemies."[66]

For a future Belgian Liberal Senator, Maurice Despret, himself a Walloon:

> "The Germans (in Flanders) did what the population desired. . . It is the modest provincial bourgeoisie - the shopkeepers and lower-level functionaries - that supports the Flemish movement, along with younger elements of the lower clergy."[67]

During World War II, greater support for the German occupier could be found in Flanders than in Wallonia. This sparked further division, e.g. over the collaboration of Leopold III with the Germans, and during the subsequent referendum over his abdication of 1950, with Flanders favouring the King and Wallonia opposing him. As Lode Wils observes,

> "Half a century after World War II, it seems that the politics of the German occupation has left a time-bomb. Not only in Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, but also in Belgium."[68]

Avoiding history is no solution, as Alan Cairns or Anthony Smith note.[69] One cannot simply sweep difficult issues under the rug, expecting them to never be spoken of again. Ernest Renan, in his 1882 lecture *What is a Nation?* argued that the ability to forget is a crucial feature of national development.[70] This may be easier to achieve where a single nation is concerned, than when a multinational state is involved. Minority-type

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[66] Wils, op. cit., p. 222.
[67] Wils, op. cit., p. 223
[68] Wils, op. cit.,, p. 337.
[69] Alan Cairns writes, "Historical debates are not trivial. When modified historical interpretations emanate from a source with high legitimacy, they can shape our self-understandings." Alan Cairns, *Citizens Plus*: *Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian State*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000, p. 32. Anthony Smith observes: "History is no sweetshop in which its children may pick and mix; but neither is it an unchanging essence or succession of superimposed strata. Nor can history simply be disregarded, as more than one nationalism has found to its cost." Anthony Smith, *Myths & Memories of the Nation*, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 181.
[70] "The essence of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common and have also forgotten many things. . .Every French citizen has forgotten Saint-Bartholomew and the massacres in Midi in the 13th century." Ernest Renan, *Qu'est ce qu'une nation?* Paris: Agora, 1992, p. 42.

nationalities within multinational states may be less willing to forgive and forget than may be true for minorities within nation-states who are in a weaker power position.

Ressentiment

A sense of grievance can easily be elevated into a feeling of ressentiment, i.e. "a chronic feeling of affront linked with vengeful desires that cannot be readily consummated."[71] Some peoples have relatively short social memories - the English, the Americans; others relatively long - the Irish, the Poles. Why is social amnesia more common for some than for others? Majority nationalities, one could argue, have less reason to be haunted by the past, and will take a positive view of events like the Act of Union, the sequel to the War of the Spanish Succession, or the British Conquest of Canada of 1759.

> "It is often said that history is written by the victors. It might also be said that history is forgotten by the victors. They can afford to forget, while the losers are unable to accept what has happened and are condemned to brood over it, relive it, and reflect how different it might have been."[72]

Cultural explanations also come into play. When they have long controlled dominant political institutions, members of majority nationalities have every reason to take these for granted. When they have been placed in a subordinate position, e.g. through conquest, linguistic marginalization, or repression, members of minority nationalities may feel much less supportive of such institutions.

> "Majority nations within a nation state, however liberal or democratic, are structurally insensitive towards the susceptibilities of minorities not only because of their dominant role in the running of the state, but because the cultural and symbolic identifying origins of the nation state - its historical, linguistic, geographical or ethnic past - are primarily (and probably necessarily) couched in the language of the majority."[73]

Ressentiment on the part of minority nationalities toward majorities can, however, breed a counter-ressentiment on the part of majority nationalities. Violence by ETA in the

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[71] Bernard Meltzer & Gil Richard Musolf, "Resentment and Ressentiment," *Sociological Inquiry*, Vol. 72, #2, 2002, p., 251.
[72] Peter Burke, *Varieties of Cultural History*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996, p. 54.

Basque Country and elsewhere has provoked enormous hostility to Basque nationalism among Spaniards, e.g. the gathering of millions in different Spanish cities to protest ETA's assassinations.[74] Bill 101 in Quebec provoked antipathy towards Quebec nationalism from members of the English-speaking minority in Quebec and from many in English Canada.

Members of majority nationalities do not share the experience of inferiority felt by members of minority nationalities or the latter's fear of having their name "blotted from books of memory".[75] For majority nationalities, too much fixation on the sins of omission or commission of the past may rule out any further common life together. Moreover, they can grow suspicious of what they take to be escalating demands by minority/peripheral nationalities for ever greater power, under the guise of addressing past grievances. As Juan Diez Medrano observes:

> "Spain finds itself in a quandary. Regional decentralization has been necessary to alleviate nationalist conflict, but in the long run it will favour the development of an even stronger national sentiment. Although this strengthened national sentiment may stop short of separatism, it does make state unity more fragile. In a situation like this, in which large proportions of the population of particular regions have developed a strong, local nationalist sentiment, economic or political crises at the state level can more easily translate into state breakup."[76]

Similar disagreements can arise where national myths are concerned. David Lowenthal speaks about the cult of heritage in different countries, about how the past is often more admirable as a realm of faith than of fact, and about how iconic fatherland images derive in large measure from later findings and fabulations of patriot scholars.

> "Heritage by its very nature must depart from verifiable truth; adherents of rival heritages simultaneously construct versions that are equally well-grounded (and equally spurious)."[77]

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[73] Aristide Zolberg, "The Making of Flemings and Walloons: Belgium 1830-1914," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 5, 1974, pp. 34-5.
[74] José Luis de la Granja Sainz, *El Siglo de Euskadi: El Nacionalismo Vasco en la España del Siglo XX*, Madrid: Tecnos, 2003, p. 312.
[75] Shakespeare, *Henry VI, Part 2, Act 1, Scene 1*, cited in Peter Burke, op. cit., p. 43.
[76] Juan Diez Medrano, *Divided Nations: Class, Politics, and Nationalism in the Basque Country and Catalonia*, Cornell University Press, 1995, p. 194.
[77] David Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past: The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*, New York: Free Press, 1996, p. 250.

Two examples from multinational states come to mind. July 11, the anniversary of the Battle of the Golden Spurs of 1302, fought by a Flemish count and Flemish peasants against the French in an era long before Belgium ever became a state, has become a Flemish national day. It has increasingly taken on a Flemish flavour for modern-day Flemish nationalists. As a francophone Belgian observer notes:

> "The Flemish national holiday - the Battle of the Golden Spurs - is no longer a pro-Belgian weapon aimed against the French menace, but an anti-Belgian weapon, a Flemish symbol opposed to whatever remains French in the Belgian state."[78]

In Scotland, there are conflicting views of Bruce, William Wallace, and the 14th century battle of Bannockburn. For Scottish nationalists:

> "The challenge before us is not to live in the past as we stand in the shadow of Bruce, but rather to live up to the past. . .Bruce won a decisive battle but he wouldn't really have completed the case and struggle for independence had he not won the hearts and minds of the Scottish people and we must never forget that because each generation has to face new and different challenges."[79]

For non-nationalists:

> "Bruce was a French or Norman noble with very little appreciation of what it meant to be Scottish. Similarly, Bonnie Prince Charlie was an Italian exile who came to Scotland. No, the Scottishness that I take great encouragement from is the kind of Scotland that emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries through the industrial revolution."[80]

Constructing common myths that will unite across ethnic or national lines in multinational states is, therefore, no small challenge. As George Schöpflin observes:

> "In socially and particularly in ethnically divided societies, the use of myths almost invariably enhances the division, unless there are myths that unite the groups across the divide. It is possible to conceptualize myths of citizenship that transcend ethnicity - the Swiss identity is an excellent example - but these are rare."[81]

We also need to bear in mind that one size does not fit all and that minority-type nationalities can follow quite different trajectories where history and memory are

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[78] Marcel Paquet, *Le Fascisme Blanc: Mésaventures de la Belgique*, Paris: Éditions de la Différence. 1998, p. 30, my translation.
[79] Dick Douglas, Scottish National Party candidate, speech at annual SNP Bannockburn rally, 1993, cited in Reicher and Hopkins, p. 135
[80] A Labour MP, cited in Reicher and Hopkins, p. 138.

concerned. Catalonia's history is not the same as that of the Basque Country. Catalan society was based upon the promotion of capitalism and the quest for political autonomy; the primary foundation of Catalan nationalism historically was cultural and linguistic, rather than political.[82] The origins of Basque nationalism lie in the mutation of a society with a rural tradition; unlike Catalonia, the Basque Country did not possess a vibrant tradition of acceptance of newcomers.[83] There has been much greater violence in the Basque case, e.g. ETA, than in the Catalan, and Basque nationalism has a harder, more independence-oriented edge to it. Wales is not Scotland, having had a much earlier political association with England; not surprisingly, its inhabitants showed considerably less support for devolution, which barely squeaked through in the Welsh referendum of Sept. 18, 1997, with 50.3% of those voting favouring a Welsh Assembly. By comparison, 74.3% of those voting in the Scottish referendum held a week earlier supported a Scottish Parliament.[84] Aboriginal demands in Canada are not identical to those of Québécois, reflecting very different demographic, cultural, linguistic, economic, and territorial realities. Nor are Wallonia and Flanders simply mirror images of one another.

Ambiguous identities

Questions about history and memory leave larger political questions regarding the relationship between nation and state, or between national identity and citizenship, unresolved. These are a good deal more complex than hard-line political nationalists might assert. Although committed supporters of minority-type nationalism aspire to political independence, e.g. in Quebec, moderate nationalists and non-nationalists do not, and retain a significant loyalty to Canada.[85] One thinks of the quip by the well-known

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[81] George Schöpflin, "The Functions of Myth and a Taxonomy of Myths," in Geoffrey Hosking and George Schöpflin, eds., *Myths and Nationhood*, London: Hurst, 1997, p. 24.
[82] Medrano, *Divided Societies*, p. 16; Kathryn Crameri, "Banal Catalanism?", *National Identities*, Vol. 2, #2, 2000, P. 153.
[83] Izquierdo, op. cit., p. 41; Conversi, op. cit., p. 196.
[84] http://www.election.demon.co.uk/welsh.html; http://www.election.demon.co.uk/scottish.html
[85] For example, in a 1996 Quebec poll , 68% of respondents agreed with the statement "I am profoundly attached to Canada," as opposed to 32% who did not. Maurice Pinard, Robert Bernier, Vincent Lemieux, *Un Combat Inachevé*, Montréal: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1997, Table 10.6 , p. 340.

Quebec comedian, Yvon Deschamps, about "Quebecers want[ing] a sovereign Quebec within a strong, united Canada." Scottish nationalists may dream of an independent Scotland; most Scots reject this.[86] Survey data on Belgian public opinion points to a much less polarized division between Flemish and Walloons than nationalist supporters would suggest.

> "The majority of [Belgium's] population is not all concerned with the nationality problem. A mere 9.6% of the Flemish population is interested in reform of the state and in Wallonia this percentage even drops to 5.3%. Moreover, Belgian nationalist feelings are still very strong; 90% of the Flemish population rejects the idea of a separate Flemish nation, whilst in Wallonia there are hardly any proponents of separatism."[87]

The largest single group of respondents to surveys in Catalonia sees itself as Spanish and Catalan, preferring to not have to choose between the two.[88] A well-known Catalan figure, Josep Ramoneda, expresses what is probably the majority sentiment on Catalonia's status: "I am a Catalan, I am not a nationalist, but Catalonia is a nation."[89] Basque society, for its part, is split right down the middle as between supporters and opponents of nationalist positions.[90] An in-depth study cites a cross-sample of Basque opinion that underlines the range of views to be found there. "It is the duty of every member of *Euskal Herria* to resist the destruction of the Basque nation." "I want to defend *Euskal Herria*. I want a free nation for us. Nationalism is what we need to keep our language, our customs, our way of living." "I think that clinging to nationalism as a proposal for the 21st century is a step backward." "*Euskara* is just one of many languages.

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[86] Cf. Keating, op. cit., p. 61, Figure 2, Support for constitutional options, Scotland, 1975-2000, showing support for Scottish independence by under 30% of respondents to most surveys taken over 25 years.
[87] Bart Maddens, Roeland Beerten, and Jaak Billiet, "The National Consciousness of the Flemings and the Walloons. An Empirical Investigation," in Kas Deprez & Louis Vos, eds., *Nationalism in Belgium: Shifting Identities, 1780-1995*, 1998, p. 206.
[88] A 1996 poll by the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas showed 36.5% of respondents seeing themselves as equally Catalan and Spanish, the largest single group in this survey of Catalan attitudes towards Catalonia and Spain. Kenneth McRoberts, *Catalonia: Nation Building without a State*, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2001, P. 165.
[89] Cited by Javier Tusell Gómez, "Historia de una Relación," in Xavier Antich et al., eds., *Cataluña-España: Relaciones políticas y culturales*, Barcelona: Icaria, 2003, p. 180.
[90] Xosé-Manuel Núñez, op. cit., p. 740, speaks about a tie between Spanish and peripheral nationalists in Catalonia and Basque Country, and within the Basque Country itself.

My country includes all of humankind." "If violence is the price that we Basques have to pay for independence, I am not going to pay it."[91]

In his *Representative Government*, John Stuart Mill famously argued that the existence of different nationalities within the same country, especially if their members read and spoke different languages, would make it next to impossible to have the united public opinion necessary to make representative government work.[92] This turns out to have been unduly pessimistic, as the survival of Belgium, Canada, or Spain would attest. But the citizens of such states may have to accept a greater degree of ambivalence in their interactions with one another across linguistic and cultural lines than might be true for the citizens of states who have developed a more unitary type of national identity.

History itself, as I have been arguing in this paper, is a complicated affair in multinational states. Of Spain, it has been said:

> "Spain has been a nation since the16th century, but a problematic one, in which regional and private particularisms have co-existed with national reality."[93]
>
> "Spanish reality, from the beginning of the 20th century down to today, allows us to observe that for a majority of its citizens Spain is, at the same time, a nation and a state, but that for important minorities it is the second, but not the first."[94]
>
> "One neither can explain peripheral nationalism as a deviation from a central Spanish 'reality', nor explain Spain as a false imposition on peripheral 'realities.'"[95]

For Quebec and Canada, Jocelyn Létourneau and Guy Rocher capture some of the complexities:

> "Most recent Quebec textbooks express . . .a continuing desire for roots, unshakeable desire to be presented as equal to all others, fidelity to a confederal ideal that has been evaded through the practice of Canadian federalism. The attachment of Québécois to Canada, *another and the same country*, remains strong."[96]

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[91] Thomas C. Davis, "Patterns of Identity: Basques and the Basque Nation," *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol. 3, #1, Spring, 1997, pp. 61-88.
[92] John Stuart Mill, *Representative Government*, Book 16, "Of Nationality, as Connected with Representative Government", London: Dent, 1968, p. 361.
[93] Juan Pablo Fusi, *España. La Evolución de la Identidad Nacional*, Madrid, Temas de Hoy, 2000, p. 280.
[94] Tusell, *España, Una Angustia Nacional*, p. 157.
[95] Borja de Riquer & Enric Ucelay-Da Cal, op. cit.,, p. 299.
[96] Jocelyn Létourneau, in L. Turgeon, J. Létourneau, K. Fall, eds., *Les espaces de l'identité*, Presses de l'Université Laval, 1997, p. 117.

> "While history can unite, it can also divide. A society has to learn to live with its memory, to absorb it and to fashion its present and future accordingly."[97]

In the British case, Hugh Kearney, Adrian Hastings, and Keith Robbins paint the following multifaceted picture:

> "During the past millennium, 'England', 'Ireland', Scotland', and 'Wales' have not lived in mutual isolation. Since the Viking invasions, if not earlier, the cultures of the British Isles have reacted with each other."[98]

> "'British' for most English was merely an additional name for a single identity. For the Scots and the Welsh, on the other hand, they were indeed two different, but not opposed realities. . .Welsh could help resurrect Welshness as a respectable identity. For the Scots, the formal recognition of Britain was really a condition of the Union. . . Britishness was clearly additional to the national identity they already possessed."[99]

> "In their different ways, the inhabitants of Wales and Scotland have long lived with a duality of identity, accepted or regarded in different degrees by different individuals: Welsh/British or Scottish/British. It is not a mind-set which comes easily to the majority of the population of England."[100]

Multinational states are a kind of template for the interweaving of identities, languages, religions, and national cultures in historical experience. They encompass overlapping and conflicting identities. They may well have a common overriding state structure and a single form of citizenship, but members of majority and minority-type nationalities usually situate themselves with regards to that state in quite distinctive ways.

Competing versions of memory, especially as between majority and minority-type nationalities, have important consequences for identity. History, as Huizinga argued, may indeed be the intellectual form in which civilization renders account to itself of the past. But if that past is plural, as it most certainly is in the case of multinational states, then historical narratives and interpretations of key events will be plural - and often mutually contradictory - as well. As a result, there can be no single reading of "national" history in

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[97] Guy Rocher in John Meisel, Guy Rocher, Arthur Silver, *As I Recall/ Si je me souviens, Historical Perspectives*, Montreal: Institute for Research on Public Policy, 1999, p. 368.
[98] Hugh Kearney, *The British Isles. A History of Four Nations*, Cambridge: Canto edition, 1995, p. 285.
[99] Adrian Hastings, *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion, and Nationalism*, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 64.

such states. This makes the task of constructing common political institutions and of preserving political unity more arduous and complicated than is usually the case in mono-national states with less contested interpretations of the past along linguistic and cultural lines.

[100] Keith Robbins, "The United Kingdom as a Multi-national State," in Justo Beramendi, Ramon Mais, Xosé Núñez, eds., *Nationalism in Europe Past and Present*, Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, 1994, Vol. 2, p. 314-5.